

# REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

## UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE

APRIL - JUNE 2024



**IOM**  
UN MIGRATION

GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE  
DISPLACEMENT  
TRACKING MATRIX

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## PUBLISHER

International Organization for Migration  
Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia  
Dampfschiffstrasse 4/10-11, 1030, Vienna, Austria  
+43 1 581 22 22  
Website: <https://rovienna.iom.int/>  
Contact: [roviennadataresearch-newsletter@iom.int](mailto:roviennadataresearch-newsletter@iom.int)

International Organization for Migration  
Country Office in the Republic of Moldova  
Le Roi Business Center, Strada Sfatul Tarii 29, 9th floor,  
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova  
+373 (6) 800 33 11  
Website: <https://moldova.iom.int/>  
Contact: [IOMMoldovaDTM@iom.int](mailto:IOMMoldovaDTM@iom.int)

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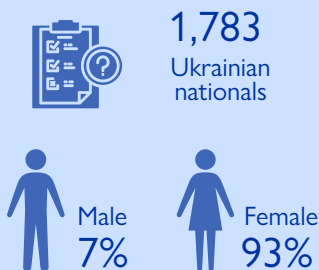
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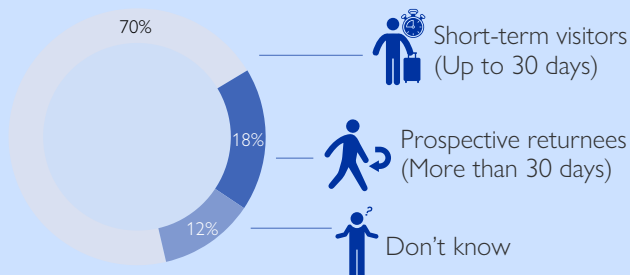
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# KEY FINDINGS

## Demographics



## Intentions



## Needs



## Countries of stay



Oblast of origin 86% Different oblast 14%



## In displacement



52% displaced in 2022

24% displaced in 2023

24% displaced between January and June 2024

## Assistance



12% of prospective returnees received assistance



92% of short-term visitors received assistance

## Entries & Exits

26% crossed back regularly since 2022

68% of perspective returnees crossed 1 or 2 times



12% Long term accommodation

## Group composition

Average HH size: 2.5



22% of women were travelling alone with children



66% With one child



30% 2 children



4% 3+ children

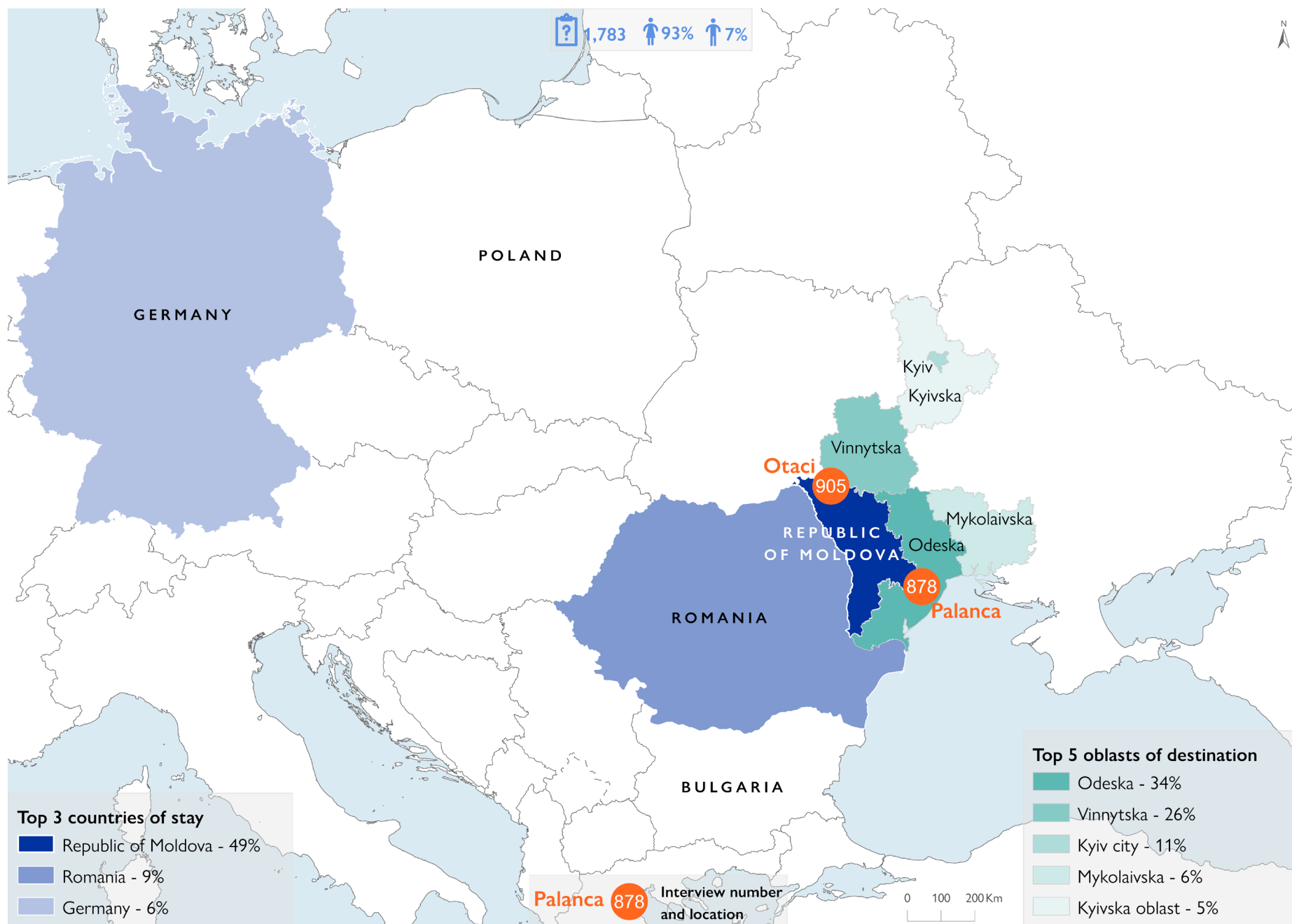


38% No needs

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, APRIL - JUNE 2024



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

## 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". It should also be noted that results may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding or multi-select questions.

A total of 1,783 surveys were collected between April and June 2024.

