For the past day and a half, Platon (4) slept in the car, on his way to the Romanian border with his mother, while his father stays back in Ukraine.

17 - 23 March 2022

Highlights

- As of 25 March, over 3.7 million refugees have fled Ukraine (over 2.2 million to Poland, over 579,000 to Romania, over 379,000 to Republic of Moldova, close to 343,000 to Hungary, and over 545,000 to other countries). UNICEF is working with host governments, civil society and municipal partners to ensure their protection, in line with the European Union (EU) Temporary Protection Directive, and address immediate health & nutrition, education, early childhood development, social protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs.
- UNICEF has scaled up capacity within established country programmes in Belarus, Republic of Moldova, and Romania, has established offices in Poland and is finalizing an exchange of letters to support government led refugee response programs in Czech Republic, Hungary (where UNICEF has a large presence) and Slovak Republic.
- UNICEF has deployed 122 surge missions (child protection, WASH, social protection emergency coordination, operations, supply & logistics) to Poland (53), Moldova (15), Romania (14), Hungary (10), Slovakia (5), Czech Republic (4), and through the Regional Office (21).
- UNICEF has six operational “Blue Dots” (Romania, Moldova) and one under pilot (Poland), through which 24,263 people have been reached. Establishment of 26 more is being accelerated for Hungary (4), Moldova (4), Poland (10), Romania (3), and Slovak Republic (5), which when operational will reach at least 13,000 people, including 5,200 children per day.
- As of 23 March, UNICEF has USD 28.8 million available against its USD 73.1 million ask for the refugee response under this humanitarian appeal. UNICEF appreciates the generous contributions from public and private sector donors.

UNICEF Response Key areas

Establishment of ‘Blue Dots’ to provide critical support and protection services for children and families, provision of technical support for registration, screening, case management and referrals, including family tracing for unaccompanied children, psychosocial support and prevention and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

Provision of education and recreational supplies for children and adolescents, facilitate access to temporary learning, recreational and early childhood development activities; support host-government in coordination and integration of children into national education systems.

Provision of essential health services for mothers and children, promotion of vaccination, infant and young child feeding, provision of essential commodities, including vaccines, health supplies, medicines, and micronutrient supplements.

Provision of temporary water and sanitation services, distribution of critical hygiene and dignity products for families, women and children, support infection prevention and hygiene promotion.

Support multi-purpose cash interventions for vulnerable households with children, strengthen capacity of national social protection systems to integrate refugee children.

Situation in Numbers

- 4,000,000 People anticipated to flee from Ukraine and seek protection and support across the region
- 3,772,599 Refugees who have crossed borders from Ukraine into neighboring countries since 24 February 2022
- 7 neighboring countries covered under UNICEF’s response in Europe

UNICEF Appeal 2022

US$ 73.1 million

Funding Status as of 23 March

(USD million)

- Funds received: 28.8 M
- Funding gap: 44.3 M

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Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Belarus, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic

* This reflects the current requirement under Pillar 2 ( Refugee Outflow) of UNICEF’s HAC appeal of USD 349 million which covers interventions in neighbouring countries
Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships

Under the overall Ukraine HAC appeal, aligned with the interagency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) (March to August 2022), UNICEF is initially seeking USD 73.1 million to respond to urgent humanitarian and protection needs of refugee children and their families fleeing to neighbouring countries in Europe. As of 23 March, UNICEF has received USD 28.8 million against the appeal, of which 65% is fully flexible. These resources are critical to enabling UNICEF to scale up the response to reach children most in need. UNICEF is fully committed to transparency and accurate financial reporting standards, including through the Financial Tracking System (FTS) managed by OCHA. UNICEF is extremely grateful to the public and private donor contributions from the refugee response plan to date. Active engagement from corporate partners in the use of the core assets has also helped accelerate the UNICEF response.

The numbers of women and children on the move both inside and outside Ukraine continues to increase. This has led to additional humanitarian needs. Refugee numbers have increased exponentially in the last few weeks, and result, plans are being revised to anticipate demand through the end of 2022 and financial requirements are being re-assessed. A revised UNICEF appeal will be launched by mid-April. Continued, flexible contributions will enable UNICEF and partners to adapt, and expand urgent support to meet the needs of refugee children and families, as well as host communities neighbouring Ukraine that have been impacted by the war and the exodus of millions of women and children.

