

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE



JANUARY - MARCH 2024

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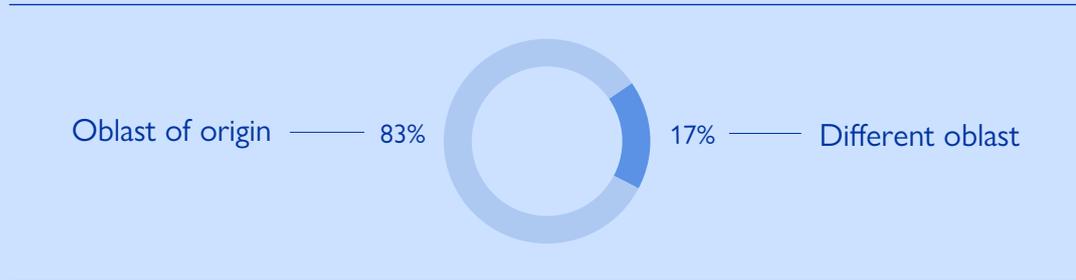
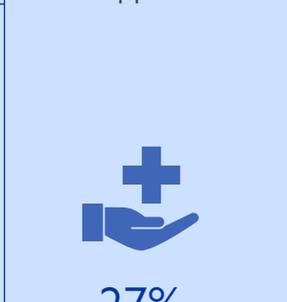
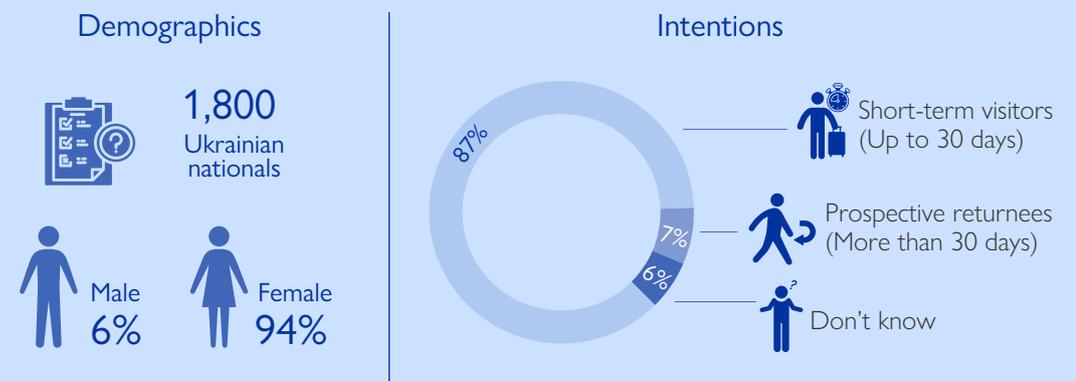
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS	4
OVERVIEW	6
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	6
INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS TO UKRAINE	9
TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE	11
OBLASTS OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION	12
NEEDS, ASSISTANCE RECEIVED, AND CHALLENGES	17
METHODOLOGY	21

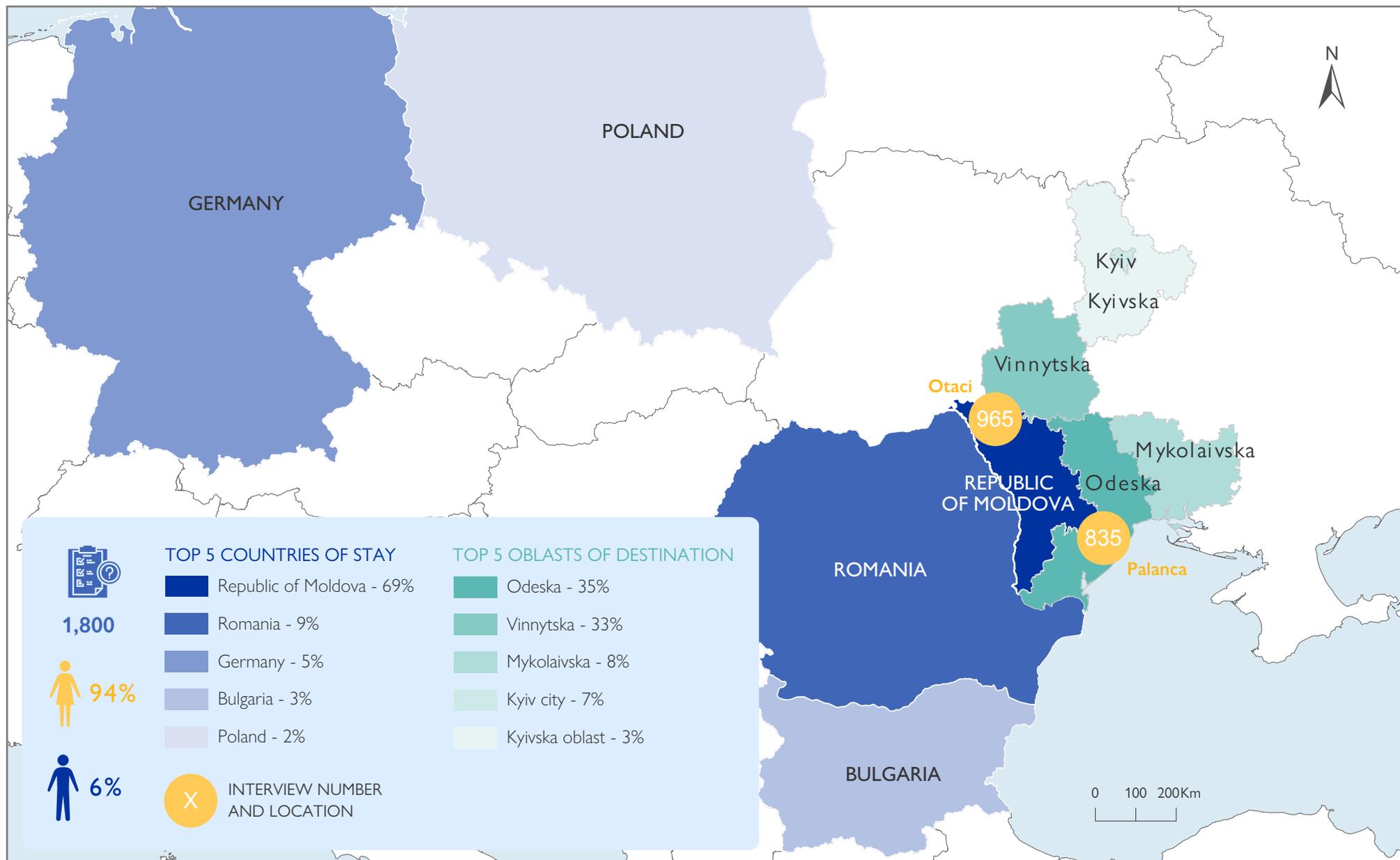
KEY FINDINGS



Multiple answers possible

* Gender breakdown of employment and education profiles is available on page (18-19).

MAP 1: REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, SURVEYS DEPLOYED, COUNTRIES OF STAY AND OBLASTS OF DESTINATION IN UKRAINE, JANUARY - MARCH 2024



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OVERVIEW

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) collects data on [Ukrainian nationals and TCNs \(who resided in Ukraine before 2022\) that were crossing back to Ukraine from or through the Republic of Moldova, either for temporary stay or prospective return.](#)

The survey focuses on the return intentions, duration of displacement, destinations, assistance, and experiences

of unequal treatment of the respondents. For analytical purposes, individuals planning to spend 0 to 30 days in Ukraine are categorized as "short-term visitors," while those intending to stay longer than one month are identified as "prospective returnees."

A total of 1,800 surveys were collected between January and March 2024.

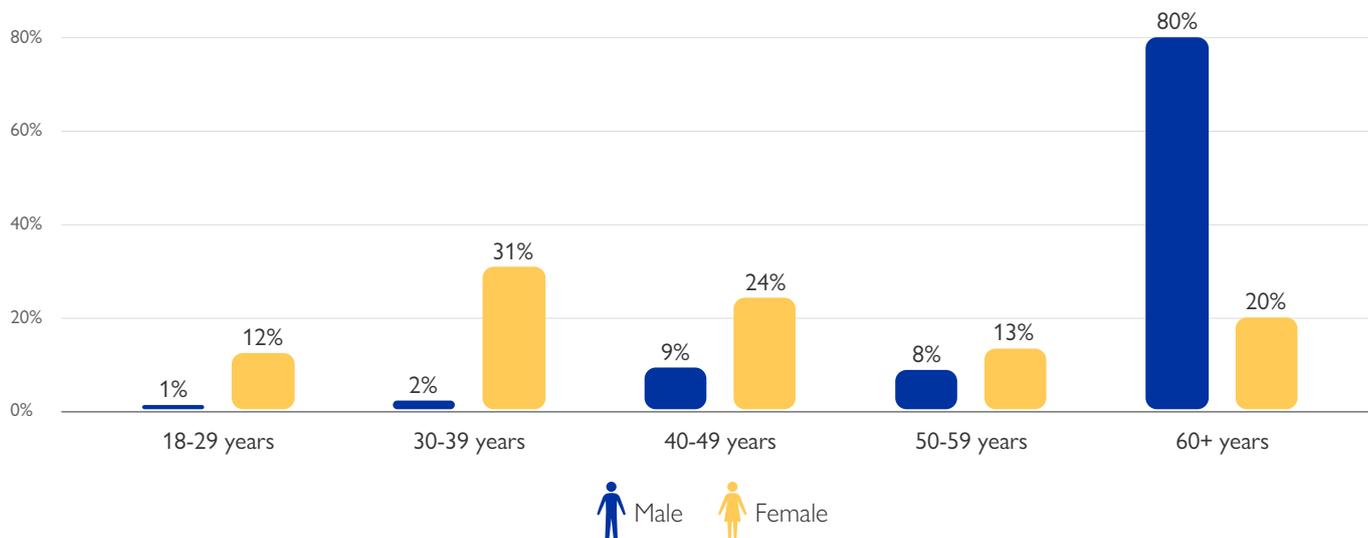
SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

GENDER AND AGE

A total of 1,800 individuals were interviewed between the 15 January and 30 March 2024 at two main border crossing points between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. Almost half of the data (965 surveys) was collected at Palanca Border Crossing Point (BCP), while the other 46 per cent, was collected at Otaci

BCP. Ninety-four per cent of the respondents were women, and six per cent were men. Of the 106 interviewed males, the majority (80%) were above 60 years old. The highest share of women were aged 30-39 years (31%), compared to two per cent of men within the same age group.