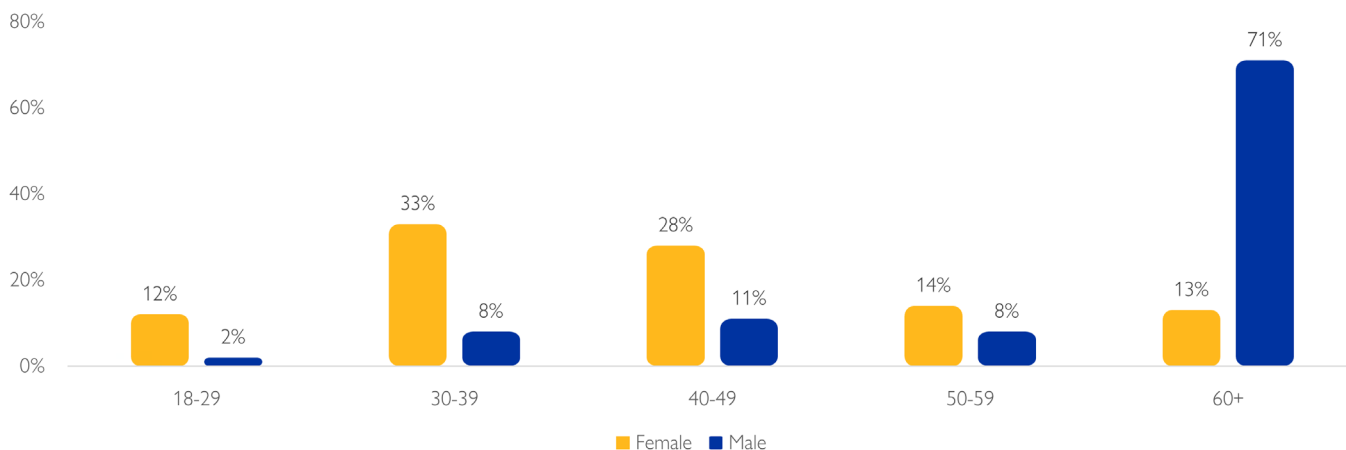
## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### GENDER AND AGE

A total of 1,783 individuals were interviewed between 1 April and 22 June 2024 at two main border crossing points between the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. More than half of the data (51%) was collected at Otaci Border Control Point (BCP), while the other 49 per cent was collected at Palanca

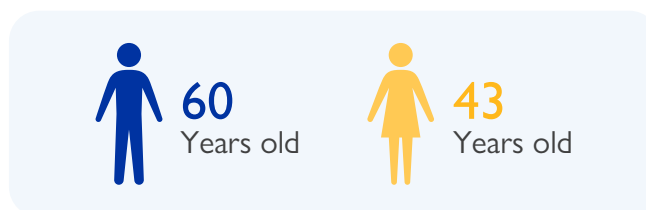
BCP. Ninety-three per cent of respondents were women and seven per cent were men. The highest share of men crossing the borders were those above 60 years old (71%), while for women the highest share was in the age category 30 and 39 years old (33%).

Figure 1: Age distribution by gender (%), n=1,783



Of the respondents interviewed, 31 per cent were between the age of 30 and 39. The average age of the total sample was 44 years old. The male respondents had an average age of 60 years, while female respondents had an average age of 43 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.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2: Average age by gender, n=1,783



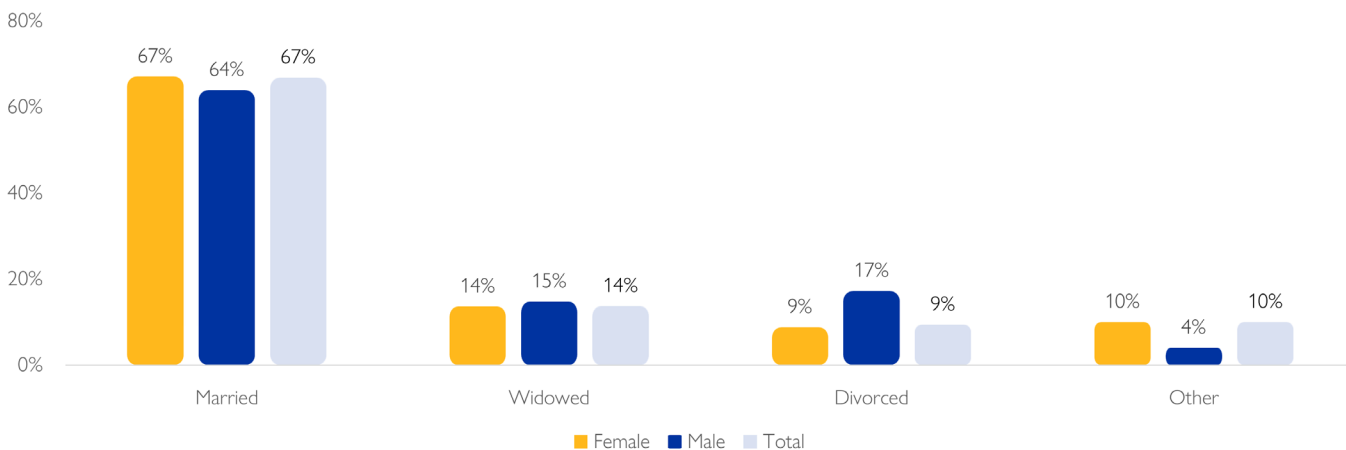
1. During the period of martial law, the Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 64/2022 'On the Introduction of Martial Law in Ukraine' dated 24 February 2022 prohibits male citizens of Ukraine aged 18 to 60 from leaving the country. Source: Government of Ukraine (Kyiv, 2022). "До кого з чоловіків, громадян 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 19 July 2024.

## MARITAL STATUS

In terms of their marital status, 67 per cent of respondents were married, while others reported being widowed (14%), divorced (9%), single (7%), or in a partnership (3%). The proportion of married women was slightly higher than the proportion of married men (67% versus 64%). Most men who crossed back to Ukraine were over 60 years old, and 16 per

cent of them reported being divorced, which was considerably higher than the share of divorced women (6%). The proportion of widowed and single women (21%) was higher than the proportion of men (15%). An equal proportion between genders held partnership status (3%) and one per cent of men preferred not to answer.

Figure 3: Marital status by gender and total (%), n=1,783



## GROUP COMPOSITION

During April to June 2024, the percentage of respondents travelling 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. Most of the respondents that were travelling with a group (n=810) were with their immediate family or relatives and with friends or colleagues. Sixty per cent of groups were formed by two persons, followed by 30 per cent made up of groups of three, eight per cent in groups of four and two per cent in groups of five. Among the female respondents, 22 per cent (n=369) were single women travelling with only children in their group. Sixty-six per cent of them were travelling with one child, 30 per cent with two children, four per cent were travelling with three or more children.

Of the 820 respondents that reported to be travelling with a group, 67 per cent of them were with a group that included children (0 to 17 years old), and 28 per cent were with a group that had at least one older person (60 years old or more).

