

The Politics of Distorted Data

How Many War-Displaced Ukrainian Citizens Are in Russia?

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“War turns people into numbers”, said Oleksandra Matviichuk, the Head of the Ukrainian Nobel Peace Prize-winning Centre for Civil Liberties, during her Speech to Europe in Vienna in May 2023.¹ But what if the numbers are turned into people? The infamous ‘fog of war’ spreads not only to the actual battlefields with unknown war casualties on both sides but also reaches civilian – yet highly political and emotionally charged – matters. This text focuses on one such issue – the attempt to calculate how many Ukrainian citizens have been forcefully displaced to Russia since the start of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022 and how many might remain there. We need to understand where the publicly circulating numbers, which range from 1.3 to 5.4 million, come from, so that the real people behind them remain on the political agenda of Ukraine and its international partners during the war and afterwards.² When the time comes, decisions about Ukrainian citizens in Russia should be included in post-war negotiations. Like Ukrainians displaced in Europe and elsewhere, Ukrainians in Russia should have the opportunity to decide on their future settlement and return options. Better estimates on how many displaced Ukrainians remain in Russia can help us plan the necessary steps for their support.

I argue that in the case of the forced displacement of Ukrainians to Russia, the inflated and unverified number of border crossings between Ukraine and Russia – provided, moreover, only by the Russian side – wrongfully transformed into the number of supposedly real individual Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion in the

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- 1 Oleksandra Matviichuk, “A Speech to Europe by Oleksandra Matviichuk”, *Documenting Ukraine Blog*, <https://www.iwm.at/documenting-ukraine/blog/a-speech-to-europe-2023-by-oleksandra-matviichuk> [accessed: 25.07.2024].
 - 2 For instance, point 4 of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s peace formula states: “Release of all prisoners and deportees, including war prisoners and children deported to Russia”. See: *Reuters*, “Explainer: What is Zelenskiy’s 10-point peace plan?”, 28 December 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-is-zelenskiys-10-point-peace-plan-2022-12-28/> [accessed: 25.07.2024].

direction of the aggressor state. To analyse the politics behind these distorted numbers, I look closer at the available, albeit limited, data we have in the public domain on the forced migration flow of Ukrainians to and through Russia in 2022 and 2023. I conclude that a more realistic estimate of the number of Ukrainian citizens displaced to Russia after the invasion is up to a maximum of 1 million people and that, moreover, this number is probably decreasing as people are transiting through Russia to elsewhere.

Why Focus on the Numbers?

First, it is important to note that we do not know what the exact number of people residing in the territories of the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk, and Luhansk Oblasts (see Figure 12) was before the start of the full-scale invasion because the last Ukrainian census took place in 2001. At that time, the combined population of these four oblasts amounted to about 10 million people.³ Since then, Crimea was annexed by Russia in March 2014, and some parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (ORDLO) were occupied by Russia in April/May 2014 and have been governed through the self-proclaimed ‘republics’ (marked by the red line in Figure 1). In addition to the natural process of demographic decline that all Ukrainian regions experience, hundreds of thousands of people left the occupied territories between 2014 and 2021, moving either to other areas in Ukraine (there are a registered 1.4 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as of December 2021⁴), to Russia (estimated to be as high as 1 million people⁵), or somewhere abroad (no estimates available).

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- 3 Derzhavnyi komitet statystyky Ukrainy (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine), “Vseukrainskyi perepys naselennia 2001” (“All-Ukrainian Population Census”), <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/publications/#p1> [accessed: 25.07.2024].
 - 4 National Social Service of Ukraine, “Sotsialnyi zakhyst vnutrishno peremishchenykh osib” (“Social Protection of Internally Displaced Persons”), <https://nssu.gov.ua/vpo> [accessed: 25.07.2024].
 - 5 Irina Kuznetsova, “To Help ‘Brotherly People’? Russian Policy Towards Ukrainian Refugees”, *Europe–Asia Studies* 72/3, 2020, 505–527. For more information on the processes of the depopulation of the occupied territories from 2014 to 2021, and on the most current developments, see: Tetyana Malyarenko and Borys Kormych, “New Wild Fields: How the Russian War Leads to the Demodernization of Ukraine’s Occupied Territories”, *Nationalities Papers*, 2023, 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2023.33>; Tetyana Malyarenko and Borys Kormych, “Russian Policy towards the Economy of Occupied Ukrainian Territories: Crawling de-Modernization”, *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 64/2, 2023, 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2023.2167097>; and Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “Terror, Collaboration and Resistance: Russian Rule in the Newly Occupied Territories of Ukraine”, *Eurozine*, 17 January 2023, <https://www.eurozine.com/terror-collaboration-and-resistance/> [accessed: 25.07.2024].