Figure 1: Age distribution of respondents by gender (%), n=1,800



Of the interviewed respondents, 29 per cent were between the age of 30 and 39. The average age of the total sample was 46 y.o. The male respondents had an average age of 63 years, while female respondents averaged 45 years. This trend has been consistent in previous data collection rounds and could be linked to the restrictions preventing working-age men from leaving Ukraine due to potential conscription into the army.¹

Figure 2: Average age of respondents by gender, n=1,800



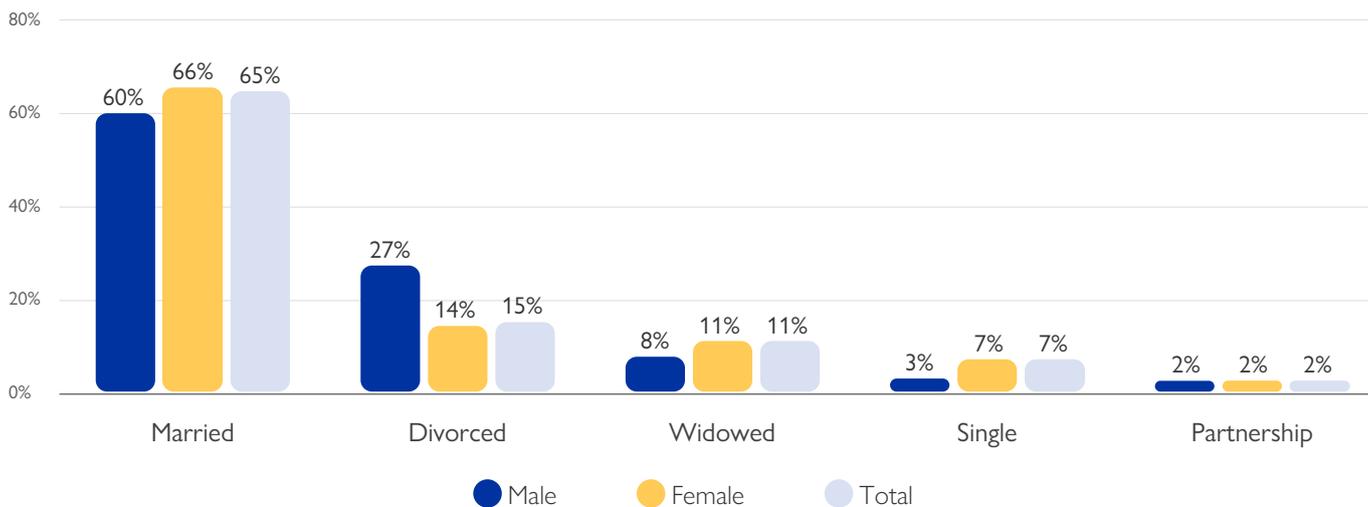
1. During the period of martial law, the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 64/2022 'On the Introduction of Martial Law in Ukraine' dated 24 February 2022 prohibits male citizens of Ukraine aged 18 to 60 from leaving the country. Source: Government of Ukraine (Kyiv, 2022). "До кого з чоловіків, громадян України віком від 18 до 60 років, не застосовується обмеження виїзду за кордон - Which men, citizens of Ukraine aged 18 to 60, are not subject to the restriction on travelling abroad", accessed 16 May 2024.

MARITAL STATUS

In terms of their marital status, 65 per cent of respondents were married, while others reported being divorced (15%), widowed (11%), single (7%), or in a partnership (2%). The proportion of married women was slightly higher than the proportion of married men (66% versus 60%). Most men who crossed back to Ukraine were over 59 years old, and 27 per cent of them reported being divorced, which was considerably higher

than the share of divorced women (14%). The proportion of widowed and single women was higher than men, with widowed women comprising 11 per cent and single ones seven per cent, compared to eight and three per cent respectively for men. An equal proportion between genders held partnership status (2%).

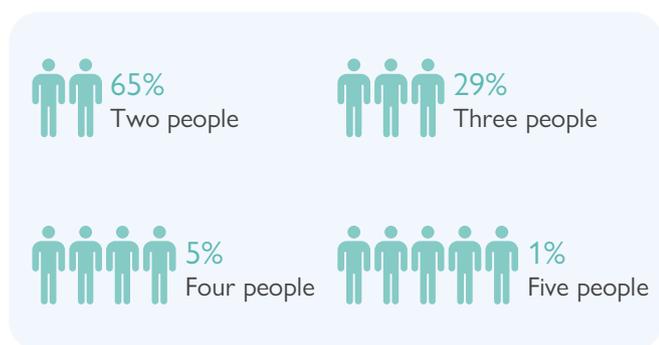
Figure 3: Marital status by gender and total (%), n=1,800



GROUP COMPOSITION

During January to March 2024, the percentage of respondents traveling alone and in a group were very similar, with the former accounting for 54 per cent of the total respondents and the latter, making up 46 per cent of the total. All the respondents that were traveling with a group (n=838) were either traveling with their immediate family or with relatives. The majority (65%) of those who reported to be traveling in a group were accompanied by one other person. Additionally, 29 per cent reported traveling with a group composed of three people, while five per cent were traveling with a four-person group, and one per cent with a five-person group. On average, the group size was 2.4 persons per group, with female respondents traveling in larger groups than males, 80 per cent of whom were traveling with one other person.

Figure 4: Group size upon crossing into Ukraine (%), n=838



Of the 838 respondents that reported to be traveling with a group, 76 per cent of them were traveling with a group that included children (0 to 17 years old) and 17 per cent were traveling with a group that had at least one older person (60 years old or more).

Figure 5. Household compositions (%), n=838

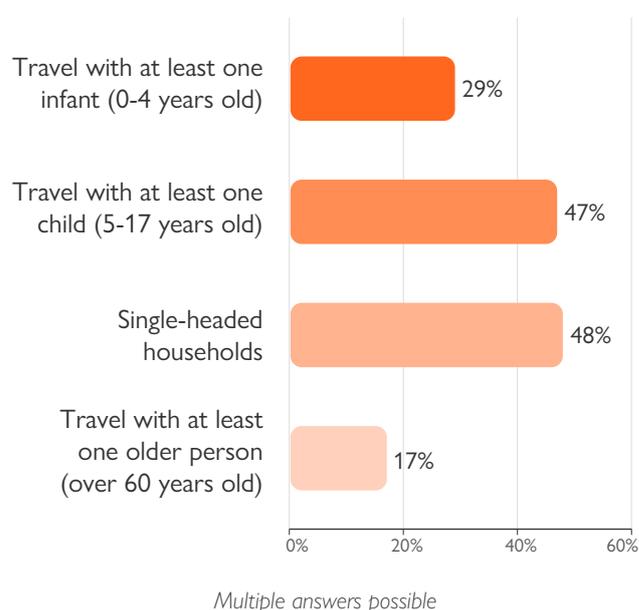
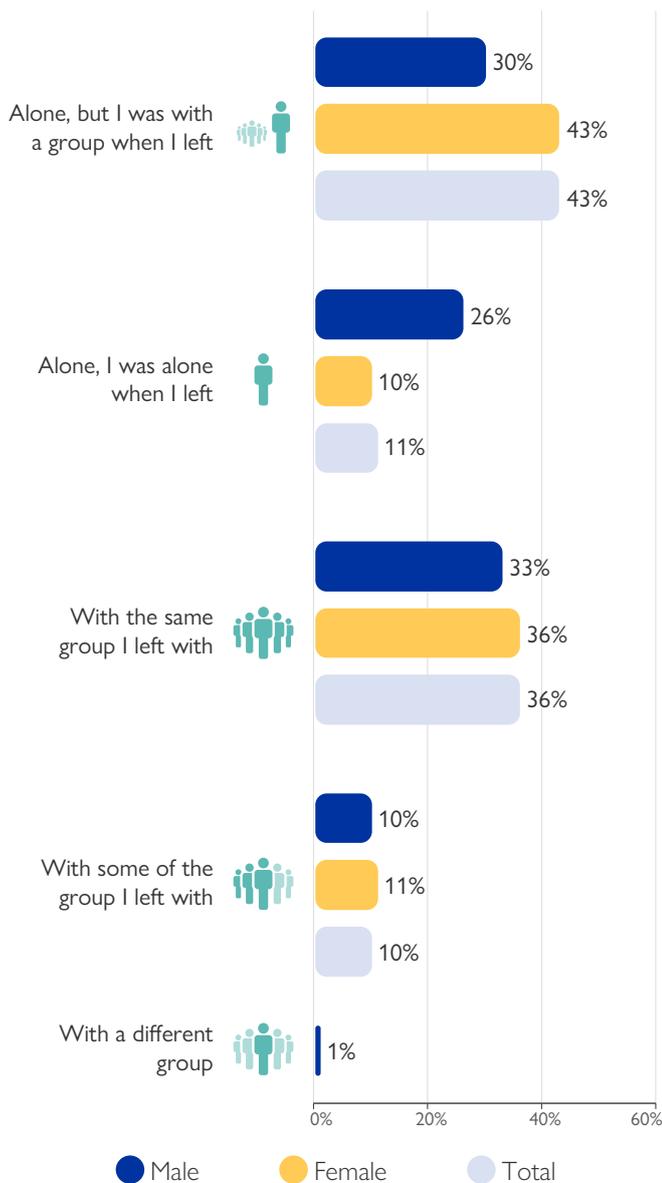