UNICEF and UNHCR have a strong operational partnership in countries neighbouring Ukraine, aligned with the blueprint for joint action for refugee children. An important component is the joint roll out of the “Blue Dots”. UNICEF is also working closely other UN Agencies and partners to deliver its multi-sectoral response. Close relationships have been established with relevant Government Ministries, Local Authorities, Municipalities, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and national networks like the Scout Association in Poland, which have national reach, contextual knowledge and localised experience.

Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 25 March, over 3.7 million refugees have crossed from Ukraine into Europe. Over sixty percent (2.2 million people), have arrived in Poland, with significant caseloads (579,800) in Romania, Moldova (379,204), Hungary (342,738) and Slovakia (267,702).1 With intensified fighting in South-Central Ukraine, particularly in and around Mariupol and Odessa, an increase of refugees is anticipated in the Republic of Moldova and Romania.

Women and children, constitute about 90 percent of those who have fled Ukraine,2 and are extremely vulnerable to significant risks, including human trafficking and exploitation, as evidenced in a recent Europol warning. UNICEF and partners have thus prioritised dissemination of related awareness messages, alerts and information.

For children arriving in neighbouring countries, particularly unaccompanied and separated children, there remains critical need to ensure safety, stability, minimum protection standards and access to services in reception facilities across the region. UNICEF and UNHCR issued a joint statement calling for protection of unaccompanied and separated children fleeing Ukraine, urging neighbouring countries to ensure immediate identification, registration and safe spaces for children and families linked to national child protection systems and expand capacity of emergency care arrangements.

Regional Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF is working closely with UNHCR and key humanitarian partners to respond to emerging humanitarian needs and expand its programmatic and advocacy support, for refugee children and their families in the affected neighbouring countries. UNICEF is part of national coordination structures led by government and supported by civil society partners. Assessments are ongoing and operational plans are being implemented and adapted to the evolving situation, in coordination with other humanitarian partners and ongoing interagency processes.

To meet immediate protection and humanitarian needs of refugee children and their families, UNICEF is working with CSOs, NGOs, national networks and associations to establish “Blue Dots”, child and family protection hubs providing services for child and gender-based violence (GBV) protection, identification of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), family reunification, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), social protection, health, education and early childhood development. Hubs are located in strategic sites like border crossings, registration points, urban centres or delivered by mobile teams. In Moldova and Romania, six established Blue Dots have reached around 24,200 children, women, and families. Operationalisation of 26 more is being accelerated for Hungary (4), Moldova (4), Poland (10), Romania (3), and Slovak Republic (5) which will reach at least 13,000 people, including 5,200 children per day.

UNICEF’s immediate priority in the refugee hosting countries is to support Government and national partners to deliver services to meet urgent needs in areas of child protection, including health, nutrition, child protection, WASH, education, social protection, addressing basic needs and mitigating the risk of outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases, like Measles and Polio. In the medium-term, UNICEF will focus on supporting expansion of national systems including basic social services, through technical support, building capacity of national actors and systems and creating a supportive and enabling environment for mothers and children aligned to temporary protection directive granted by the European Union (EU). UNICEF will conduct social listening in neighbouring countries to understand the points of view related to the crisis among refugees and host communities, with a view to informing and adapting its programme response.

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In Belarus, Moldova, and Romania, UNICEF has leveraged its presence, experience and partnerships, established through long standing country programmes, to quickly respond and scale up. UNICEF has established offices and capacities in Poland and is finalizing an exchange of letters with government to support government led refugee response programs in Czech Republic, Hungary (where UNICEF has a large presence) and Slovak Republic. In all these countries, UNICEF maintains a strong engagement with its well-established National Committees, leveraging their facilitating role to support the response.