Figure 4. Single women travelling with children (%), n=369

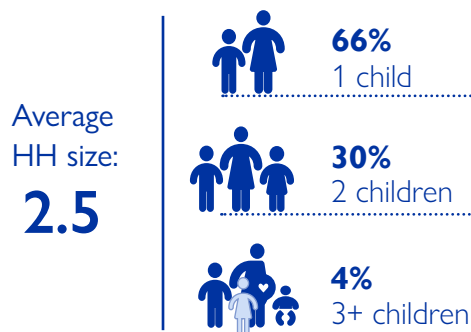
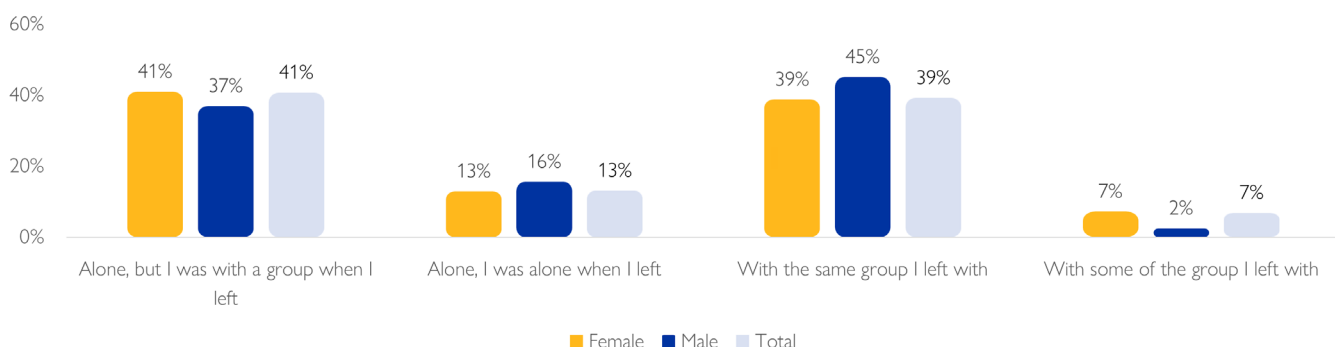


Figure 5: Group composition upon crossing into Ukraine, by gender and total (%), n=1,783



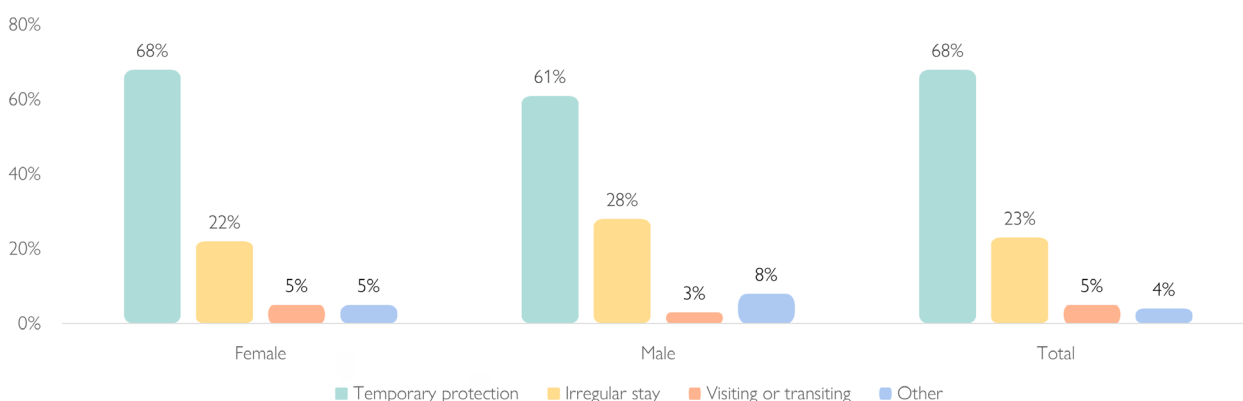
## LEGAL STATUS

The share of respondents without regular status was 23 per cent. Other respondents were only visiting or transiting the country for vacation (5%), had temporary residence (3%), or had a work or student visa (2%). During this period, 68 per cent of respondents reported having Temporary Protection (TP).<sup>2</sup> This is higher than the proportion of TP holders reported among Ukrainians residing in the Republic of Moldova as of 15 July 2024, which was estimated to be 43 per cent.<sup>3</sup>



**68%** of respondents reported having Temporary Protection (TP) status in the Republic of Moldova

Figure 6: Legal status by gender and total (%), n=1,783



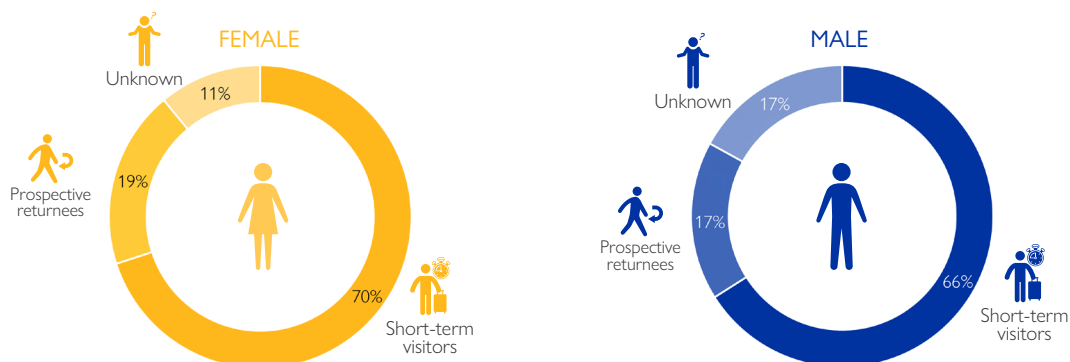
## INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS TO UKRAINE

### SHORT VISIT OR PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES

In the second quarter of 2024, 18 per cent of Ukrainian respondents intended to stay in Ukraine (prospective returnees), while 70 per cent planned to go for only a short visit (short-term visitors). Another 12 per cent were unsure about the length of their visit. For the purpose of the analysis, “short-term visitors” are persons 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 women (19%) than men (17%). Similarly, women were more likely to be crossing for a short visit than men (70% compared to 66%).

Figure 7: Intended duration of stay in Ukraine, by gender (%), n=1,783



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. 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 19 July 2024.  
 3. General Inspectorate for Migration, (Chisinau, 2024). “Statistica săptămânală a Inspectoratului General pentru Migrație”, accessed 19 July 2024.



A high number of respondents planned to stay in their own homes in Ukraine (86%). Ten per cent were planning to stay at their relatives' accommodation, while 4 per cent intended to find private accommodation or stay with friends (4%). Short-term visitors

showed a higher tendency (12%) to plan to stay with relatives compared to prospective returnees (1%). Prospective returnees 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 (61%), check on their properties (26%), or obtain or renew documents (18%). Respondents also mentioned reasons such as visiting a doctor (14%), helping their families (10%), or friends (10%).

Prospective returnees however, were crossing the borders to reunite with family members (53%) or to work in Ukraine (47%) as they planned longer stays. Additionally, one-third

(32%) mentioned coming back after having visited someone abroad.

As illustrated in Figure 8, the reasons for returning to Ukraine differed between female and male respondents. Differences were notable among prospective returnees of different genders, with women mainly mentioning reasons such as reuniting with family members (55%) or to work in Ukraine (48%). Conversely the most popular reason among men prospective returnees was missing their home and home country (33%).