Figure 6. Group composition upon crossing into Ukraine, by gender and total (%), n=1,800

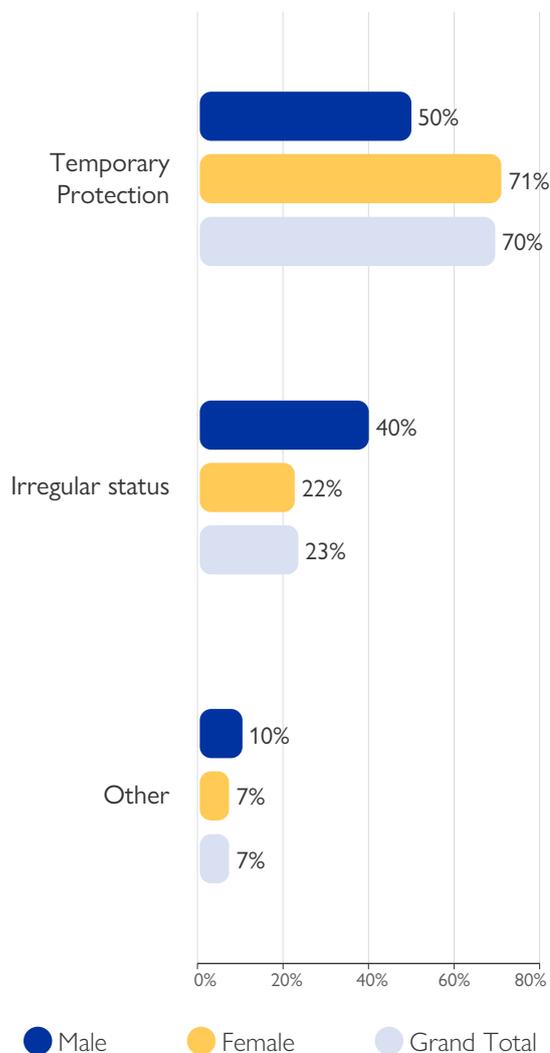


Regarding changes in group composition while crossing back, 11 per cent crossed back alone, similar to their initial departure from Ukraine. Another 36 per cent crossed back with the same group they had initially left the country with. Additionally, 43 per cent chose to travel alone, despite having been part of a group previously. The remaining 10 per cent journeyed with some members of the same group they left Ukraine with. Slightly more male respondents than female respondents were crossing back to Ukraine alone (57% versus 53%). Similarly, almost two thirds of the prospective returnees were crossing back to Ukraine alone (60%) compared to 54 per cent for among the short-term visitors.

LEGAL STATUS

On 28 February 2024, the Government of the Republic of Moldova extended the decision to grant Temporary Protection (TP) to displaced people from Ukraine for until March 2025.² The share of respondents reporting not having regular status was 23 per cent. Other respondents mentioned having temporary residence (4%), or being in the country for short-term entry, with a working visa, or with refugee status (1% each). This distribution can also be confirmed by the refugee numbers reported by the General Inspectorate for Migration (GIM). For the period of 1 March 2023 to 22 April 2024, there were 44,784 TP holders in the Republic of Moldova and 9,640 were still in waiting. Moreover, 1,803 people were in the asylum system, 7,025 had permanent or temporary residence and 2,114 Ukrainians obtained Moldovan citizenship (GIM, 2024).³

Figure 7: Legal status of respondents in the Republic of Moldova by gender and total, (%)



2. Since March 2023, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has granted Temporary Protection (TP) Status to persons displaced from Ukraine as a form of immediate protection, granting them access to essential services in the Republic of Moldova. TP has been extended until 1 March 2025. Source: General Inspectorate for Migration (Chisinau, 2024). "The temporary protection for Ukrainians on the territory of the Republic of Moldova is to be extended", accessed 15 May 2024.

3. General Inspectorate for Migration, (Chisinau, 2024). "Statistica săptămânală a Inspectoratului General pentru Migrație", accessed 16 May 2024.

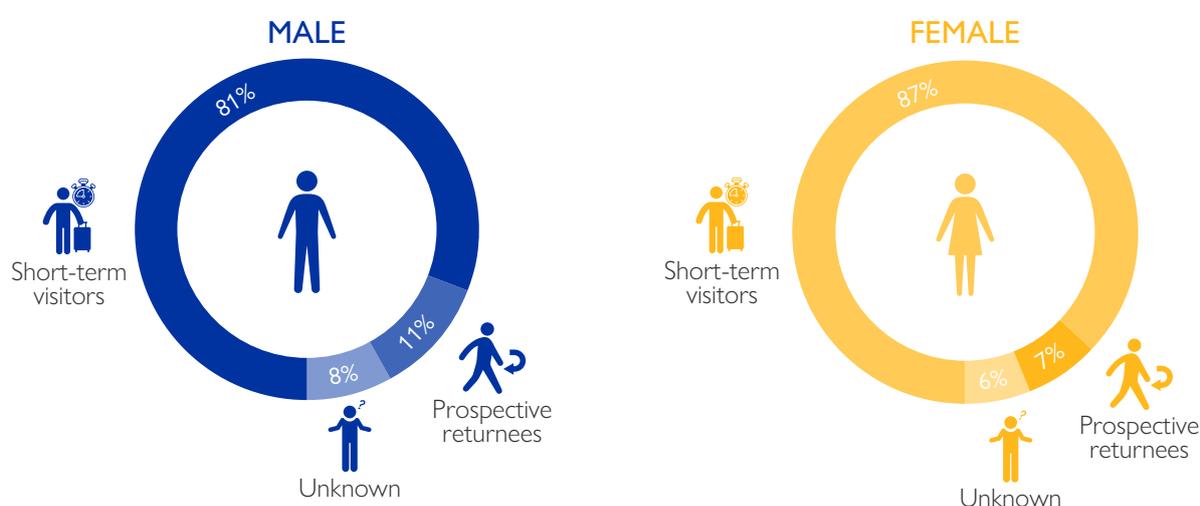
INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS TO UKRAINE

SHORT VISIT OR PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES

In the first quarter of 2024, seven per cent of Ukrainian respondents intended to stay in Ukraine (prospective returnees), while 87 per cent planned to go for only a short visit (short-term visitors). Another six per cent were unsure about the length of their visit. For the purpose of the analysis, “short-term visitors” who intended to spend between 0 to 30 days in Ukraine, while respondents planning to stay in Ukraine

for more than one month are considered as “prospective returnees”. Significantly, most of those mentioning periods longer than 30 days stated the intention to remain indefinitely in Ukraine. The share of respondents who were returning was slightly higher among men (11%) than women (7%). On the contrary, women were more likely to be crossing for a short visit than men (87% compared to 81%).

Figure 8: Intended duration of stay in Ukraine, by gender (%), n=1,800



Most respondents planned to stay at their own homes in Ukraine (79%). Fifteen per cent were planning to stay at their relatives' places, while 4 per cent intended to find private accommodations or stay with friends (4%). Short-term visitors

