



Ukraine Response & Program Overview

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered Europe's largest displacement crisis since the Second World War. Today, approximately 3.6 million people remain internally displaced in Ukraine, while more than 5.6 million Ukrainian refugees recorded globally. When Russia launched its full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, more than [10.6 million people](#) were displaced, including an estimated 40% of Ukraine's Roma population. Yet, the struggles of Roma refugees were largely overlooked. Thousands were left without critical support as systemic barriers—lack of identification, limited access to housing and employment discrimination—deepened an already dire situation.

Odeska Oblast in Southern Ukraine, home to more than 2.2 million people, has been profoundly affected by the war. Over 1.3 million residents have faced direct impacts, and the region has become a major hub for returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing frontline oblasts such as Kherson, Donetsk and Kharkiv. This rapid population increase has placed significant strain on Odeska's social and medical systems. As of January 2025, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that at least 41 percent of the current Odeska population urgently requires humanitarian assistance.

Recent escalations have intensified these needs. Russian drone and missile strikes have repeatedly targeted critical infrastructure, including port facilities, energy systems, an oil depot and a gas

compressor station. These attacks not only disrupt vital services but also intensify humanitarian crises, creating constant and widespread danger for civilians.

Across Ukraine, women and girls account for 57 percent of internally displaced people, with older women making up a significant share. Among Ukrainians who have sought refuge in the Republic of Moldova, more than 89 percent are women and children, underscoring the gendered impact of displacement. Women, children and older persons, persons with disabilities, Roma communities and single mothers face heightened protection risks. Disrupted social networks, reduced access to services and the inability to meet basic needs increase vulnerability to gender based violence, sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking. The stress of securing safe housing, accessing medical care and reconnecting with loved ones further strains physical and psychological well being.

Moldova, which borders Ukraine's Odeska Oblast, has taken on an outsized humanitarian role. Between February 24, 2022 and June 30, 2025, more than **1.13 million Ukrainian refugees** crossed into the country, and over **130,000 remain**, reflecting Moldova's sustained commitment to hosting displaced people. Despite being one of the Europe's poorest nations and not a member of the European Union, Moldova has welcomed the highest number of Ukrainian refugees relative to its population. This generosity has come despite

limited resources and significant strain on Moldova's economy and its health, education, labor and social welfare systems.

The CWS response in Moldova and Ukraine has grown into a network of social cohesion, basic needs assistance and protection-centered programming, all grounded in strong local partnerships. Since March 2022, CWS has supported more than 56,000 displaced persons across both countries. What began as rapid emergency relief has evolved into a comprehensive, multi-sector effort rooted in community-driven change, accountability and long-term impact.

Across the region, we're highlighting a few of CWS's regional programs that are making a tangible difference in people's lives. In Odesa, CWS and Caritas Odesa worked together through the winter months to ensure families would not face the cold alone. Between November 2024 and February 2025, 129 households, 241 displaced people, including 37 with disabilities, received firewood deliveries that helped them stay warm through harsh conditions.

In Odesa, another group of women—those living with HIV—found support beginning in September 2024 through CWS's partnership with Positive Women Odesa. As needs grew across the region, CWS expanded its presence in Odeska Oblast in June 2025, reaffirming a commitment to holistic, empowering care for women facing layered vulnerabilities, including displacement and stigma.

CWS is committed to breaking the cycle of discrimination and exclusion experienced by Roma communities, a mission made even more urgent as nearly 100,000 Roma Ukrainians were displaced by the invasion. Through partnerships with organizations in Chişinău, Moldova—such as

Platforma Femeilor Rome "ROMNI," a women led, constituent led group where roughly 67 percent of leadership roles are held by Roma women and girls with lived experience—CWS provides essential support that strengthens stability, dignity, and long term inclusion for Roma refugees and host communities.

Farther west, in Balti, Moldova, Diaconia's Anastasis Center has become a place where healing and connection take root for women and children. Since July 2024, 148 children and youth have participated in school and recreational activities that restore a sense of normalcy. Meanwhile, 95 women—including mothers, grandmothers and women without children—have taken part in parenting support and psychosocial sessions that strengthen family bonds and open pathways to individualized counseling. Since the start of the response, the Center has reached 398 children and 158 women, weaving together Ukrainian and Moldovan families in shared resilience.

Across every community and partnership, the story remains constant: people drawing strength from one another and rebuilding their lives through compassion, connection and coordinated support. From project design through implementation, protection mainstreaming and monitoring and evaluation, CWS invests deeply in each partnership—providing tailored technical assistance and training that strengthens local leadership and long term impact. CWS's commitment is reflected in collaborations that bring Moldovans and Ukrainians together, elevate community resilience and ensure that those who are most vulnerable and marginalized are not only seen but actively supported.