Figure 8: Reasons for going back to Ukraine by gender and intentions of stay (%), n=1,569



## TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE

The primary cause of initial displacement was the war in Ukraine, accounting for 83 per cent of cases. Economic factors were the second most common cause, contributing to 27 per cent of the displacements. Limited access to essential services such as basic education, healthcare, water, food, and housing each accounted for only one per cent of respondents. For a vast majority of prospective returnees (99%), the war was the root cause of

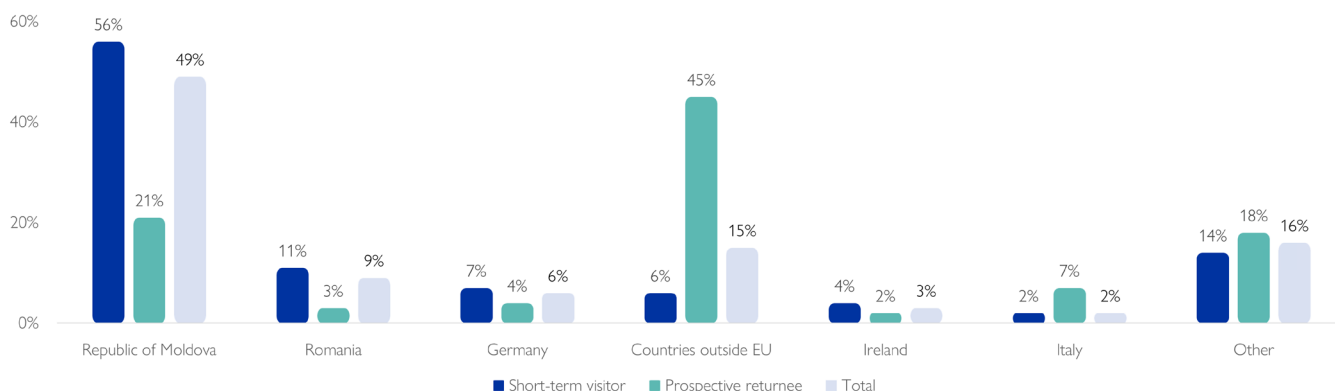
their displacement, followed by economic reasons (36%). Most of the prospective returnees (78%) however reported having left Ukraine for a short visit abroad. While the main reason for displacement was the war for both men and women (84% and 82% respectively), more than half of male respondents also reported having left for economic reasons (53%), double the proportion of women (25%).

## COUNTRIES OF STAY

Among the 1,783 respondents interviewed while crossing back to Ukraine, 49 per cent had been residing in the Republic of Moldova, 36 per cent stayed in a European Union (EU) member country, and the remaining 15 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 56 per cent, compared to prospective returnees, who constituted 21 per cent. Conversely, almost half (45%) of the prospective returnees reported to have stayed in countries outside the EU, considerably more than the short-term visitors (6%).

Figure 9: Countries of stay, by return intention and total (%), n=1,783



## DURATION OF DISPLACEMENT

Among the 1,783 respondents surveyed, the majority (52%) were displaced in 2022: 30 per cent reported being displaced in the first quarter of 2022 (January to March), while another 10 per cent were displaced in the next quarter (April to June 2022). In the months that followed, the percentage of respondents who were displaced in this period fell to six per cent per quarter. The number of respondents that reported being displaced during the year 2023 was 24 per cent. The same number reported being displaced in the first half of 2024. This might be attributed to a series of factors, including a spike in hostilities in Ukraine in the first months of 2024.<sup>4</sup> In particular, the vast majority of prospective returnees (84%) had been displaced in the first half of 2024.

## ENTRIES & EXITS

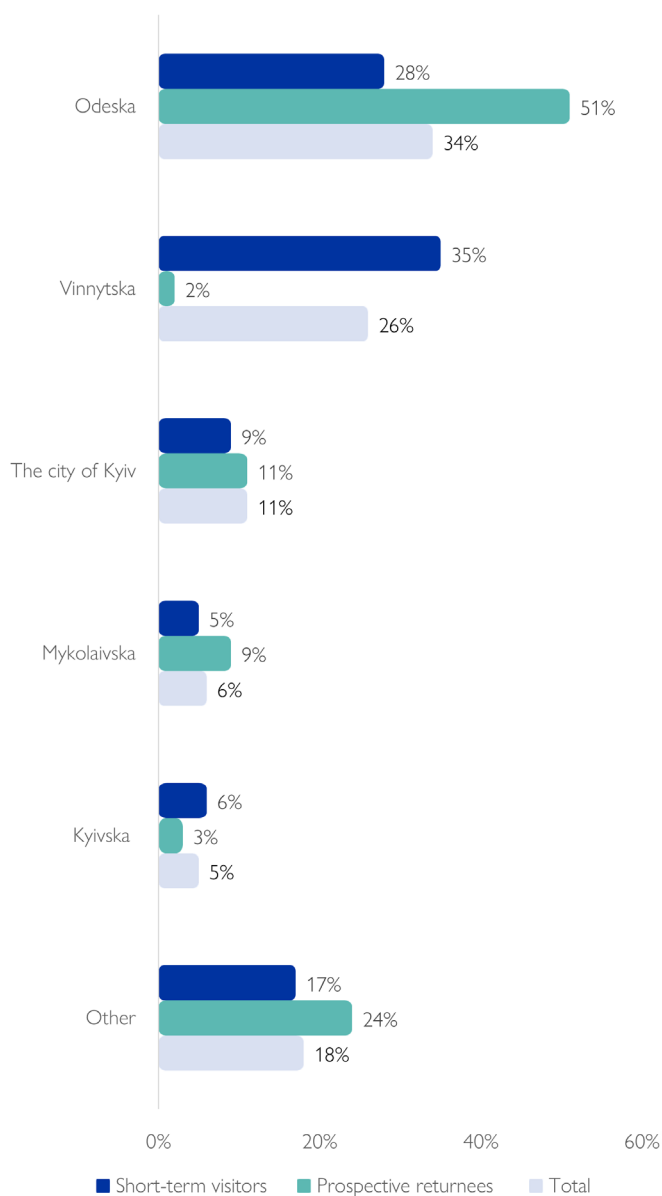
Since the start of the war in Ukraine until June 2024, 72 per cent of respondents had crossed the border more than two times. More than one in four respondents (26%) reported having regularly crossed the border to Ukraine. Ninety-nine per cent of the participants that reported regularly visiting Ukraine (n=467) reported to be residing in the Republic of Moldova and were mostly returning to the Vinnytska oblast (63%). A majority of short-term visitors had made multiple trips across the Ukrainian border, with 37 per cent of them reporting to have regularly returned to Ukraine, and 18 per cent having visited it five times or more. Conversely, prospective returnees showed a low rate of multiple crossings, and the majority (68%) had crossed the border once (37%) or twice (31%) since their displacement.

4. United Nation Security Council - Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, (2024). "Escalating Attacks on Ukraine's Civilian, Energy Infrastructure Making Humanitarian Aid Delivery Even More Dangerous, Relief Chief Tells Security Council". Accessed 16 July 2024.

## OBLASTS OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

The majority of respondents came from five oblasts in Ukraine: Odeska (34%), Vinnytska (16%), the city of Kyiv (9%), Mykolaivska (7%), and Kyivska (6%). The remaining respondents (28%) 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). The distribution of oblasts of origin was slightly different among the prospective returnees than the whole sample, with more respondents originating from the Odeska region (51%), the city of Kyiv (11%) and Mikolaivska (9%).

