



Moldova's Temporary Protection:

Addressing Displacement from Ukraine and Planning for the Future

SUMMARY

This briefing note summarizes recent Temporary Protection (TP) developments in Moldova. It provides recommendations to relevant stakeholders to ensure medium- and long-term legal stay options for those displaced by the war in Ukraine. Specifically, it recommends:

1. Planning for the extension of Moldova's current TP system until at least March 2026, in line with EU counterparts.
2. Develop long-term legal stay options for displaced people.
3. Enhance support for social integration and the well-being of displaced people.
4. Strengthen data collection and monitoring to inform evidence-based policymaking.

BACKGROUND

The Republic of Moldova, a nation with remarkable compassion, has welcomed many displaced persons from Ukraine, demonstrating our shared humanity. **Between 24 February 2022 and 29 September 2024, 1,186,847 people** sought refuge in Moldova, with over 10% choosing to remain in the country.¹

Despite having fewer resources than its neighbouring EU countries to manage the arrival

of people, Moldova responded swiftly and effectively. This was made possible through coordinated efforts between the Government of Moldova, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), UN agencies, and international humanitarian organizations, such coordination platforms with active participation from all actors, enabling a prompt response to the displacement.

Since February 2022, displaced people - including Ukrainians, non-Ukrainian spouses, and some third-country nationals (TCNs)- have been allowed to live and work in Moldova under emergency measures enacted by the Commission on Exceptional Situations (CES).

¹ <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/MDA>

In February 2023 Moldova restructured its migration services by transforming the Office for Migration and Asylum into the General Inspectorate for Migration (IGM). This reform aimed to decentralize immigration services, improving access to information, counselling, and documentation services for foreign nationals and applicants across the country, through territorial offices in the North, Centre, and South.

MOLDOVA'S TEMPORARY PROTECTION

On 01 March 2023, Moldova implemented a Temporary Protection (TP) mechanism to manage the large influx of displaced people from Ukraine.² Individuals meeting the criteria for displaced people from Ukraine (aligned with the EU's TP Directive) had 90 days to apply for TP in Moldova to remain legally in the country.

Once granted TP status, beneficiaries gained access to essential services, including healthcare, education, and the right to work. They were also permitted to leave Moldova for up to 45 days during the TP period. TP was initially granted for one year, with the possibility of two six-month extensions.

In early February 2024, NRC participated in the public consultations, providing feedback on the draft decision to amend TP regulations. On 28 February 2024, the Moldova government adopted the decision to extend TP until 01 March 2025 and introduced significant changes to the original January 2023 decision.³

Between 01 March 2023 and 04 November 2024, **79,020 people were pre-registered** in the IGM information system for TP.

The most notable changes made to the TP regime as of 01 March 2024 include:

- **Automatic renewal of ID documents** issued to TP beneficiaries. **TP beneficiaries may now travel abroad for more than 45 days** without losing their TP status.
- Authorities may **conduct announced checks at the self-declared address** of TP beneficiaries.
- Ukrainian adults crossing the border with internal passports or national ID cards **may only enter/exit from and to Ukraine once**.
- Ukrainians **can no longer enter Moldova with expired travel or identity documents** (minors are exempt from this requirement and may enter Moldova with expired identity documents). Individuals without valid entry documents may still access Moldova territory if they request asylum.
- TP beneficiaries have **access to social benefits and expanded healthcare services**.
- TP beneficiaries can **register at the territorial subdivisions of the National Employment Agency (NEA)** for employment support.
- TP beneficiaries may **temporarily admit vehicles for private use** into the territory of Moldova.

² https://igm.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/hg_21_2023_ro-1.pdf

³ [Moldovan government extends by one year term of providing temporary protection to people displaced from Ukraine | GUVERNUL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA](#)



NRC ICLA and Protection from Violence team sharing information related to Temporary Protection and PfV activities with project participants, 2023. Photo: NRC

As of 04 November 2024, **62,698** identity documents had been issued to TP beneficiaries, including 16,234 for minors. Additionally, 1,255 people were registered in the Republic of Moldova's asylum system, with 1,059 asylum seekers still awaiting a decision. Furthermore, 6,922 Ukrainian citizens held valid residence permits in Moldova.⁴

The Government of the Republic of Moldova provides displaced people from Ukraine with legally secure status through TP. Since its introduction, TP has granted access to various rights and services, including employment opportunities, temporary housing, emergency and primary healthcare, public education, and social support for families with children and unaccompanied minors.