Figure 12: Map of the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine (as of 11 August 2023)

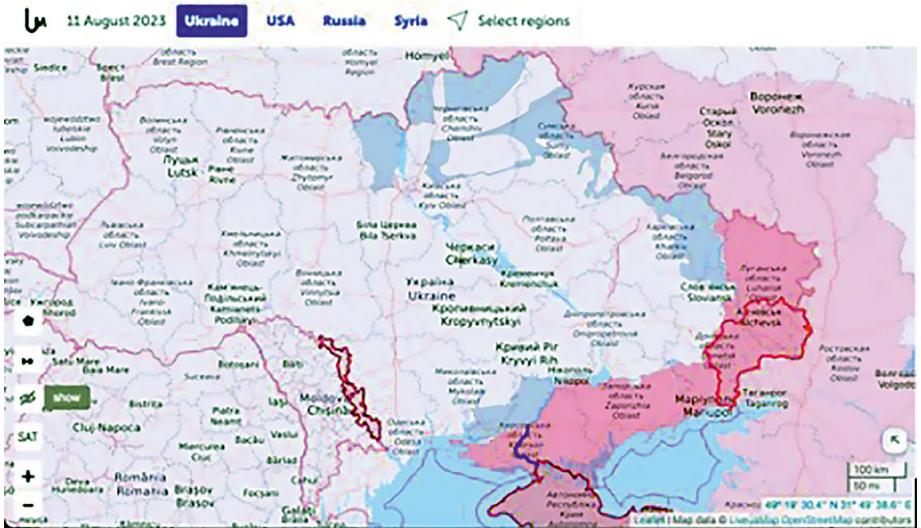


Image from Liveuamap, 11 August 2023, <https://liveuamap.com> [accessed: 11.08.2023]

After the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, parts of Northern, Eastern, and Southern Ukraine were occupied. Some of them were soon liberated by the Ukrainian Armed Forces (marked grey in Figure 1), whereas others remained under occupation. Russian forces often prevented the civilian population of these regions from evacuating to Ukrainian-controlled territory. Some civilians were taken hostage and transferred to Russian territory, while others endured military actions, repressions, and ecological and humanitarian challenges but had to remain under occupation. This was especially true for those with reduced mobility or other obligations. We do not know how many people temporarily left the occupied territories in the direction of Russia and then returned to their homes because they could not find accommodation or work in Russia, left its territory to other countries, or had to visit the occupied territories for other reasons.⁶

The lack of reliable demographic data leaves room for speculation about the number of people fleeing the military actions, and this is especially so considering the absence of independent oversight and verification about how the data have been produced, by whom, and for what purposes. Recognising the sources and agendas of data-producing and data-circulating actors can help us be more critical towards

6 International Organization for Migration (IOM) UN Migration, *LATVIA. On the Way Back to Ukraine: Surveys with Refugees on Destinations, Length of Stay & Assistance*, report, April–June 2023, https://dtm.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdh1461/files/reports/DTM_2023_LVA_Crossing_g_back_survey_Ukraine_Q2.pdf [accessed: 25.07.2024].

the numbers and mitigate the potential negative effects of such circulations. These numbers do not exist in a vacuum; they have concrete political effects and shape and legitimise policies, primarily towards the (un)counted people themselves.⁷

War-displaced Ukrainians in Russia remain largely outside of international protection schemes and without support from the Ukrainian state because the diplomatic ties between Ukraine and Russia were cut in February 2022. Russia closed all humanitarian corridors between the occupied territories and the Ukrainian-controlled territories of Ukraine in the spring of 2022. Most civilians fleeing the war had little choice about their route of escape from active warzones, and many are considered deportees by the Ukrainian government and some international observers.⁸ Some civilians were transported by the Russian authorities, but the majority escaped the war on their own in the only available direction of Russia. All had to undergo a ‘filtration’ procedure: a mandatory screening process that involved a document check, having their fingerprints and photo taken, phone inspections, body searches, questioning, and, for some people, (often) arbitrary detention and torture.⁹ The international community has rightly focused on the forcible transfer of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories to Russia and has noted that these may be qualified as genocidal deportations.¹⁰

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- 7 Peter Andreas and Kelly M. Greenhill, “Introduction: The Politics of Numbers”, in: Peter Andreas and Kelly M. Greenhill (eds.), *Sex, Drugs, and Body Counts: The Politics of Numbers in Global Crime and Conflict*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010, 1–18.
- 8 5:00 AM Coalition, *Deportation of Ukrainian citizens from the territory of active military operations or from the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus*, report, https://zmina.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/01/deportation_eng.pdf [accessed: 25.07.2024]; and Human Rights Centre ZMINA, *Deportation of Ukrainian Citizens to the Territory of the Russian Federation: Signs and Context*, report, April 2023, https://zmina.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/05/deport_people_eng_web.pdf, [accessed: 25.07.2024].
- 9 Amnesty International, “Like A Prison Convoy”: *Russia’s Unlawful Transfer And Abuse of Civilians In Ukraine During ‘Filtration’*, report, 10 November 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/6136/2022/en/> [accessed: 12.08.2023]; Yale School of Public Health Humanitarian Research Lab, *System of Filtration: Mapping Russia’s Detention Operations in Donetsk Oblast*, report, 25 August 2022, <https://hub.conflictobservatory.org/portal/sharing/rest/content/items/7d1c90eb89d3446f9e708b87b69ad0d8/data> [accessed: 25.07.2024]; and Daria Getmanova and Svitlana Matviyenko, “Producing the Subject of Deportation: Filtration Processes during the Russia–Ukraine War”, *Sociologica* 16/2, 2022, 239–252.
- 10 Oksana Dudko, “A Conceptual Limbo of Genocide: Russian Rhetoric, Mass Atrocities in Ukraine, and the Current Definition’s Limits”, *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 64/2–3, 2022, 133–145; Kristina Hook, *The Russian Federation’s Escalating Commission of Genocide in Ukraine: A Legal Analysis*, report, July 2023, https://newlinesinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/26-Genocide-Ukraine-Report-NISLAP_.pdf [accessed: 25.07.2024]; Victoria Colvin and Phil Orchard, “Forced Deportations and the Ukraine War: Russian Culpability in Atrocity Crimes”, *Violence: An International Journal* 3/2, 2023, 1–20; Parliamentary Assembly Council