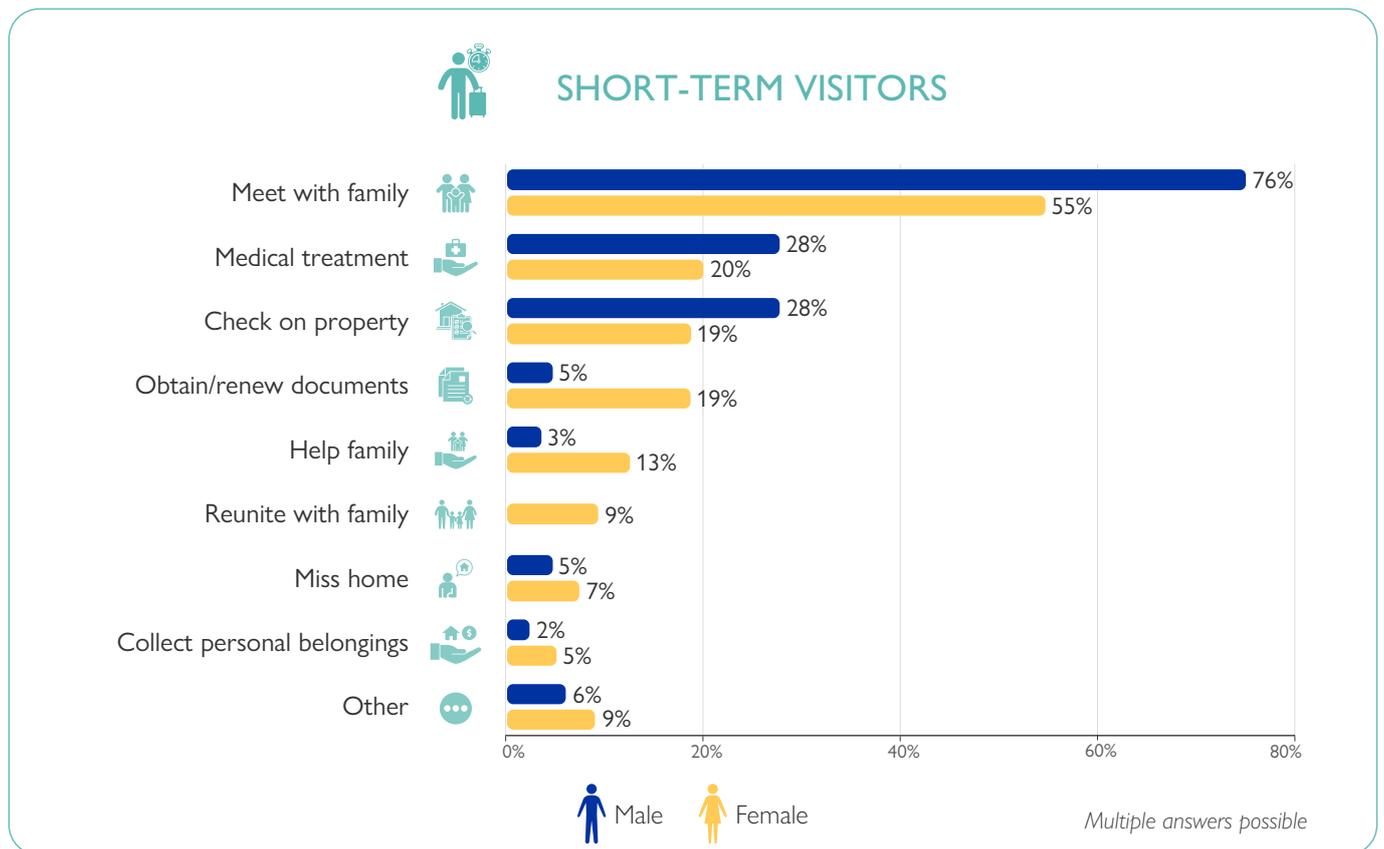
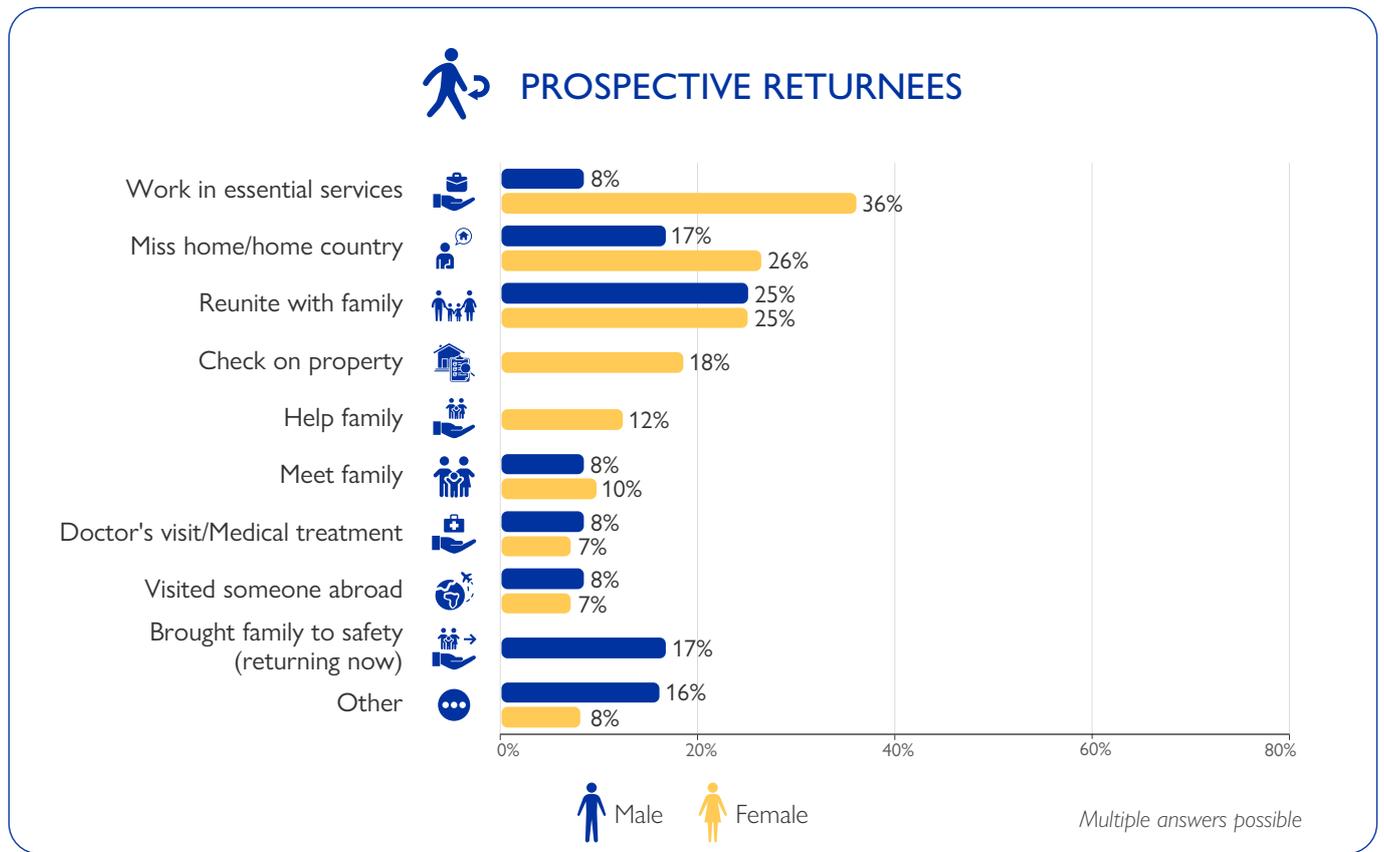
showed a higher tendency (17%) to stay with relatives compared to those intending to return, who predominantly preferred to return to their own homes or other private accommodations (98%)

REASONS

Upon crossing back, most short-term visitors were returning home to meet their families (56%), visit a doctor (21%), or check on their properties (19%). Respondents also mentioned reasons such as obtaining or renewing documents (18%), helping their families (12%), and other non-disclosed reasons (10%).

On the other hand, prospective returnees typically planned longer stays, which resulted in a slight shift in their reasoning. Majority were crossing the borders due to employment in essential services (33%), while a lower proportion, 25 per cent each, cited the longing to return home and reunite with family members. Additionally, 17 per cent were returning to check on their properties, help their family or friends (11%), and meet with them (10%).

Figure 9: Reasons for going back to Ukraine by gender and intentions of stay (%), n=1,800



TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE

The primary cause of initial displacement was the war in Ukraine, accounting for 82 per cent of cases. Economic factors were the second most common cause, contributing to 14 per cent of the displacements. Family matters and limited access to essential services such as basic education, healthcare, water, food, and housing each was a cause for only 3 per cent of

respondents. A very small fraction, less than 1 per cent, fled due to fear of targeted violence or to evade military service. The displacement affected both genders equally, with no significant difference observed between men and women. For a vast majority of prospective returnees (93%), the war was the root cause of their displacement.

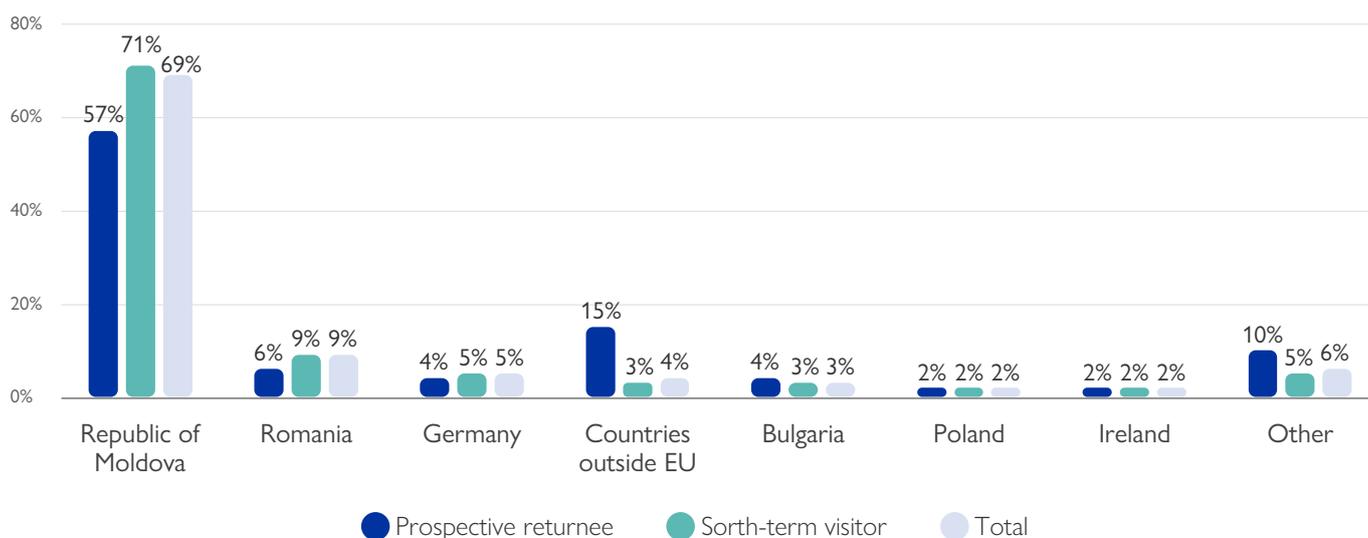
COUNTRIES OF STAY

Among the 1,800 respondents interviewed while crossing back to Ukraine, 69 per cent had been residing in the Republic of Moldova, 27 per cent stayed in a European Union (EU) country, and the remaining 4 per cent stayed in other countries.

