



International Rescue Committee in Poland

Ukraine crisis response

The continuing war in Ukraine is causing extreme civilian harm, as millions of people have been forced to leave their homes and find shelter in neighboring or further countries. Poland is the country hosting the largest number of refugees from Ukraine. IRC has worked in Poland since February 2022 to provide vital support to those affected by the conflict, so they can return home when it is safe, not because they have to.

WHO ARE WE?

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is an international, independent humanitarian aid organisation. The mission of IRC is to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and gain control of their future. The IRC is now at work in over 40 crisis-affected countries. The IRC has been responding to humanitarian crises in Europe since 2015, when we launched an emergency response to the peak in migration in Greece and relaunched operations in Serbia.

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO CRISIS IN UKRAINE?

The IRC launched an emergency response to the war in Ukraine in February 2022, working directly and with local partners to reach those most in need. In Ukraine, we are focusing our response in the conflict-affected areas in the east and southeast. We are distributing essential non-food items, providing cash assistance to the most vulnerable households, improving access to health care, and providing a variety of targeted protection services for people with increased vulnerability and needs. Our emergency programmes are also active on the ground in Poland and Moldova. Responding along the entire arc of the crisis, we are running activities targeting Ukrainian refugees in Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czechia and Bulgaria, as well as in Germany, Italy, Greece and the UK.



Let's meet Oksana Shendryk with her daughter Anna Khutorna, who came to Poland from Sumy and now live in Warsaw. In partnership with the Polish Centre for International Aid, the IRC helped Oksana to find employment in the cultural centre. Photo: Karolina Jonderko

What does IRC do in Poland?

The number of refugees remaining in Poland can be estimated at around 1.5 million. Ninety-three percent of them are women and children. To provide the best support to them, we work in different locations in Poland through diverse approaches: partner-led and joint IRC-partner interventions and activities led by IRC in the frame of three programs:

▪ **Emergency Cash and Livelihoods Support**

IRC has been delivering cash assistance to the most vulnerable families to ensure refugees can buy food, medicine, clothing and other essentials. We supported over 900 vulnerable households with winter cash assistance.

With the Polish Centre for International Aid (PCMP), we have also supported Ukrainian refugees to find employment in Poland. We are working to develop other programmes supporting refugees to find employment through the provision of legal support, language and skills training.

▪ Protection

Together with our partners, we are running Safe Healing and Learning Spaces for children in collective shelters in Warsaw. In these centres children can receive psychosocial support, play and learn.

Thanks to cooperation with our partner Migam, we are providing sign language translation in Ukrainian and in Polish Sign Language to support access to services for refugees living with disabling hearing loss.

We assist individuals with refugee backgrounds to navigate Polish public services (health, social, educational). With various partners, we provide refugees legal assistance and information (hotlines, info points) to integrate into Polish communities, and emergency legal aid to unaccompanied minors and their guardians, as well as support for people with disabilities, the elderly and survivors of violence. With IRC's support, our partners help women affected by the war in Ukraine to find safe haven and assistance in a center for GBV survivors in Warsaw.

▪ Education

In cooperation with Teach for Poland, IRC will integrate the existing teaching model with the IRC's healing classroom components to train 40 Polish teachers and 12 Ukrainian teachers on how to work with students with refugee backgrounds and those experiencing trauma.

We support the Child Development Foundation in opening two free-of-charge childcare centers. They will be providing childcare services to 40 Ukrainian families.



Solidarity and strong international response to the crisis in Ukraine has set a precedent for how the world should respond to humanitarian crises globally. This response must be sustained. People fleeing Ukraine need our continuous support.

Alan Moseley, Country Director IRC Poland



CONTACT US

- If you are interested in our programming and want to contact us, please reach us out on: contact.poland@rescue.org.
- If you are a journalist, please get in touch with our communications officer: veronika.rzezutka@rescue.org.