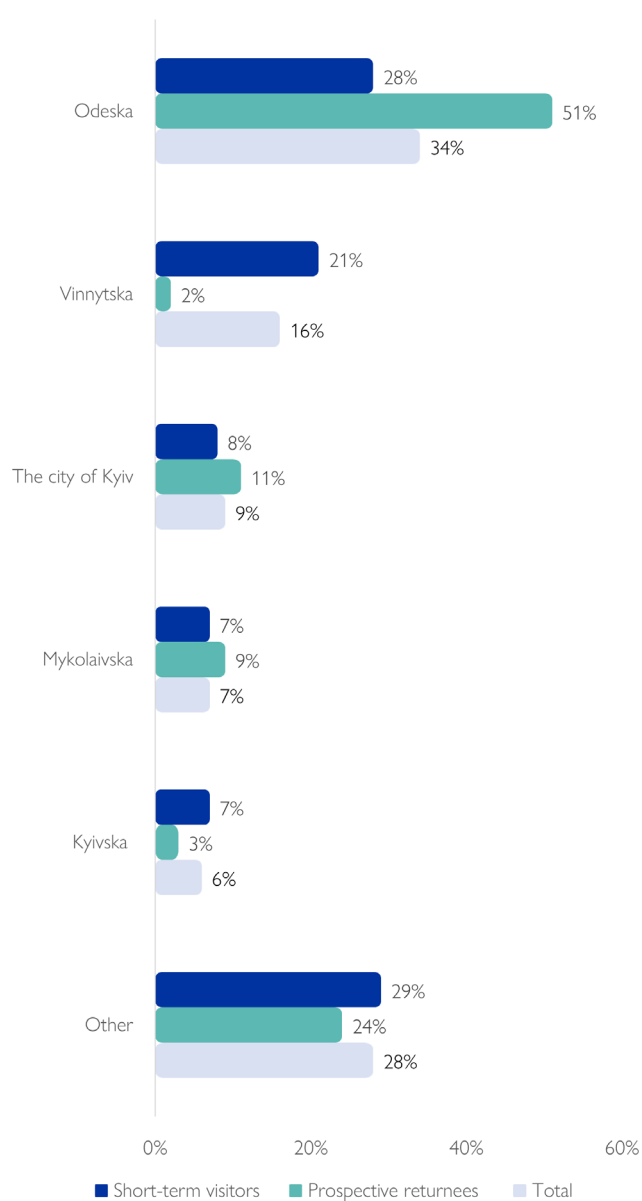
**Figure 10:** Oblast of origin by return intention and total (%), n=1,783



## 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, 26 per cent of the respondents reported returning to Vinnytska, while this was reported as an oblast of origin by 16 per cent of respondents. This increase could be attributed to the increase in short-term visitors travelling there (from 35% to 21%).

**Figure 11:** Oblast of destination by return intention and total (%), n=1,783



## MAP 2

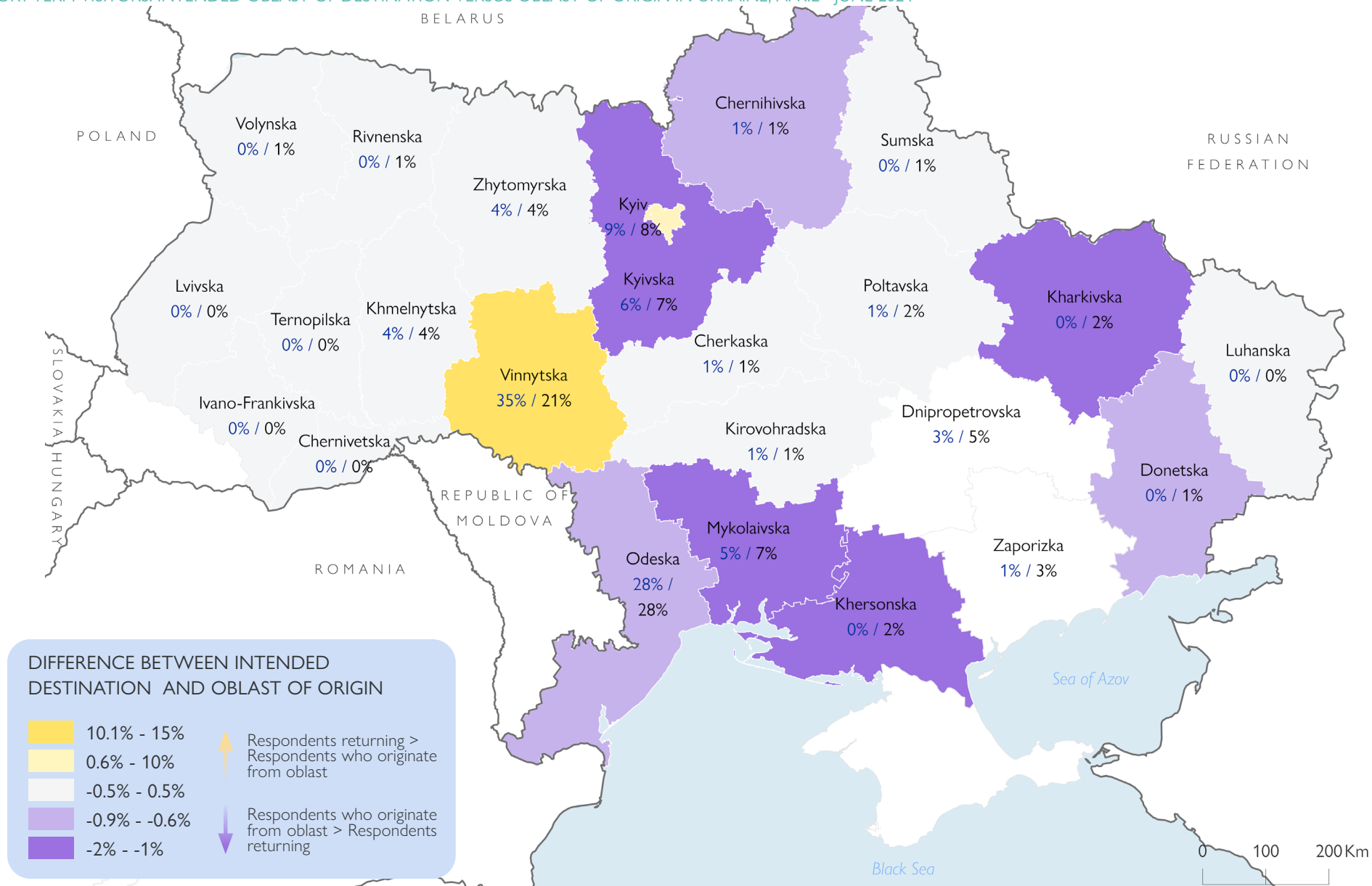
PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES: INTENDED OBLAST OF DESTINATION VERSUS OBLAST OF ORIGIN IN UKRAINE, APRIL - JUNE 2024