Unsurprisingly, since the full-scale invasion, the Russian authorities have published even more limited migration statistics¹¹ that do not explicitly separate Ukrainians displaced due to the Russian invasion from other cross-border travellers. They also do not publish the number of transit international travellers (including Ukrainians fleeing the invasion) who left the territory of the Russian Federation.

Nonetheless, it is regrettable to see how Ukrainian officials repeat and amplify Russian falsifications. For instance, in a report published in August 2023, Russian Presidential Children's Ombudswoman Maria Lvova-Belova (who was issued an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March 2023 for crimes against Ukrainian children) stated: "From February 2022, the Russian Federation accepted [prinyala, Russian] 4.8 million residents from Ukraine and the republics of the Donbas, among them are more 700 thousand children".¹² Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets quickly reacted to this report, stating, "in 2022, Russia transferred [vyvezla, Ukrainian] more than 700,000 children from Ukraine",¹³ and said that this is yet further proof of the deportation of Ukrainian children. Other

of Europe, "Deportations and Forcible Transfers of Ukrainian Children and Other Civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian Territories Temporarily Occupied", Resolution 2495, 2023, <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/31776/html> [accessed: 25.07.2024]; Veronika Bilkova, Cecilie Hellestveit, and Elina Steinerte, *Report on Violations and Abuses of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, Related to the Forcible Transfer and/or Deportation of Ukrainian Children to the Russian Federation*, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, report, 2023, https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/7/542751_1.pdf [accessed: 12.08.2023]; Yulia Ioffe, "Forcibly Transferring Ukrainian Children to the Russian Federation: A Genocide?", *Journal of Genocide Research* (Forthcoming), 2022, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4236369 [accessed: 25.07.2024]; Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial Brussels, *Violation of the Rights of Children Taken from Ukraine to Russia and Belarus as a Result of Russian Military Aggression*, report, 12 June 2023, <https://adcmemorial.org/en/publications/violation-of-the-rights-of-children-taken-from-ukraine-to-russia-and-belarus-as-a-result-of-russian-military-aggression/> [accessed: 25.07.2024]; and Kidmapping map, <https://mapping.kids> [accessed: 25.07.2024].

- 11 Anastasija Kokourova, "17 organov vlasti zasekretili statistiku s fevralya proshlogo goda" ("17 Governmental Institutions Made Statistics Secret as of February of Last Year"), *Esli byt tochnym (To Be Precise)*, 18 May 2023, <https://tochno.st/materials/zasekretili-statistiku-s-fevralya-proshlogo-goda> [accessed: 25.07.2024].
- 12 Maria Lvova-Belova, *Doklad o deyatel'nosti Upolnomochennogo pri Prezidente Rossiiskoi Federatsii po pravam rebenka v 2022 godu (Report on the Activity of the Russian Federation's Presidential Children's Rights Ombudsman in 2022)*, report, 2023, p.117, [http://deti.gov.ru/detigray/upload/documents/July2023/7\)kHUTqLlsZL45\)Dp4Xl.pdf](http://deti.gov.ru/detigray/upload/documents/July2023/7)kHUTqLlsZL45)Dp4Xl.pdf) [accessed: 12.08.2023] [author's trans.].
- 13 Ombudsman Lubinets Dmytro, "Deportatsiia ditei – ne 'dobra sprava', a zlochyn!" ("The Deportation of Children is Not a 'Good Deed', but a Crime"), Telegram post, 31 July 2023, https://t.me/dmytro_lubinets/3194 [accessed: 25.07.2024] [author's trans.].

officials doubt the number of 700,000, for example, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk, who often comments on the issue of the forced transfer of children.¹⁴ Nonetheless, Lubinets's statement illustrates that the Ukrainian side has limited sources of information about the number of Ukrainian citizens displaced to Russia, yet it uses Russia's falsified numbers to highlight the scale of its war crimes. To compare the range of discrepancies, as of 12 August 2023, the official Ukrainian number of documented children forcibly transferred to Russia was 19,546, of whom 386 were returned to Ukraine.¹⁵ Where does this discrepancy in numbers come from?