When considering the population residing in the Republic of Moldova, a significantly higher proportion was made up of

short-term visitors, at 71 per cent, compared to prospective returnees, who constituted 57 per cent. Other common countries of stay for short-term visitors included Romania (10% females compared to 3% males), Germany (5% females and 1% males), and 12 per cent in other European Union (EU) countries. A small proportion of three per cent resided in countries outside of the EU.

Figure 10: Countries of stay, by return intention and total (%), n=1,800



DURATION OF DISPLACEMENT

Among the 1,800 respondents surveyed, 43 per cent reported being displaced in the first quarter of 2022 (January to March), while another 20 per cent were displaced in the next quarter (April to June 2022). In the months that followed, the percentage of refugees in displacement fell to less than 10 per cent. Notably, in the period between July and September 2023, the proportion of men was higher than the proportion of women (15% compared to 5%). While there were no disparities in share of short-term visitors, the majority of prospective returnees had been displaced since February – March 2022 (61%).

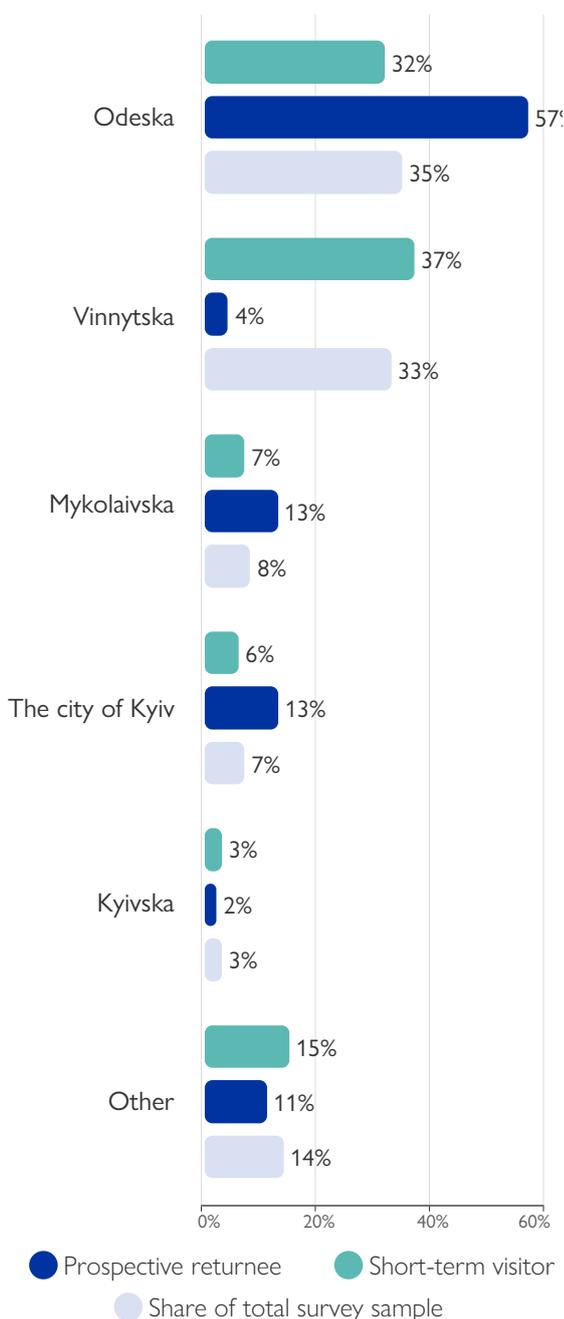
ENTRIES & EXITS

Since the start of the war in Ukraine up until March 2024, 67 per cent of respondents had crossed the borders more than two times (10% reported more than 10 times), while 24 per cent crossed twice, six per cent once, and three per cent did not know how many times they had crossed. A majority of short-term visitors had made multiple trips across the Ukrainian border. Despite a larger proportion of these visitors being female, males still accounted for a significant share (68% compared to 56%). For visitors who crossed twice, the male share was higher than that of females (37% compared to 24%). Prospective returnees also showed a high rate of multiple crossings (66%), with 18 per cent crossing three to five times. Furthermore, the majority of men who planned to return to Ukraine for an extended period had crossed the border once (67%).

OBLASTS OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

The majority of respondents came from five oblasts in Ukraine: Odeska (35%), Vinnytska (21%), Mykolaivska (9%), the city of Kyiv and Kyivska (5% each). The remaining respondents (25%) originated from various oblasts, mostly around the City of Kyiv as well as in the eastern and southern parts of Ukraine (the regions most impacted by the war). Notably, the distribution of oblasts of origin was slightly different among the prospective returnees which reported to be mostly coming from the Odeska region (57%), Mikolaivska (13%) and the city of Kyiv (9%).

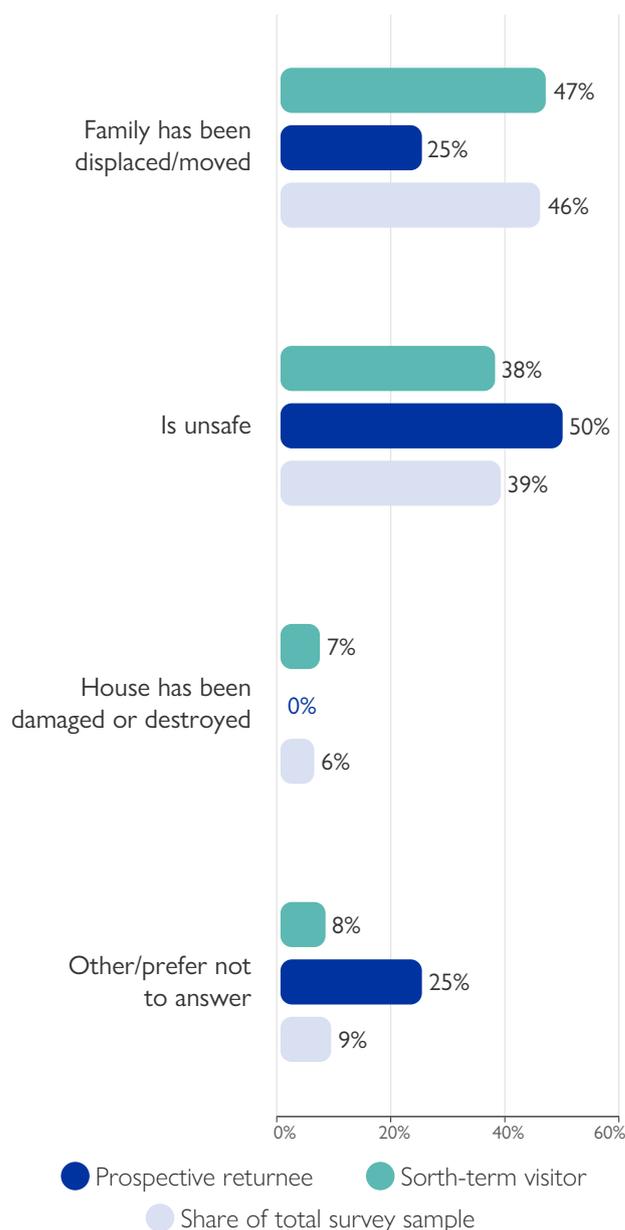
Figure 11: Oblast of origin by return intention and total (%), n=1,800



INTENDED DESTINATION

Eighty-three per cent of all respondents were planning to return to the same oblast of origin, while 17 per cent intended to go to a different oblast. Consequently, there were some variations between the oblast of origin and destination. In particular, 33 per cent of the respondents reported returning to Vinnytska, while this was reported as oblast of origin by 21 per cent of respondents. This increase could be attributed to the increase in short-term visitors travelling there (from 37% to 23%). Similarly, the share of respondents going to the city of Kyiv increased to seven per cent of the total, which could be consequence of 13 per cent of prospective returnees intending to stay in Kyiv.