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### MAP 3

SHORT-TERM VISITORS: INTENDED OBLAST OF DESTINATION VERSUS OBLAST OF ORIGIN IN UKRAINE, APRIL - JUNE 2024

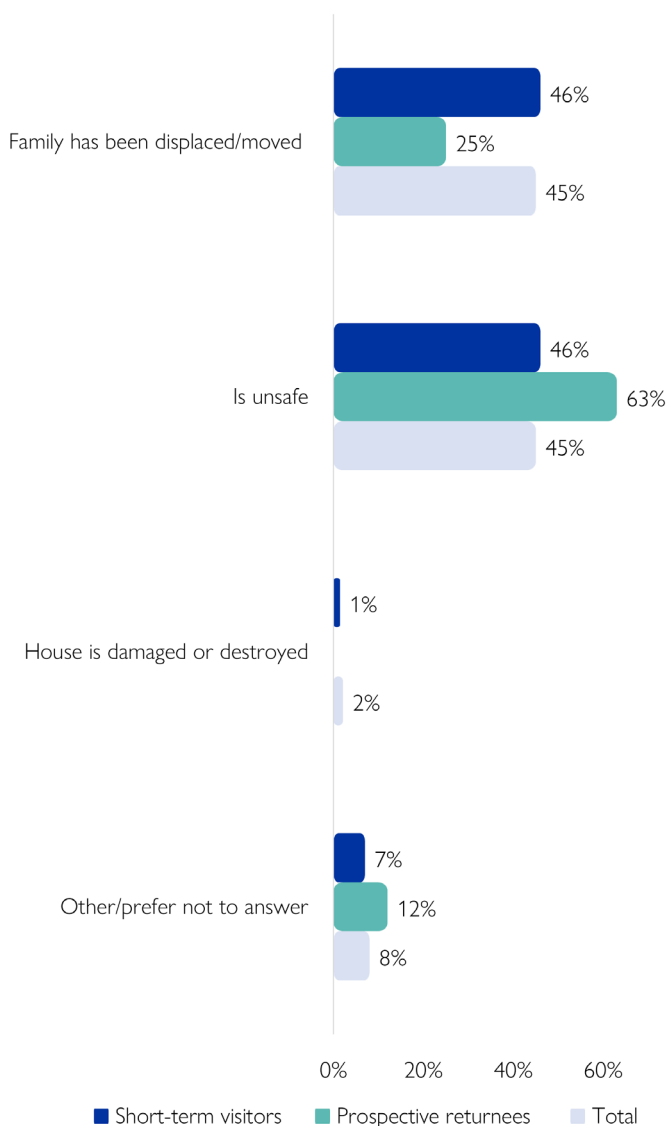


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## NOT RETURNING TO PLACE OF ORIGIN

The reasons for not returning to their original place varied among respondents. The two most common reasons, reported by 45 per cent each, were because their family had relocated or been displaced within the country or because their original oblast was unsafe. Additionally, 2 per cent could not return because their homes had been damaged or destroyed. A small percentage (1%) mentioned that they required health services that were unavailable in their original place. It was noted that more than half of the prospective returnees (63%) reported moving to a different oblast because their original oblast was unsafe or because their family was displaced there (25%).

**Figure 12:** Reasons for not returning to place of origin (%) n=246



- 45%** Family displaced
- 45%** Safety concerns
- 2%** 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 aimed at ascertaining whether they anticipated encountering any challenges were posed to the respondents. Generally, the expectations of prospective returnees were more positive than those of short-term visitors.


Almost all prospective returnees reported not expecting difficulties in accessing basic services in Ukraine (79%), finding necessary food products (100%), securing accommodation (99%), cover household expenses (98%), accessing or renewing documents (100%), or participating in the political affairs of the country (98%).

Conversely, more short-term visitors reported being concerned about possible difficulties they might encounter upon returning to Ukraine. Eight per cent reported expecting security issues, and four 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 decisions.

**Figure 13:** Perceptions of difficulties faced upon returning in Ukraine, by return intentions and total (%), n=1,783

 <b>PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES</b>							
	Basic services	Food products	Cover HH expenses	Renew documents	Participate in public affairs	Adequate accommodation	Cope with security
Very difficult	1%						1%
Somewhat difficult	4%						
Neither difficult nor easy	16%		2%		2%	1%	1%
Somewhat easy	27%	8%	17%	3%	23%	3%	81%
Very easy	52%	92%	81%	97%	75%	96%	17%

 <b>SHORT-TERM VISITORS</b>							
	Basic services	Food products	Cover HH expenses	Renew documents	Participate in public affairs	Adequate accommodation	Cope with security
Very difficult	4%	4%	4%				4%
Somewhat difficult					4%		4%
Neither difficult nor easy	4%		7%		4%	4%	12%
Somewhat easy	22%	33%	33%	23%	42%	19%	19%
Very easy	70%	63%	56%	77%	50%	77%	61%

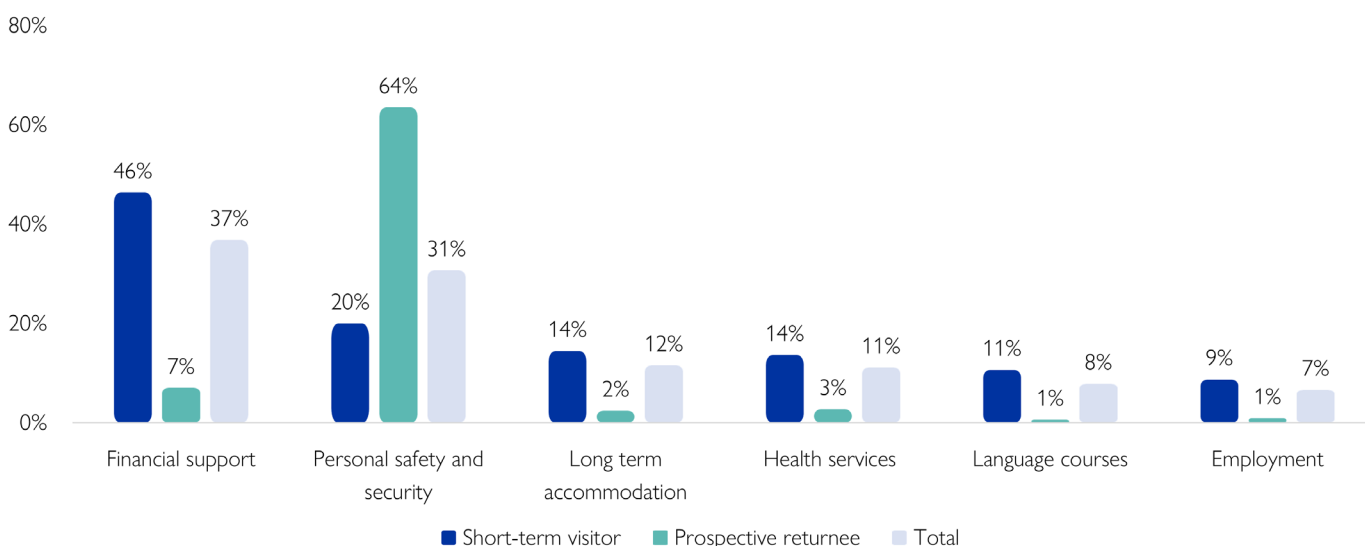
<b>TOTAL</b>							
	Basic services	Food products	Cover HH expenses	Renew documents	Participate in public affairs	Adequate accommodation	Cope with security
Very difficult	1%						2%
Somewhat difficult	3%						1%
Neither difficult nor easy	13%	1%	4%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Somewhat easy	28%	12%	24%	7%	26%	7%	72%
Very easy	55%	87%	72%	92%	72%	92%	23%

## NEEDS, ASSISTANCE RECEIVED, AND CHALLENGES

More than one third of all respondents (38%) 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 (41% versus 30%). The most common needs reported by short-term visitors included financial support (46%), personal safety and security (20%), long term accommodation and healthcare services (14% each). The most frequent needs of prospective returnees included personal safety and security (64%), financial support (7%), and healthcare services (3%).