In trying to provide answers, I first briefly discuss the concept of the 'politics of numbers' and its relevance for my analysis in this case study. Second, I compare data on the forced displacement of Ukrainians to Russia provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), official Ukrainian sources, and official Russian sources, noting discrepancies, inconsistencies, and gaps. Third, I focus on the available – albeit limited and scrutiny-requiring – migration statistics of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs to demonstrate that even based on official Russian sources, we can conclude that the publicly stated numbers of Ukrainians in Russia are inflated and do not match the records of the Russian institutions responsible for migration statistics. Finally, I conclude with a reflection on why these purposefully distorted numbers continue to circulate in the official narratives of not only Russia but also Ukraine, and why international agencies and Ukrainian officials should be more critical in repeating these falsified numbers.

The Politics of Numbers

Statistics on the number of the displaced are used for a variety of purposes: to justify the allocation of resources, anticipate the social and economic impacts of displacement, envisage potential security challenges, and ensure that the displaced are taken into consideration when policies are being formulated.¹⁶ For these reasons,

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- 14 Anastaiia Poia, "Do Ukrainy povernuly shchonaimenshe 380 ukrainskykh ditei, yaki buly deportovani do RF – Vereshchuk" ("At Least 380 Ukrainian Children Deported to the Russian Federation Were Returned to Ukraine"), *Ukrainska Pravda (Ukrainian Truth)*, 10 August 2023, <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2023/08/10/255831/> [accessed: 25.07.2024].
- 15 See updated data on the Children of War portal: Dity viiny (Children of War), <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua> [accessed: 25.07.2024]. Civic initiatives, such as Save Ukraine, Helping to Leave, SOS Ukraine, and The Ark help with evacuating children and adults from the temporarily occupied territories and from Russia to Ukraine or European countries.
- 16 Jeff Crisp, "Who Has Counted the Refugees?" UNHCR and the Politics of Numbers", *New Issues in Refugee Research*, June 1999, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4ff58e4b2.pdf> [accessed: 25.07.2024].

it is important to know not only the overall number of the displaced but also their composition (e.g., gender, age), education levels, skills, occupations, and other dynamically changing needs. Reliable, comprehensive, and up-to-date data is thus essential for state policies. However, the ‘politics of numbers’, that is “intentional efforts by individuals or institutions [to lower or inflate numbers] to pursue their own interests and to influence the behaviour of others”¹⁷, interfere with this equation. Reliable data is difficult to obtain in a situation of war with unclear realities on the ground. Discrepancies, omissions, and errors in the numbers collected can occur for a multitude of reasons: poor training, a lack of technological infrastructure and local knowledge, human error, a lack of access to certain areas, the urgency of intervention, and the breakdown of institutions. But, as Joël Glasman and Brendan Lawson argue, this “can also be due to manipulation. A whole series of studies shows that states often have an interest in disguising humanitarian statistic”.¹⁸ The number of casualties, the displaced, and people particular in need or vulnerable situations carry not only humanitarian or technical value but also political and moral weight, often used to highlight the scale of man-made inequalities and injustices.¹⁹

The scales of displacement and return have symbolic meanings for state actors, either of political failure (a massive outflow of the population) or political success (a high number of returns). Hosting displaced people or returnees is also a political gesture to show a country’s humanitarian effort and an argument for obtaining international aid. Countries often use an exaggerated number of incoming displaced people to embarrass the country of origin and point out its human rights violations or other reasons that forced people to flee.²⁰ Lowering the number might mean the opposite – minimising and legitimising the actions of those who provoked the displacement or denying the scale of the problem.

Gabriel Cardona-Fox argues that the collection of data is inherently political, especially in such countries as Russia, which are often ‘blind spots’ for international statistical bodies.²¹ Both exaggerating and lowering the numbers may serve operational, conceptual, and political purposes to heighten or hide certain social, economic, or demographic phenomena. In this regard, Caress Schenk’s analysis of migration statistics in Russia demonstrates gaps due to corruption and informality

17 Ibid., 17.

18 Joël Glasman and Brendan Lawson, “Ten Things We Know about Humanitarian Numbers”, *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 5/1, 2023, 1–10, here 2.

19 Ibid., 2–4.

20 Ibid., 17.

21 Gabriel Cardona-Fox, “The Politics of IDP Data”, *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 39/4, 2020, 620–633.

within the responsible institutions, frequent changes in migration policies and data collection regulations, as well as the arbitrariness of data collection on the ground.²²

When we look at the exaggerated Russian number of persons displaced from Ukraine to its territory (about 5.4 million), the reasoning for such distortion seems to be threefold. First, this is to embarrass the Ukrainian state that supposedly failed to prevent the war and to protect and evacuate its citizens and, as a result, now experiences a large-scale outflow of the population and faces long-term demographic problems.²³ Second, a clear intention is to portray Russia as the biggest ‘humanitarian’ host of displaced Ukrainians since 2014 – as a country that is ‘evacuating’ civilians from the combat zone and opening its borders to people fleeing the ‘anti-Russian hostile regime’ and willing to ‘find refuge’ in Russia, which provides them with all kinds of support [sic].²⁴ Third, an inflated number of displaced Ukrainians in Russia questions the mandates and effectiveness of the UNHCR and other UN institutions that accept their de facto powerlessness to even count the displaced, not to even raise the issue of protection and the rights of the displaced in a country that caused their displacement and dispossession in the first place.