Figure 12: Oblast of destination by return intention and total (%), n=1,800



MAP 2

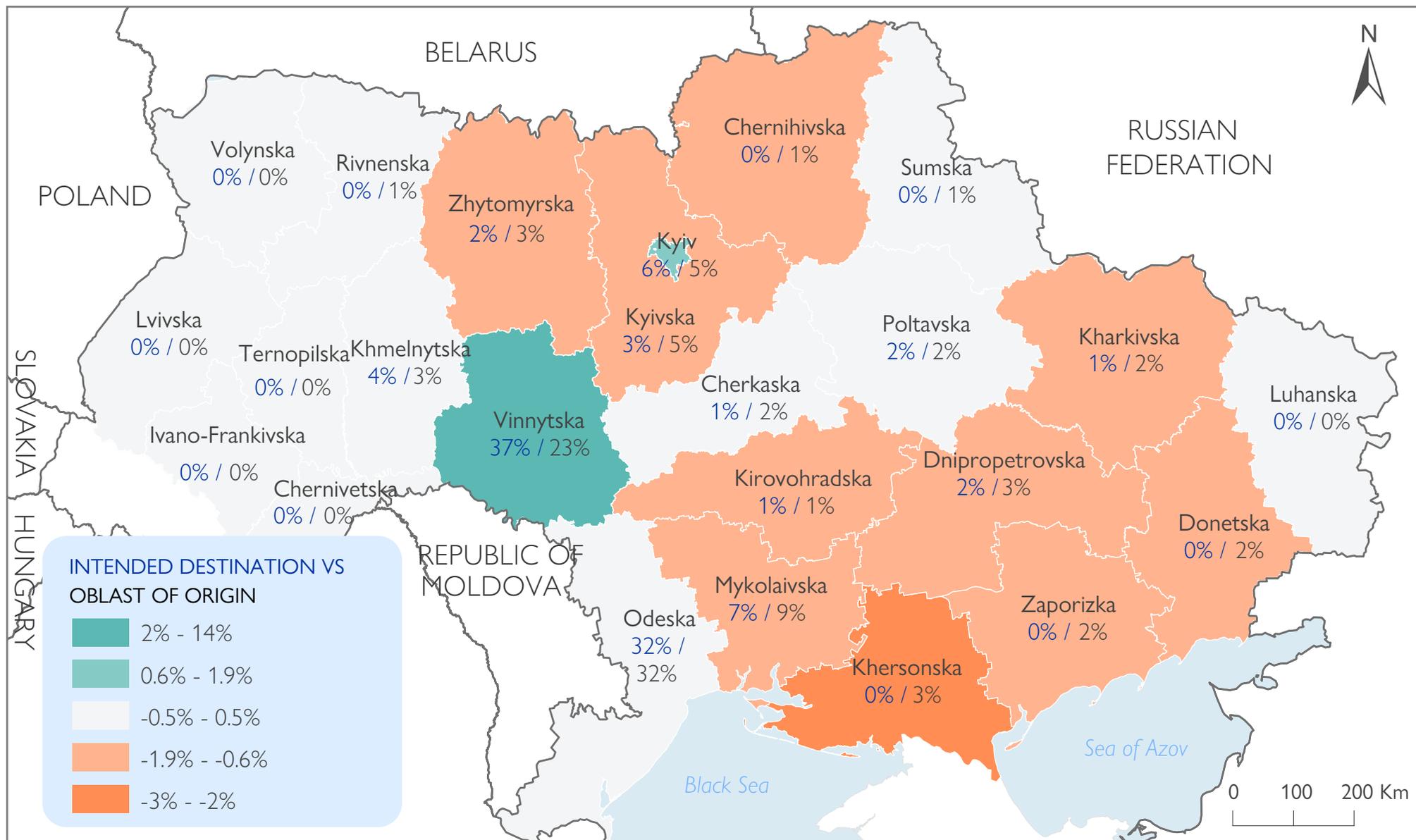
PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES: INTENDED OBLAST OF DESTINATION VERSUS OBLAST OF ORIGIN IN UKRAINE, JANUARY - MARCH 2024



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MAP 3

SHORT-TERM VISITORS: INTENDED OBLAST OF DESTINATION VERSUS OBLAST OF ORIGIN IN UKRAINE, JANUARY - MARCH 2024



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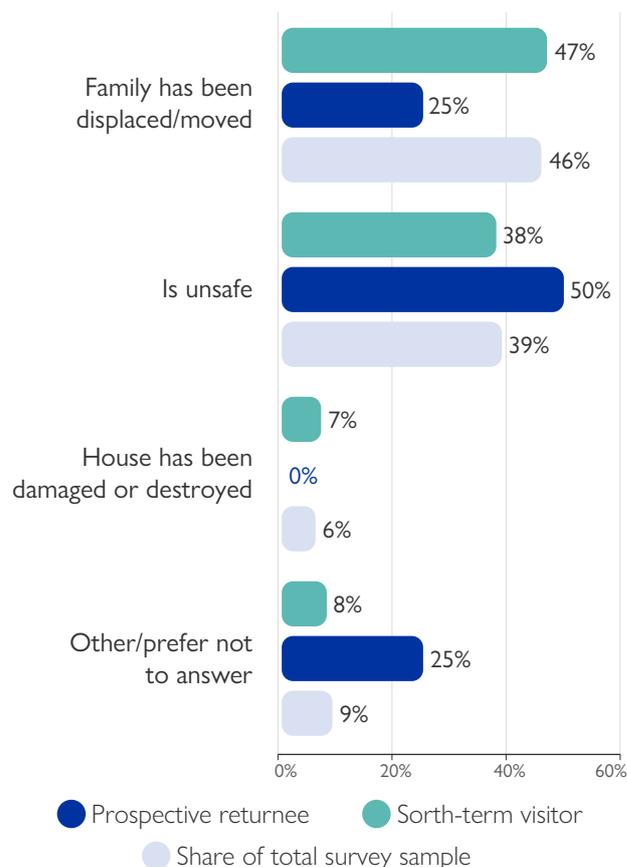
RETURNING TO A DIFFERENT OBLAST

The share of prospective returnees that intended to return to their oblast of origin reached 97 per cent, considerably more than among short-term visitors (81%). For those returning to a different oblast (n=312), the majority (73%) intended to go to Vinnytska, followed by the city of Kyiv (15%), and Odeska (5%). Others intended to go to Khmelnytska (4%), Kyivska, Poltavska and Mykolaivska (1% each). Notably, all the prospective returnees that were not returning to their oblast of origin (n=4) reported intending to stay in the City of Kyiv.

NOT RETURNING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN

The reasons for not returning to their original place varied among the respondents. The most common reason, reported by 46 per cent, was because their family had relocated or been displaced within the country. A significant 39 per cent stated that they couldn't return to their original oblast due to safety concerns. Additionally, 6 per cent couldn't return because their homes had been damaged or destroyed. A small percentage (2%) indicated that they needed to obtain documents from another region. Others (1%) mentioned that they were either meeting family or required health treatments that were not available in their original place. Notably, half of the prospective returnees (50%) reported moving to a different oblast because their original oblast was unsafe. However, 25 per cent chose not to provide an answer.

Figure 13: Reasons for not returning to place of origin (%) n=312





46%

Family displaced



39%

Safety concerns



6%

Damaged/occupied property

RETURN AS A DURABLE SOLUTION

In an effort to gain a better understanding of their expectations and how these might impact respondents' decision to return, a series of questions were posed to the respondents. These questions aimed to ascertain whether they anticipated encountering challenges in specific areas upon their return. Generally, the expectations of prospective returnees were more positive, with around 90 per cent of respondents reporting that it would be easy to access services they needed, cover their expenses, or avoid adverse security issues. Almost all prospective returnees reported not expecting difficulties in accessing basic services in Ukraine (98%), finding necessary food products (97%), securing accommodation (95%), accessing or renewing documents (94%), or participating in the political affairs of the country (91%). However, 11 per cent of prospective returnees expressed concerns about dealing with security issues caused by the war.

Conversely, more short-term visitors reported being concerned about possible difficulties they might encounter upon returning to Ukraine. One-third of them (32%) reported expecting security issues, and 11 per cent expected to have issues covering their household expenses. Overall, these expectations regarding the situation upon returning to Ukraine may be one of the factors influencing their decision.