Since March 2023, when the Moldova government implemented TP, NRC provided over 7,400 individuals with information on TP and legal stay options, and supported more than 2,650 individuals with pre-registration for TP.

LEGAL ANALYSIS

NRC in Moldova views the amendments made and approved by the government for TP in February 2024, as positive. However, the legal status of displaced people in Moldova after March 2025 remains uncertain. The Government of Moldova

has begun assessing the costs of providing medium–to long-term legal stay options after March 2025 for displaced people from Ukraine, involving CSOs, UN agencies, and INGOs in the discussions. A significant concern is that **28% of Ukrainian families do not possess valid travel documentation**,⁵ which poses challenges for their mobility.

This is further exacerbated by the temporary suspension of passport issuance by the diplomatic missions in Chisinau and Balti, which occurred multiple times in 2024. This has understandably constrained the ability of Ukrainians, specifically Ukrainian men, to obtain valid travel documents.

Although the future of TP after March 2025 is still uncertain, NRC specialists and other experts hope that Moldova will align its decisions with the changes made by the EU regarding its TPD, which has already been extended for one more year until 04 March 2026.⁶

Regardless of the decisions made after March 2025, the Government of Moldova must be prepared to ensure the legal status of displaced people from Ukraine.



NRC ICLA team sharing information related to the application process for Temporary Protection, 2023 with a project participant. Photo: NRC

⁴ <https://igm.gov.md/protectia-internationala-si-documentarea-ucrainenilor-in-republica-moldova-5/>

⁵ NRC, Rapid Needs Assessment for Education and Legal Needs, June 2024.

⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2024/06/25/ukrainian-refugees-council-extends-temporary-protection-until-march-2026/>

NRC RECOMMENDATIONS

To the General Inspectorate for Migration and Moldovan Government Stakeholders:

Planning for the potential extension of Moldova's Temporary Protection system

With the EU's Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) now extended until March 2026, Moldova should prepare for the possibility of expanding its temporary protection (TP) system further. Stakeholders are encouraged to initiate discussions on the legal, financial, and administrative implications and consider options to align Moldova's policies more closely with those of the EU.

Temporary Protection extension or other legal stay options should be communicated by the end of December 2024.

Communicating Temporary Protection rights across government services to ensure equitable access

It is essential to ensure that the rights of Temporary Protection (TP) holders are communicated to all government services at every level. This will promote transparent and equitable access to services nationwide, enabling TP holders to understand their entitlements and receive the support they need without barriers. Effective dissemination of this information will enhance service delivery and foster a more inclusive environment for refugees.

Implementing Temporary Protection cost-free, automatic, or online renewal processes

To streamline the Temporary Protection (TP) renewal process for refugees, an online or automatic renewal system is recommended to issue updated TP cards with new validity dates. This approach would reduce administrative burdens, ensure timely renewals, and alleviate financial costs for refugees, who should not be required to incur fees for TP renewal. A cost-free and efficient renewal process will support refugee stability and integration while enhancing overall system accessibility.

Developing long-term legal stay options for displaced people

Key stakeholders, including the Government of Moldova, UN agencies, and international organizations, should commence detailed planning for legal stay options that will become necessary after March 2025.

The Government of Moldova must communicate these options well before March 2025, allowing displaced individuals adequate time to prepare for their future. Given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, displaced people are likely to require medium - to long-term solutions. Prioritizing durable solutions such as legal stays, employment opportunities, and eventual integration will help reduce these vulnerable populations' prolonged uncertainty.

Enhancing support for social integration and well-being of displaced people

In addition to legal stay and employment options, supporting social integration is essential to fostering resilience and well-being among displaced persons. Stakeholders should create inclusive services to help displaced and host communities, promote social cohesion, and reduce potential tensions.

Strengthening data collection and monitoring for evidence-based policymaking

Accurate, up-to-date data on displaced populations is crucial for developing effective and responsive policies. To better inform decision-making and resource allocation, stakeholders should prioritize gathering and analyzing data on demographics, needs, and trends among displaced populations.

For more information about NRC's work on TP, contact:

Michèle Carezis, Advocacy and Communication Manager, NRC Moldova: michele.carezis@nrc.no

Jude Halaseh, ICLA Specialist, NRC Moldova: jude.halaseh@nrc.no