UNHCR Data

The last available UNHCR Ukraine Data Portal number of border crossings from Ukraine to Russia since the start of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022 amounts to 2.85 million (see Figure 13).²⁵ It is dated 3 October 2022, two days before the Russian Federation annexed the four occupied oblasts of Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson) and declared their residents Russian cit-

22 Caress Schenk, “Counting Migrants in Russia: The Human Dimension of Administrative Data Production”, *International Migration Review*, 2023, 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01979183231154565>; Caress Schenk, “The Kremlin Has Another Weapon in Its Arsenal: Migration Policy”, *The Washington Post*, 11 April 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/04/11/russia-ukraine-weaponized-migration/> [accessed: 12.08.2023].

23 For instance, already in March 2022, the Head of the Russian National Centre for Defence, Command General Mikhail Mezetsev, announced that the Ukrainian government is using civilians as ‘human shields’ and that they have a list of 2.7 million people willing to be relocated to Russia. See: *RIA Novosti (RIA News)*, “Minoborony: bolee 2,7 milliona ukrainitsev hotyat evakuirovatsya v Rossiyu” (“The Ministry of Defence: More than 2.7 Million Ukrainians Want to Evacuate to Russia”), 19 March 2022, <https://ria.ru/20220319/evakuatsiya-1779069058.html> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

24 Kuznetsova, “To Help ‘Brotherly People?’”, 509, 520.

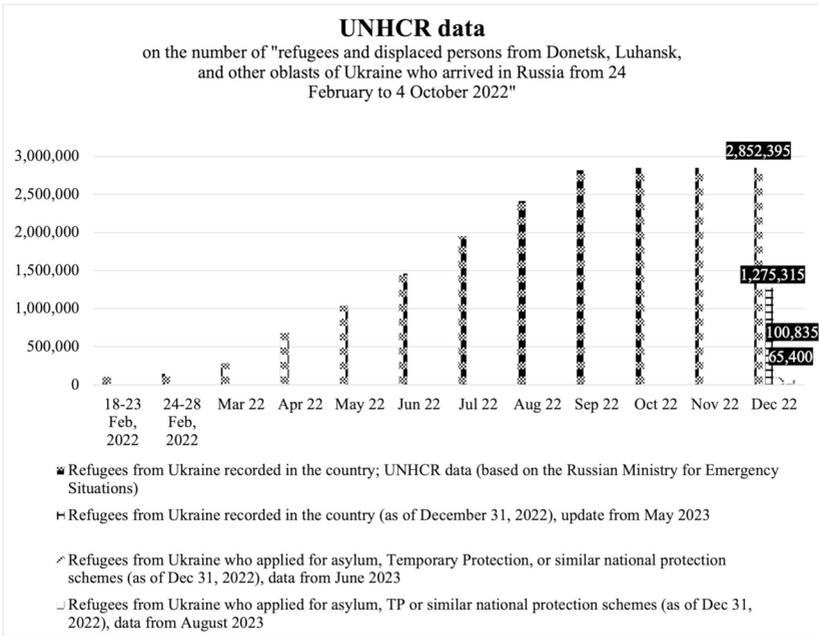
25 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Operational Data Portal, “Ukraine Refugee Situation”, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine/location> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

izens.²⁶ Since then, we have seen no UNHCR updates on the number of border crossings between Ukraine and Russia. I assume this is due to the Russian position that residents in the occupied territories are now ‘Russian’ citizens moving within ‘Russian’ (in fact occupied) territory and, hence, should no longer be considered as cross-border ‘refugees’. The UNHCR’s history of involvement in handling post-Soviet displacements was limited and not particularly successful, according to its own evaluation,²⁷ and it looks like they reverted to their usual approach when divergent statistics emerged: “UNHCR staff ... see no value risking the confrontation with the host government [...]”.²⁸ As Irina Mützelburg notes, the UNHCR often compiles numbers measuring different facts from different countries (border crossings, estimates of the displaced, the number of registered people) into one number of ‘refugees from Ukraine’ to demonstrate the extent of the crisis.²⁹

There is no doubt that counting the displaced is a complicated task, especially amidst the ongoing war. This task involves establishing criteria and a methodology for who is counted, the capacity (or lack thereof) to organise the process, accounting for the natural processes of birth, death, and onward or return movement among the displaced, and political considerations.³⁰ Nonetheless, the UNHCR does not provide information about any independent monitoring mechanism to verify (or at least review the initial sources) the data it makes publicly available under its logo on the UNHCR portal, side-by-side with data coming from other countries. Moreover, the lags in updates and discrepancies in numbers are also unexplained, leaving open questions about the reliability and comprehensiveness of UNHCR-branded data.