Figure 14: Perceptions of difficulties faced upon returning in Ukraine, by return intentions and total (%), n=1,800

 PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES							
	Basic services	Food products	Cover HH expenses	Renew documents	Participate in public affairs	Adequate accommodation	Cope with security
Very difficult	1%		1%	1%	1%	2%	10%
Somewhat difficult		1%	12%		12%		1%
Neither difficult nor easy	1%	2%	13%	5%	6%	3%	2%
Somewhat easy	23%	26%	33%	17%	25%	11%	3%
Very easy	75%	71%	51%	77%	66%	84%	84%

 SHORT-TERM VISITORS							
	Basic services	Food products	Cover HH expenses	Renew documents	Participate in public affairs	Adequate accommodation	Cope with security
Very difficult			2%	1%	3%	1%	21%
Somewhat difficult	1%	4%	9%	4%	6%	2%	11%
Neither difficult nor easy	15%	15%	23%	11%	13%	8%	7%
Somewhat easy	39%	43%	29%	28%	32%	16%	15%
Very easy	45%	38%	37%	56%	46%	73%	46%

TOTAL							
	Basic services	Food products	Cover HH expenses	Renew documents	Participate in public affairs	Adequate accommodation	Cope with security
Very difficult			2%	1%	2%	2%	19%
Somewhat difficult		2%	5%	2%	3%	1%	4%
Neither difficult nor easy	6%	6%	20%	7%	9%	8%	3%
Somewhat easy	26%	30%	28%	20%	25%	13%	7%
Very easy	68%	62%	45%	70%	61%	76%	67%

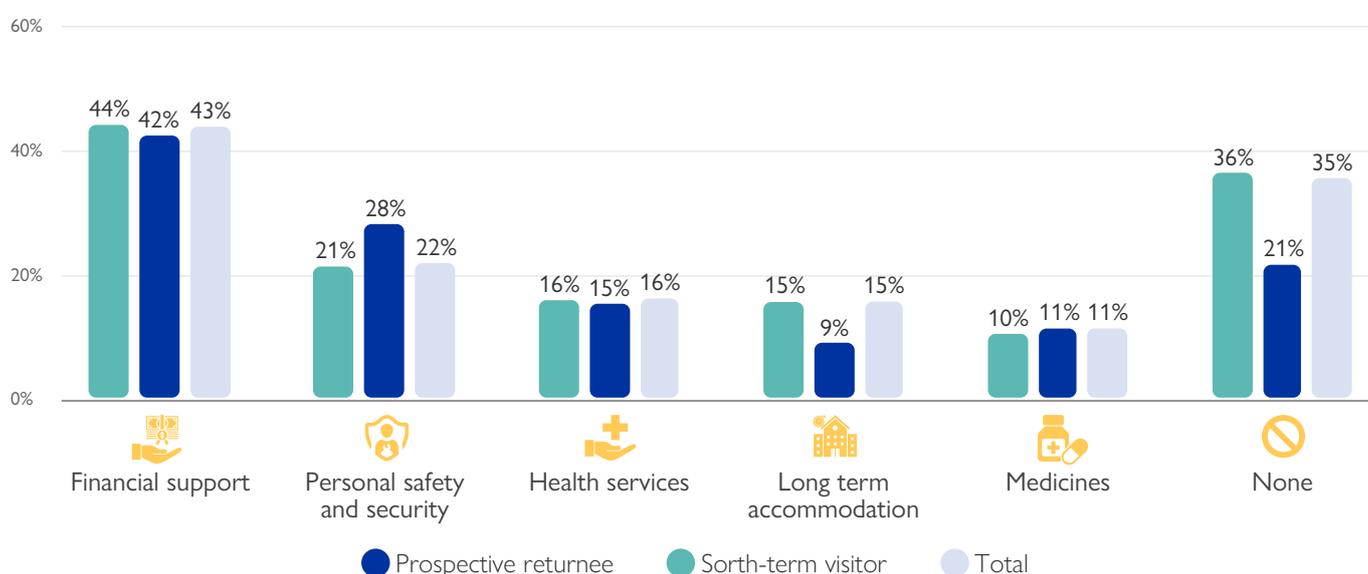
NEEDS, ASSISTANCE RECEIVED, AND CHALLENGES

More than one third of all respondents (35%) stated that they had no immediate needs at the time of the interview. The share of respondents that had no needs was higher among short-term visitors than prospective returnees (36% versus 21%). The most common needs reported by short-term visitors included financial support (44%), personal safety and security (21%), and healthcare services (31%). The most frequent needs of prospective returnees included financial support (42%), personal safety and security (28%), and healthcare services (15%).

Financial support was the most common need of both genders, with 43 per cent of women and 42 per cent of men mentioning

this as an immediate need upon crossing back. Considerably more female respondents reported the need for immediate personal safety and security than male respondents (23% versus 8%). However, the share of men reporting the need for health services (35%) and medicines (29%) was more than double that of women that expressed the same needs (respectively at 15% and 9%). This could be attributed to 80 per cent of male respondents being aged older than 60 years and considerably older than female respondents. The prevalence of health conditions tends to increase with age (WHO, 2022), potentially leading to a heightened need for regular medical care among the respondents.⁴

Figure 15: Top 5 needs upon crossing back (%), n=1,800



Multiple answers possible

ASSISTANCE RECEIVED IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

In general humanitarian assistance was received by most respondents (89%). Short-term visitors reported to have received more assistance (91%), than prospective returnees (79%). Similarly, women were slightly more likely (90%) to benefit from assistance than their male counterparts (94%). One per cent of men reported to have faced some issues with accessing the support they needed when they asked for it, none of the women reported having had such issues while in displacement. The most humanitarian assistance was provided United Nations (UN) Agencies (76%), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (29%), and IOM (25%). The share of short-term visitors that mentioned UN Agencies was more than double that mentioned by prospective returnees (80% versus 36%). Conversely, 48 per cent of prospective returnees

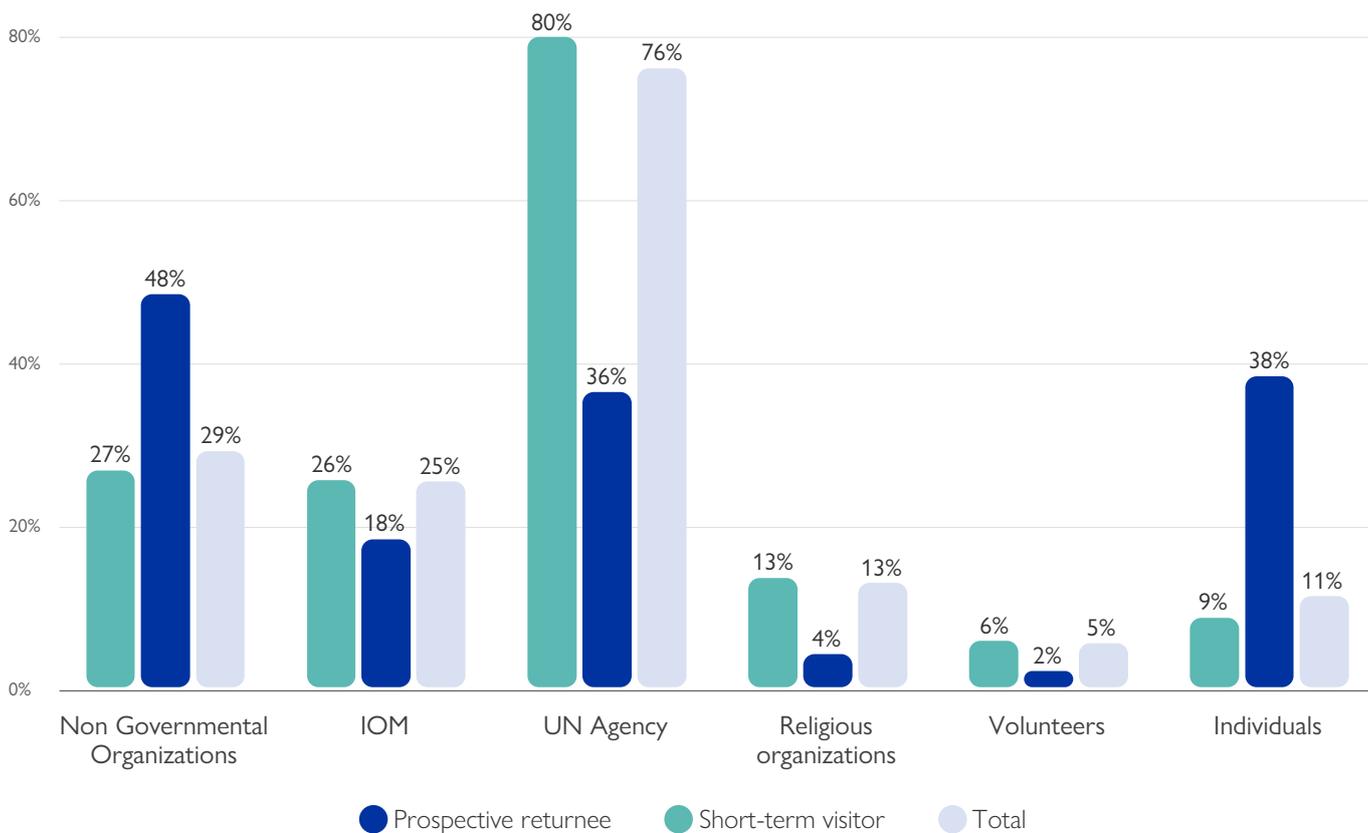
reported having received aid from NGOs while displaced, compared to 27 per cent of short-term visitors. Almost all the male respondents mentioned having accessed aid while displaced through UN Agencies (96%), while females mentioned benefitting from aid by a more various range of actors.

ASSISTANCE WHILE IN DISPLACEMENT



4. World Health Organization, (2022). "Ageing and health". <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>> Accessed 16 May 2024.