As of 23 March, UNICEF has deployed 122 surge missions, in the areas of child protection, WASH, social protection emergency coordination, operations, supply & logistics to support and bolster response capacities in Poland (53), Moldova (15), Romania (14), Hungary (10), Slovakia (5), Czech Republic (4), and through the Regional Office (21). Following this initial surge, the deployment of longer term technical and operational capacities is now underway.

### Poland

#### Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

2,236,314 refugees have entered Poland, with many of whom staying living in Warsaw, Krakow, and main urban centers. With child and social protection, health, and education systems already strained, UNICEF will focus on strengthening capacities of national systems to provide services and protection to Ukrainian children and families.

With the EU Temporary Protection Directive in place, there is a need to make sure women and children formally register and access the services to which they are entitled. The Government of Poland initiated registration during the reporting period, providing a unique identifier (PESEL), the initial basis for Ukrainians to access social services and permission to work. Over 100,000 people were registered in one day in Warsaw.

Przemysl train station is the main transit point for evacuation of children in institutional care in Ukraine to Poland, with smaller transfers occurring at border crossing points. The main reception points for these children is Stolowa Wola facility, run by the Polish government, staffed with a Ukrainian social workers deployed by the ministry.

Of an estimated school aged refugee population of 1.1 million, it remains unclear how many remain Poland. As of 23 March, 60,000 Ukrainian children are reported to have enrolled in Polish schools, with local municipalities reporting challenges in integrating children due to insufficient numbers of trained teachers, management MHPSS for children affected by conflict, and addressing children’s learning losses due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, and now displacement. New directives issued by government suggest support to refugee children can include continue remote learning, using the Ukrainian curriculum, and UNICEF is working alongside governments to operationalize digital learning opportunities.

#### Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**Child Protection:** In partnership with the Ministry of Social Policy in Ukraine, UNICEF supported the deployment of two social workers to Poland to assist in identification and registration of Ukrainian children evacuated from residential care institutions to Stalowa Wola. UNICEF also supported translation to Polish, and nationwide dissemination of instructions for evacuation of children from residential care institutions. UNICEF continues to provide guidance to organizations and individuals seeking to assist children and families as per governmental instructions and minimum child protection standards.

Plans have been accelerated to roll out 10 Blue Dots in partnerships with Polish Humanitarian Action and ZHR Scouts, identified locations and established a start-up plan to reach 5,000 people, 2,000 children. A training package for Blue Dots frontline workers has been developed in partnership with Polish NGO Empowering Children Foundation (FDDS). UNICEF continues to provide guidance to multiple organizations and individuals seeking to assist children and families based on government instructions and minimum child protection standards.

During the opening day of UNHCR’s enrollment point for multipurpose cash assistance in Warsaw, UNICEF piloted a first Blue Dot site, where 46 girls and 37 boys accessed recreation and peer engagement, and mothers were engaged while waiting to enroll.

**Health and Nutrition:** In Rzeszów, UNICEF continued monitoring the situation of Reception Centers in Przemysl and Medyka, at the border with Ukraine, to address possible stock outs and support health partners to provide frontline assistance. Coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH), WHO and subnational authorities is ongoing to ensure outbreak prevention and to reach refugee children in the cities and locations of final settlement.

**Education:** UNICEF is co-leading the Education Working Group (EWG) with a local NGO, Center for Citizenship Education Foundation, to localize the response and strengthen national ownership. In the reporting period, the network of local education partners increased to 20, with plans to expand this in coming weeks. Priority EWG actions include roll-out of a rapid needs assessment of municipalities to integrate refugee children in Polish schools, including teacher support, school improvement, support to children with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, and appropriate strategies for progressive integration of students through temporary measures and remote learning modalities.
UNICEF has collaborated closely to strengthen provision of MHPSS services and ensure adherence to minimum service standards and effective delivery of Psychological First Aid by all education partners. Following a request from the Ministry of Education (MoE), UNICEF is mobilizing support for their usage of the Learning Passport – a digital learning platform. UNICEF, with UNESCO, is also engaging with MoE to provide technical assistance, support planning for integration of children into the national system, and to access funding under the EU Technical Support Instrument.