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- 26 Ofitsialnoe opublikovanie pravovykh aktov (Official Publication of Legal Acts), Federal Laws the Russian Federation from 04 October 2022, no. 372-F3, no. 373-F3, no. 374-F3, and no. 375-F3, <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/search?pageSize=30&index=1&DocumentTypes=82a8bf1c-3bc7-47ed-827f-7affd43a7f27&PublishDateSearchType=1&PublishDate=05.10.2022&NumberSearchType=0&DocumentDateSearchType=0&JdRegSearchType=0&SortedBy=6&SortDestination=1> [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 27 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “Displacement in the former Soviet region”, in: *The State of the World’s Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action*, report, 2000, 185–209, <https://www.unhcr.org/media/state-worlds-refugees-2000-fifty-years-humanitarian-action-chapter-8-displacement-former> [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 28 Crisp, “Who Has Counted the Refugees?”, 16.
- 29 Brendan Lawson and Irina Mützelburg, “Humanitarian Numbers in the Russian–Ukrainian War: An Interview with Irina Mützelburg (October 2022)”, *Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 5/1, 2023, 52–61, here 54.
- 30 Jeff Crisp, “Who Is Counting the Refugees? Displacement Data, Its Limitations, and Potential for Misuse”, *Refugee History*, 04 August 2022, <https://refugeehistory.org/blog/2022/8/4/who-is-counting-refugees-displacement-data-its-limitations-and-potential-for-misuse> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

Figure 13: UNHCR data on the number of “refugees and displaced persons from Donetsk, Luhansk, and other oblasts of Ukraine who arrived in Russia from 24 February to 4 October 2022”³¹



All Figures are based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

War-displaced Ukrainian citizens in Russia cannot rely on the large-scale help of international organisations that usually operate in situations of mass refugee influx, such as the UNHCR or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC’s activities in Russia have been severely criticised in Ukraine for their ineffectiveness in the search for the missing and their lack of meaningful impact on the lives of captured civilians and military personnel.³² Even though the UNHCR office

31 This is a definition used by the UNHCR Russia in its monthly digests. See: “UNHCR Russia Monthly Digest, December 2022”, 1, https://www.unhcr.org/ru/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/2023/03/UNHCR_monthly_digest_Russia_December_2022_EN.pdf [accessed: 13.08.2023]. Here and throughout the text I put this definition in quotation marks because, in fact, forcibly displaced Ukrainians do not receive refugee status in Russia, nor do the majority of them receive any other national humanitarian protection status, as I explore in section B. *Migration Registration Data (from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs)*.

32 See, for instance, the report of the Central Tracing Agency of the ICRC on its activity during the Russo–Ukrainian War as of July 2023: International Committee of the Red Cross, *ICRC’s Central Tracing Agency Bureau for the International Armed Conflict between the Rus-*

in Russia exists and provides general information about the entry and condition of the reception of displaced Ukrainians, it does not work with them directly (or rather, it is not allowed to by the Russian authoritarian regime). Rather, the UNHCR in Russia relies on its cooperation with local Russian organisations, such as the Civic Assistance Committee (*Grazhdanskoe sodeistvie*), the Russian Red Cross, the Health and Life Charitable Foundation (*Zdorovie i zhyzn*), and the Silsila Foundation for the Distribution of Humanitarian Aid.³³ The UNHCR depends on the data and access provided by the state, which is limited to occasional visits to the Temporary Accommodation Centres (TAPs) across the country accompanied by Russian officials and, in particular, the Ombudswoman's representatives. Noteworthy, the total number of displaced people residing in the 807 TAPs in 58 Russian regions reached only 40,680 people in October 2022, including 12,470 children.³⁴ This was less than half of the initially planned number of 95,909 displaced people who should have been mandatorily distributed and accommodated in 1,533 TAPs, as became apparent from the Russian government's quotas established in the early days of the full-scale invasion.³⁵ What then happened to the supposedly remaining 2.84 million not hosted in the TAPs? The UNHCR gives no answers.

Nonetheless, looking at Figure 13, we see that up until June 2023, the number of 2.85 million border crossings was mistakenly equated to the actual number of individuals who were displaced to Russia. However, when we look at the recently published data on the UNHCR portal (Figure 13), the number of individuals recorded as "refugees from Ukraine [sic]"³⁶ as of December 2022 is significantly fewer than 2.85 million. In fact, it is only 1.27 million. Even more striking is the unexplained discrepancy between 1.27 million "refugees from Ukraine" and the number of individuals

sian Federation and Ukraine, report, 2023, https://t.me/mkku_ru/596 [accessed: 12.08.2023]. Note the overall number of applications (more than 86,000) and the number of cases where information about the whereabouts of the missing person has been provided (6,000).