Figure 16: Provider of assistance and aid (%), n=1,608



Multiple answers possible

UNEQUAL TREATMENT

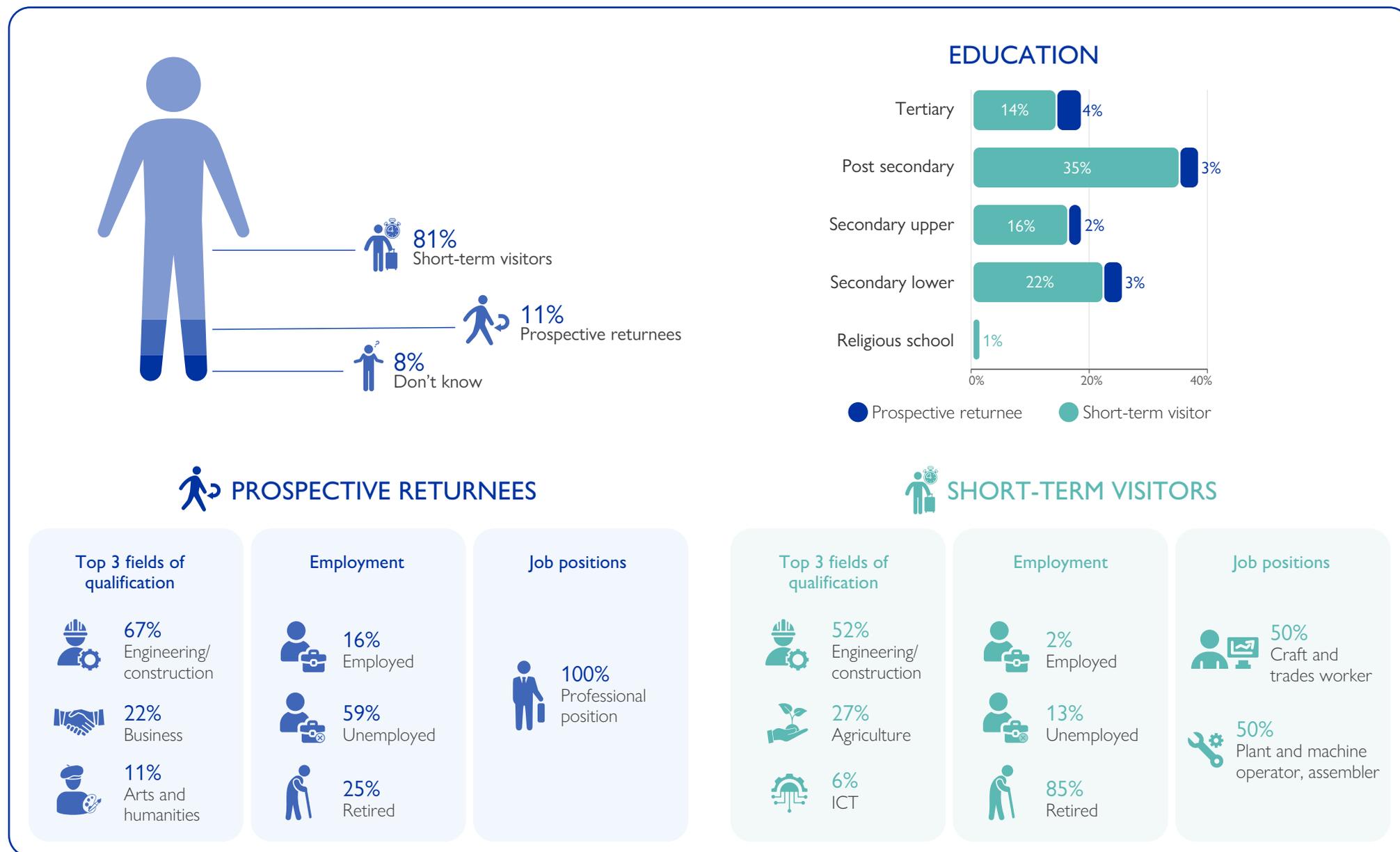
No respondent reported having experienced any type of unequal treatment while being displaced from Ukraine. Yet,

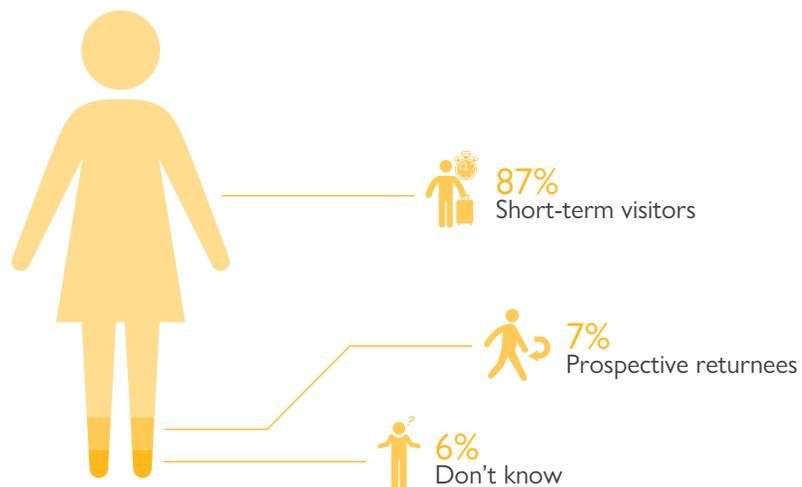
one per cent of male respondents, and two per cent of the prospective returnees preferred not to answer.



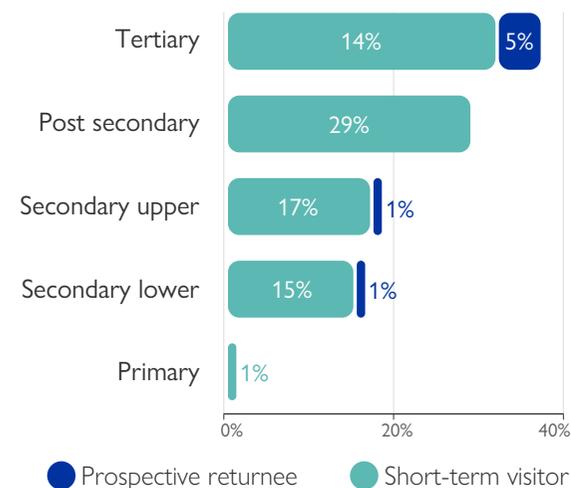
DTM enumerators supported in collecting data for an M&E exercise during the Livelihood Quick Impact Project in Otaci, Republic of Moldova. © IOM 2024

Figure 17: Education & employment by gender and return intentions, n=1,800





EDUCATION



PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES

SHORT-TERM VISITORS



* "Professionals" are those individuals involved in positions that increase the existing stock of knowledge; apply scientific or artistic concepts and theories; teach about the foregoing in a systematic manner; or engage in any combination of these activities. Competent performance in most occupations in this major group requires skills obtained from tertiary education. "Clerical support workers" are those individuals that record, organise, store, compute and retrieve information, and perform a number of clerical duties in connection with money-handling operations, travel arrangements, requests for information, and appointments. Competent performance in most occupations in this major group requires skills obtained from post post secondary and upper secondary education. Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), (Geneva, 2019). "The International Standard Classification of Occupations- ISCO-08"; accessed 17 May 2024.

METHODOLOGY

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.

Since April 2022, DTM has been surveying people who are residing in the 11 countries included in the Regional Refugee Response Plan for Ukraine. The aim of the survey is to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions, and needs. The survey is deployed in 6 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Belarus, Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia, and other 5 European Union's countries particularly impacted by the arrivals of refugees from Ukraine, including Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

In the Republic of Moldova, face-to-face surveys were conducted by 9 trained enumerators with adult refugees from

Ukraine (18+ years old). Surveys were collected in various border crossing points in the Regions of Stefan Voda (56%) and Ocnita (44%). Respondents were approached in a simple random sample by enumerators at selected border crossing point areas, both persons entering/exiting by car, by bus, by foot and by train were interviewed.

The survey is anonymous and voluntary, administered only if consent from the respondent was given. The respondent could stop the survey at any time. In the Republic of Moldova, the questionnaire is available in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Romanian, and the preferred language is determined by the interviewee. Only fully completed surveys were considered for this report. Prior to the start of the survey, all enumerators were trained by IOM on DTM standards, the use of Kobo application, IOM approach to migrants' protection and assistance, the ethics of data collection and the provision of information and referral mechanism in place.



ABOUT THE SURVEY

Aim

To improve the understanding of the profiles of Ukrainian refugees residing or transiting through the Republic of Moldova, including their displacement patterns, intentions, and needs.

Target Population

The present analysis focuses on Ukrainian nationals who are crossing back to Ukraine either for the short-term or the long-term directly from the Republic of Moldova or transiting the Republic of Moldova.

Location and execution

Face-to-face surveys were conducted by 4 trained enumerators stationed at selected border crossing points in the North and South of the Republic of Moldova. Surveys were conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Romanian using the KoBo application.

Data collection period:

In the Republic of Moldova data was collected between 15 January and 30 March 2024.

LIMITATIONS

The sampling framework was not based on verified figures of refugees from Ukraine entering through all land border points or staying in the various regions where the surveys are conducted, due to the lack of baseline information.

The geographic spread of enumerators deployed captures a wide range of locations. Whilst the overall results cannot be deemed as representative, the internal consistency of data collection in each country and at the regional level suggests that the current sampling framework produces findings of practical value.

While every attempt was made to capture all types of locations, the operational reality of fieldwork was confronted with different levels of accessibility of BCPs and other transit and stay locations, including the different availability of possible target individuals to comfortably spend 10-20 minutes responding to the questionnaire depending on a mix of personal conditions. Other factors more related to the conditions at a specific location and period, such as organizational changes in the entry and transit areas from national authorities, or weather conditions, also play a role.

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DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the main displacement patterns of refugees of any nationality fleeing from Ukraine because of the war. It captures the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended destinations and prospects in the country of displacement; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several IOM's DTM tools were deployed in countries neighbouring Ukraine and in other countries particularly impacted by the new arrivals of refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult:

<https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>