Financial support was the most common need of both genders, with 37 per cent of women and 33 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 (32% versus 10%). However, the share of men reporting the need for medicines was three times that of their female counterparts (respectively at 9% and 3%). This could be attributed to the high proportion of male respondents (71%), being over 60 years of age. The prevalence of health conditions tends to increase with age, potentially leading to a heightened need for regular medical care among the respondents.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 14: Top needs upon crossing back (%), n=1,783



Multiple answers possible

### ASSISTANCE RECEIVED IN DISPLACEMENT

In general, humanitarian assistance was received by most respondents (71%). Short-term visitors reported having received considerably more assistance (92%) than prospective returnees (12%). Similarly, women were slightly more likely (71%) to benefit from assistance than their male counterparts (64%). The most humanitarian assistance was provided by United Nations (UN) agencies (84%), IOM (33%), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (27%). Almost all male respondents mentioned having accessed aid while displaced through UN agencies (96%), while more women mentioned benefitting from aid by a more varied range of actors.

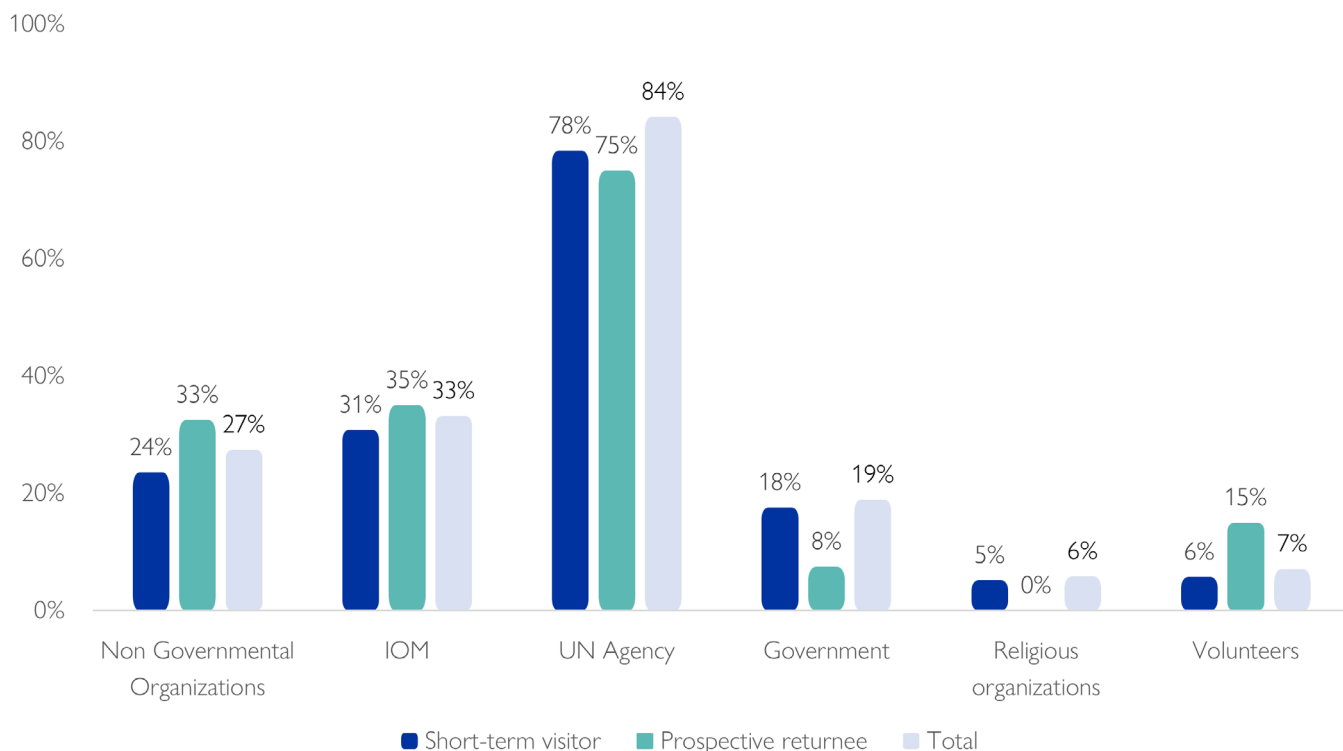
#### ASSISTANCE WHILE IN DISPLACEMENT



5. World Health Organization, (2022). "Ageing and health". Accessed 19 July 2024.



Figure 15: Provider of assistance and aid (%), n=1,265



Multiple answers possible

## UNEQUAL TREATMENT

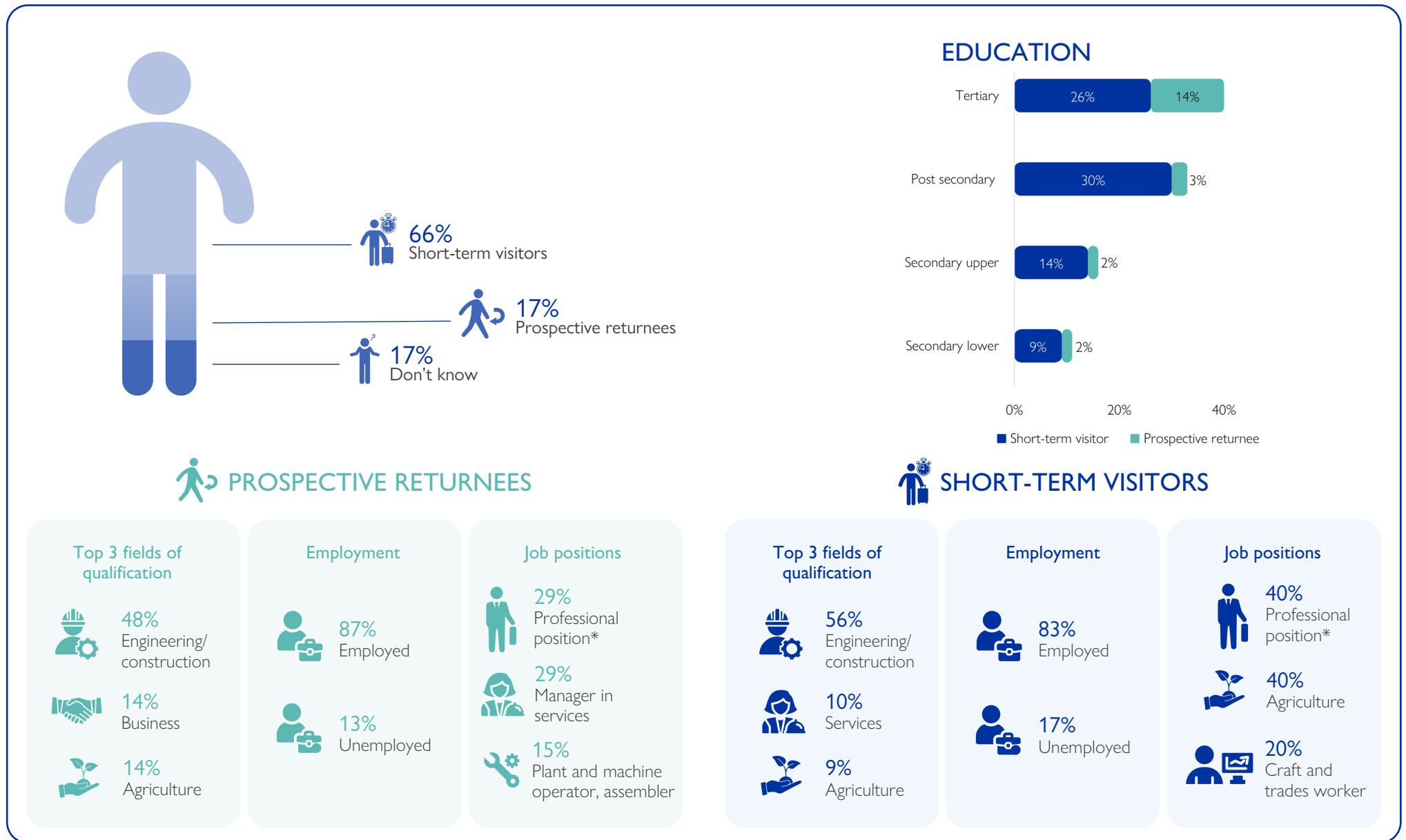
One respondent reported having experienced any type of unequal treatment while being displaced from Ukraine, while another preferred not to answer. The remaining respondents