33 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Russia, "Kuda možno obratitsya za pomoshchyu litsam, pribyvayushchim na territoriyu RF v svyazi s konfliktom v Ukraine?" ("Where Can People Arriving on the Territory of the Russian Federation in Connection with the Conflict in Ukraine Apply for Assistance?"), 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/ru/28617-helpforukrref.html> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

34 RIA Novosti (RIA News), "Chislo PVR dlya bezhentsev v Rossii dostiglo 807" ("The Number of TAPs in Russia Reached 807"), 24 October 2022, <https://ria.ru/20221024/bezhentsy-1826256366.html> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

35 Ofitsialnoe opublikovanie pravovykh aktov (Official Publication of Legal Acts), Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation from 12 March 2022, no. 349, <http://www.publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202203120005?index=6> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

36 I discuss the legal statuses of forcibly displaced Ukrainian citizens later in the text.

who applied for any kind of legal status in Russia by the end of 2022. The latter number has also decreased from the 100,000 reported in June 2023 to 65,400 in August 2023.³⁷ How did 2.85 million transform into 65,000? Does the 65,000 include those residing in the TAPs? This is not clear.

Official Ukrainian Data

There is currently no mechanism for Ukrainians in Russia to declare their (involuntary) presence on Russian territory since the embassy and consulates of Ukraine do not function on the territory of the aggressor state. The familiar number of 2.85 million 'border crossings' has been circulating in Ukrainian and international official reports as the actual number of forcibly displaced Ukrainians in Russia. This was the only available estimate coming from the UN agency that Ukrainian officials could rely on, although this number was, in fact, initially coming from the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations. As visible in Figure 14 and Figure 15, there is no consistency among Ukrainian officials on the number of Ukrainians who are considered forcibly displaced or deported to Russia. Sometimes the number is closer to the UNHCR estimates, sometimes to the numbers published by Russia, and sometimes there is no explanation provided as to where the numbers come from.

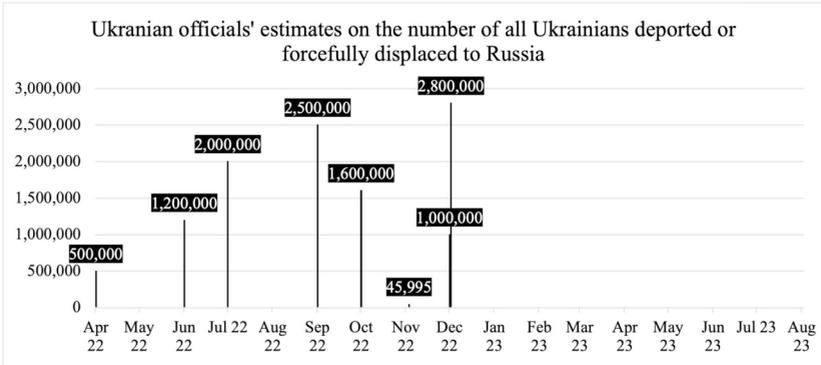
Looking at the timelines of the total number of the displaced and the number of displaced children, it is noticeable that since early 2023, Ukrainian officials have gradually moved to commenting only on the number of forcibly transferred/deported children and do not comment on the total number of Ukrainians who might be in Russia. This shift might be related to the fact that until recently there were no UNHCR updates (though the recent figures from the summer of 2023 have not been commented on by Ukrainian officials either) or because Ukrainian officials acknowledge that they cannot estimate the fluctuating number of people who move from the occupied territories to Russia and/or onwards.

Considering that the forcefully displaced Ukrainians are coming from an active warzone, they often do not have the necessary documents, or these might have been destroyed, lost during the journey, or taken away during the 'filtration' procedure, which makes daily life and further travel difficult for them. Children, and especially newborns, might not have any Ukrainian documents, while older people might only have birth certificates and not IDs or other documents necessary for daily lives abroad and travel. Furthermore, Ukrainian bank cards and SIM cards do not work in Russia. The displaced are also not allowed to exchange Ukrainian currency, so their actions in Russia are severely constrained. Registering with the Russian authorities

37 Please see all the details about the numbers and sources in Figure 23.

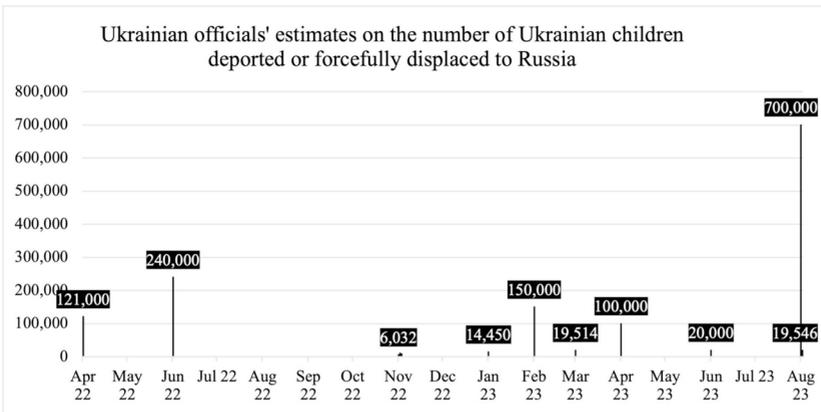
is thus necessary for Ukrainian citizens to cover their basic needs in Russia, but it also makes them part of the Russian ‘politics of numbers’.