**WASH:** Assessments of WASH facilities and services are ongoing. Initial results indicating that access to facilities and services has improved, frequency of maintenance of permanent and temporary facilities has increased and basic hygiene and dignity items remain available at border crossing points and reception sites. Key gaps include handwashing facilities, hand hygiene and access to showers in transit and short-term accommodation sites, cleaning and disinfection of bedding in large reception sites and hygiene in food distribution sites. UNICEF will collaborate with relevant authorities and local partners to support initiative to improve of hygiene in various through provision of hygiene supplies and technical advice, and to facilitate sustainable access to basic hygiene items, where gaps exist, at border crossing points, reception centres and other areas, within the Blue Dots.

**Social Protection:** UNICEF facilitated a discussion between the Cash and Protection Working Groups on policies regarding humanitarian cash transfer support to unaccompanied children. A policy position paper is being developed, reflecting national policies and global good practice, to ensure that all partners implementing humanitarian cash assistance are operating with view to the best interests of the child.

**Social and Behavior Change, Community Engagement, Accountability to Affected Population (AAP):** In collaboration with neighbouring countries, UNICEF co-developed a survey to identify information and communication needs. Interviews were conducted with volunteers to understand refugees’ information priorities, with registration, documentation, accommodation and financial support identified as most frequent requests. On preferred channels of communication, key information on a single platform (pocket cards/QR codes) was the principal suggestion, while harmonized volunteer training on interpersonal communication skills was a main capacity development need. UNICEF is initiating plans to address this feedback as a priority.

Support was provided to compile information, education and communication materials developed by UNICEF Ukraine and draft and translate guidelines for media on children affected by conflict. A mapping of Ukraine associations, organisations and online support groups as well as health, education and social service providers in Poland and neighbouring countries is ongoing. An online social listening mechanism to monitor host community sentiment and reinforce social cohesion and refugees’ needs and priorities is under development.

**Republic of Moldova**

**Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs**

374,059 people have entered from Ukraine, 43 percent women and 48 per cent children (24 per cent girls, 24 per cent boys). Those remaining have reduced from 99,773 (17 March) to 97,057 (22 March)\(^3\), however, 467 additional applications for asylum were received this week, bringing the total to 5,403. Per capita, Moldova remains the country with the highest ratio of refugees to local population.\(^4\)

Border patrol agents screening for child exploitation or trafficking raised concerns that during heavy flows, they lacked capacity to properly assess the state of children. UNICEF has boosted capacity at the border, including covering costs for child protection experts and carrying out further training for border patrol and social workers.

102 official Refugee Accommodation Centres (RACs) are available for 9,245 people, with occupancy at 50 percent. Current population flows are however already placing a strain on social safety nets and public infrastructure, with concerns that as the situation in South-Central Ukraine, particularly Odessa, gets worse, flows may overwhelm the system.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) evacuated a first group of Odessa residents on 21 March, in collaboration with UNHCR, with UNICEF providing technical support to screen for and quickly support any UASC at the border crossing. A pilot airlift to Austria is being organized by UNHCR for 190 women with children and elderly people, and UNICEF will support the protection and technical team conducting best interest assessments (BIAs) of children.

**Summary Analysis of Programme Response**

**Child Protection:** Three UNICEF Blue Dots at Otaci and Palanca border crossings and Moldexpo reception centre (Chisinau) have supported over 3,100 people (including 1,621 children) with four additional ones under establishment. In Transnistria, approximately 80 families were also supported. UNICEF is boosting child protection capacities at border crossings, placing designated full-time protection and psychosocial specialist at two major checkpoints this week. UNICEF is working closely with partners including Terre des Hommes, Copil Comunitate Familie (CCF) and Partnership for Every Child and Resonance.

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\(^3\) Data from Ministry of Internal Affairs.

\(^4\) UN Women. [Refugees at a Glance](https://www.unwomen.org/en).
Health and Nutrition: UNICEF distributed 40 basic medication kits in the RACs, benefitting around 14,000 children. UNICEF also launched a mother and child room at Palanca border crossing and printed and distributed over 10,000 flyers promoting mother and child positive health and nutrition benefits.

Education: UNICEF has engaged a new NGO partner to significantly expand provision of non-formal education, recreational activities, and resilience building for adolescents from a current 5,000 to 10,000 youth across four centres.