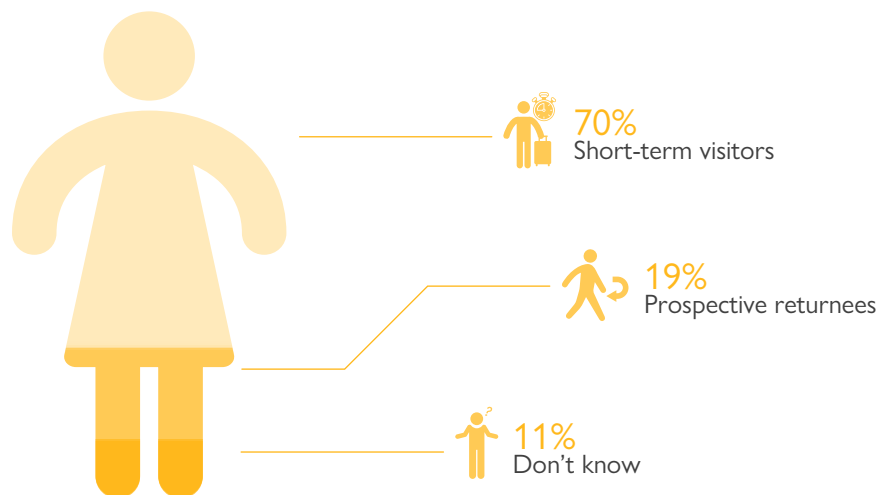
(n=1,781) did not report to have faced any unfair or discriminatory treatment during their displacement.



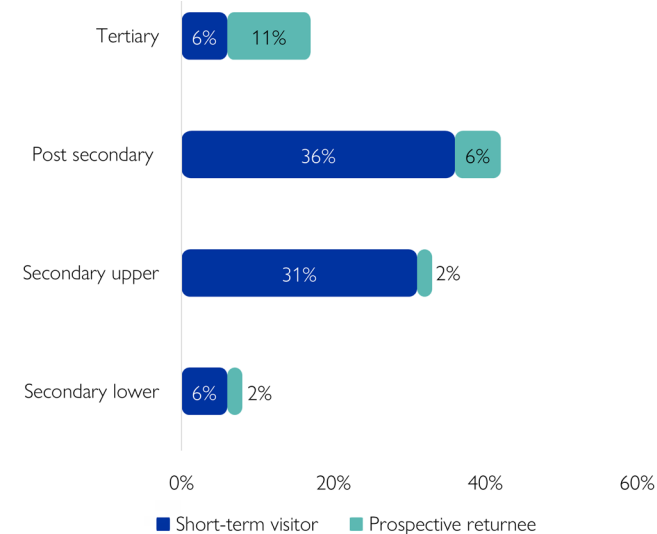
IOM Moldova's Info Center in Comrat visited by Ukrainian refugees, Republic of Moldova. © IOM 2024 / Ana Gnip

Figure 16: Education & employment by gender and return intentions, n=1,783



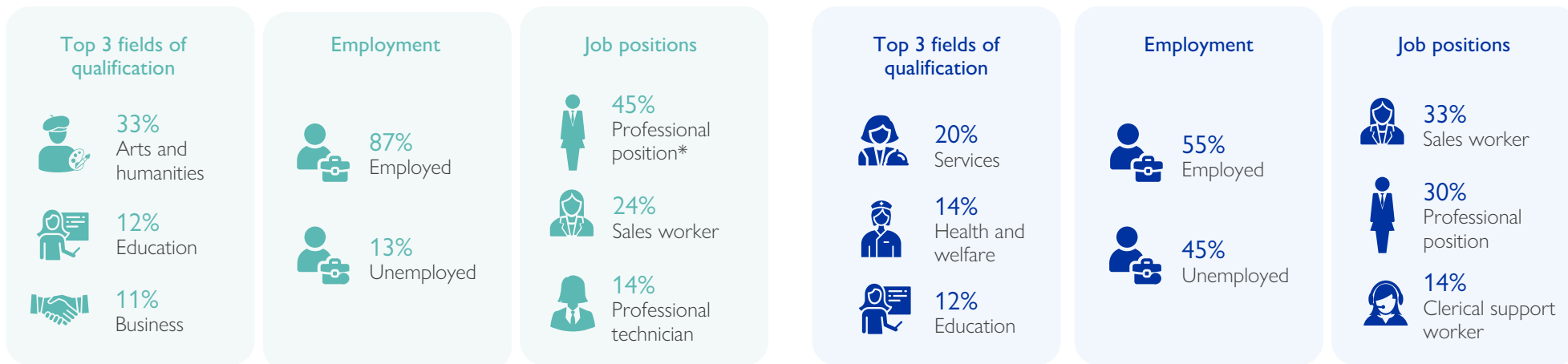


## EDUCATION



## 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: Internation Labour Organization (ILO), (Geneva, 2019). "The International Standard Classification of Occupations- ISCO-08"; accessed 19 July 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 4 trained enumerators with adult refugees from

Ukraine (18+ years old). Surveys were collected in various border crossing points in the Regions of Stefan Voda (49%) and Ocnita (51%). 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 01 April and 22 June 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.

## IOM REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

 [rovienna.iom.int](https://rovienna.iom.int)  
 [roviennadataresearch  
-newsletter@iom.int](mailto:roviennadataresearch-newsletter@iom.int)

Dampfschiffstrasse  
4/10-11, 1030  
Vienna, Austria

    
[@iomrovienna](https://www.instagram.com/iomrovienna)

## 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>