WASH: Based on needs assessment in fifteen RACs, UNICEF provided baby kits (diapers, WASH products) for 211 children, hygiene and dignity supplies to Palanca and Calaraseuca, benefitting 15,600 adults (10,200 children), blankets to 5,000 people in four RACs and clothing to 3,960 children in Chisinau.

Social Protection: Discussions are being finalised with Government to pilot humanitarian cash assistance for a small number of individuals in Chisinau, in partnership with UNHCR, with a broader programme being designed.

Social Behavior: UNICEF has engaged a specialist to support Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) activities.

### Romania

#### Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

80,037 refugees remain in Romania, majority women, approximately 31,000 children. The number of asylum seekers is relatively low at 4,000. While majority of persons entering Romania are in transit, a number lack transport or need accommodation, giving rise to urgent needs including health services, protection from violence and abuse, exploitation and trafficking, family-tracing and reunification and psycho-social care. A basic needs assessment is ongoing, with Governmental and CSO partners.

On 19 March, the Government issued a Ministerial Order announcing the scale up of the Blue Dot strategy nationally, in partnership with National Child Protection Authorities and CSOs. The National Authority for Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (NAPCRA) organised a first orientation meeting with all County Directions for Social Assistance and Child Protection.

UNICEF has advocated for the Inter-Ministerial Order to consider a digital registration system, with UNICEF and NAPCRA currently exploring the possibility of using PRIMERO, with a demonstration conducted to confirm its interoperability with existing platforms and translation into Romanian language.

#### Summary Analysis of Programme Response

**Child Protection:** Three Blue Dots are functional in Sighet, Siret and Isaccea, reaching 18,222 people so far, with another 12 under establishment, including at the Moldova-Romania border. UNICEF is collaborating with NGOs to provide wheelchairs, mobility support equipment and signs for visually impaired refugees, and to translate, print and distribute materials on GBV and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in and around Blue Dots.

**Health and Nutrition:** Blue Dots are equipped with dedicated mother and baby/toddler spaces, where women can breastfeed and clean their babies/toddlers in private areas, receive information on immunization, breastfeeding, infant and young child nutrition (IYCN), and access safe drinking water, ORS and medical first aid.

**Education:** A Ministerial Order integrating Ukrainian children in the national system was issued, which UNICEF is engaging with MoE to operationalize. Currently many Ukrainian children still follow their education back home online.

**Social Behavior:** UNICEF developed and adapted information sheets and resources on needs and priorities for refugees and tailored guidelines for media covering children affected by conflict. UNICEF developed messages for adolescents and communities to prevent trafficking and is working with UNICEF Ukraine to develop and tailor critical content on breastfeeding, nutrition, vaccination, psychological support, and education.

#### Other Countries

#### Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

In Belarus, 6,341 refugees are so far registered. The Department for Citizenship and Migration declared that anyone fleeing Ukraine, regardless of nationality, can receive assistance and temporary accommodation with Ukrainian nationals provided with full health coverage, right to education and right to work. Immediate needs at temporary shelters have been identified as psychosocial support, particularly for children, clothing for children and adults, hygiene items, and supplementary food for young children. In the longer-term response, schools receiving children will need support for their inclusion, and cash or in-kind assistance will be needed for families in private accommodation.

342,738 individuals have entered Hungary from Ukraine, with inflows into Hungary from Romania increasing significantly. It is estimated that 90 percent of new arrivals entering from Romania are transiting to other countries. On 21 March, the Government halted all refugee support activities at the two Budapest train stations and relocated people to a nearby sports stadium. Provision of services for immediate needs is well organized, including food, drinks, interpreters, medical care, a ticket office from the train company, sanitary facilities, a baby-mother corner for mothers.

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5 Data provided by the Government

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A woman with child in Sighetu Maramației, Blue Dot, Romania

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A woman with child in Sighetu Maramației, Blue Dot, Romania
with small children, a play corner for children, and information on accommodation and travel options. Temporary accommodation has been set up by municipalities close to the border, in Budapest and in associated locations. Refugees in temporary accommodation centres largely consist of Roma and other disadvantaged individuals who do not have financial means or connections to travel on. These facilities are provided with basic shelter, food and hygiene items but lack of access to child protection services.

In **Czech Republic**, around 240,000 refugees (94,000 children), are registered as of 23 March. Accommodation capacities are at a limit, especially in Prague the destination for one-third of refugees. Increasingly, emergency shelters are being used and new facilities are being identified.

In **Slovak Republic**, most of the 267,702 refugees arriving in the first wave transited to other EU Member States. Currently more people are choosing to stay, with over 40,000 refugees remaining in country as of 25 March. More towns and regions across the country are engaged in the response, putting pressure on capacities (human resources, supplies, services) of municipalities, who are creating reception-registration centers in larger towns and cities to prepare for increasing numbers. In meetings with UNICEF, government officials noted a broad range of challenges, including protection risks, lack of capacity of the social protection system to absorb the refugee caseload, and limited availability of spaces in preschools. The need to work on social cohesion within communities is mentioned has a priority.

Over 109,626 refugees have from **Romania** into **Bulgaria**, with 51,091 (20,000 children) registered in the country. Those staying in the country have increased from 10 percent in the first week to 50 percent in the last weeks. Blue Dots are being set up in Ruse, Varna and Sofia with UNHCR. The number of Bulgarians in Odessa region is estimated at over 129,000, in addition to 75,000 in other parts of Southern Ukraine. With ethnic Bulgarians the sixth-largest minority group in Ukraine, the Government in Bulgaria is accelerating contingency planning for an increased influx of refugees.

### Summary Analysis of Programme Response

In **Hungary**, UNICEF is working to strengthen the state response at border crossings and municipalities accommodating the majority of refugees. Support includes enhancement of child protection and psychosocial support, access to critical information, and operation of safe spaces for children and women. UNICEF also is advancing discussions with statutory child and social protection services to strengthen capacity and response for protection needs of children and women and engaging with the main faith-based organisations of the Charity Council to support their work at border areas.

In **Belarus**, the Ministry of Health issued free health care services for Ukrainian refugees, with immunization and psychological counselling for children available at health care institutions and online and through the national children’s hotline. UNICEF supported information dissemination among refugees on these services. A Blue Dot plan is developed to be rolled out in coordination with Red Cross, complementing services being provided in Gomel region. 2,600 individual hygiene kits and 1,000 Family Hygiene kits have been pre-positioned for an estimated 5,600 people, to meets assessed needs. 1,000 copies of first psychological aid information materials on dealing with stress and assisting children in situations of anxiety, have been produced to be distributed with Hygiene kits, this also includes what services are available in Belarus.

In **Slovak Republic**, on request of the Ministry of Interior, UNICEF will train 270 border police guards on human/child trafficking, sexual exploitation, and communication with children. UNICEF is also exploring opportunities to strengthen integration of refugees into the national social protection system, and humanitarian cash transfers. In Slovak Republic, and **Czech Republic**, UNICEF is advancing entry points strategic partnerships with governments and NGOs.

### External Media

**UNICEF Romania Article**: [Fleeing mothers with children support each other through heart-breaking loss](#)
**UNICEF Romania Article**: [Ukrainian mother: “Our world was broken”](#)
**UNICEF Romania Article**: [From Germany, help to relieve the “acute suffering” of Ukrainian children](#)
**UNICEF Romania Press Release**: [Children fleeing war in Ukraine at heightened risk of trafficking and exploitation – UNICEF](#)
**UNICEF Romania Press Release**: [UNICEF sends additional life-saving supplies for Ukraine response](#)
**UNICEF Romania Statement**: [Stop attacks on health care in Ukraine](#)
**UNICEF and UNHCR Joint Statement**: [Unaccompanied and separated children fleeing escalating conflict in Ukraine must be protected](#)
**UNICEF ECARO Article**: [3 things to know about Blue Dots](#)
**UNICEF HQ Press Release**: [More than half of Ukraine’s children displaced after one month of war](#)

### Next Sitrep: 1 April 2022

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[6 Data from the Ministry of Interior, 23 March 2022.](#)