Figure 14: Ukrainian officials’ estimates on the total number of forcefully displaced or deported Ukrainians (April 2022–August 2023)



All Figures are based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

Figure 15: Ukrainian officials’ estimates on the number of forcefully displaced or deported Ukrainian children (April 2022–August 2023)



All Figures are based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

Once in Russia, forcefully displaced Ukrainians have limited choices for further actions that depend on their social ties, available resources, and sociodemographic category. Those who have relatives or friends in Russia, have sufficient financial means, or do not want to be under increased surveillance can try evading the governmental pathway of being mandatorily distributed across the Russian regions and settled into one of the TAPs (located in hostels, summer camps, sanatoria, or sports facilities). TAPs provide the displaced with free accommodation and meals, but they are usually in remote areas far from employment opportunities, education, and healthcare facilities.

Ukrainian citizens outside the government-run TAPs struggle to access any public services without first legalising their stay in Russia, which can take up to six months (see more in the following sections). Official employment and long-term renting require legal status too. Kindergarten and school places for war-displaced children are only available if they officially register as residing in the same district, which is not always possible due to landlords' unwillingness to register temporary dwellers, often with no income. While waiting for their documentation, many people take precarious informal jobs and live in extremely strenuous conditions. Often, displaced people earn just enough to cover expenses and necessities but cannot afford medical care or clothes. Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) report that it takes months to receive the one-off cash payment of 10,000 RUB (about 100 EUR) promised by the Russian government. Until then, people remain without financial help and rely on volunteer donations of food, clothes, non-food items, toiletries, basic furniture, and second-hand gadgets to study and work online.³⁸

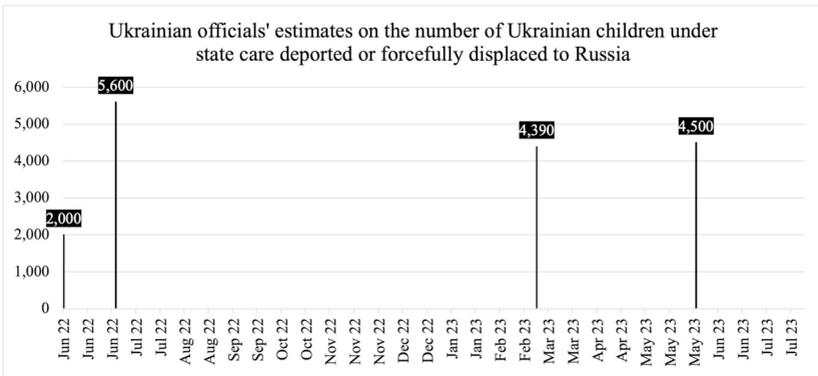
People with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, the elderly, orphaned children, or those under state care are dependent on the decisions taken on their behalf by the Russian authorities who organised the so-called 'evacuations' from the occupied territories.³⁹ These groups are the most vulnerable and have little say about where they

38 See, for instance, reports of the House with a Lighthouse Foundation for Assistance to Refugees (which is donation funded), the Civic Assistance Committee (which is UNHCR and donation funded), the Russian Red Cross (which is state and donation funded), and the Russian Orthodox Church (which is state and donation funded): Fond pomoshchi bezhentsam "Dom s mayakom" (House with a Lighthouse Foundation for Assistance to Refugees), official website, <https://mayak.fund> [accessed: 31.07.2024]; Komitet "Grazhdanskoe sodeistvie" (Civic Assistance Committee), official website, <https://refugee.ru> [accessed: 31.07.2024]; Russian Red Cross, "Tsent Rossiiskogo Krasnogo Kresta po voprosam migratsii" ("The Russian Red Cross Centre for Migration Issues"), <https://www.r edcross.ru/activity/migratsiya/> [accessed: 31.07.2024]; and the Russian Orthodox Church, "Tserkovnaya pomoshch bezhentsam i postradavshim mirnym zhitelyam" ("Church Aid to Refugees and Affected Civilians"), <https://помощьвбеде.рф> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

39 Human Rights Centre ZMINA, *Deportation of Custodial Settings from Occupied Territories of Ukraine*, report, 2023, https://zmina.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/07/deportation_eng_web.pdf [accessed: 31.07.2024].

will be evacuated to and which status they will receive. According to the Ukrainian delegation to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, “7700 persons with disabilities, including children, were in institutions in areas that had fallen under Russian occupation”.⁴⁰ Some institutions have not been evacuated to Ukrainian-controlled territory due to rapidly advancing Russian forces, the lack of human and logistical resources for evacuation, and the medical needs of the patients. Some children from these institutions were later transferred to Russia by the occupying authorities for placement in ‘foster care families’, often without the consent of their parents or legal guardians in Ukraine.⁴¹

Figure 16: Ukrainian officials’ estimates on the number of children under state care forcefully displaced or deported to Russia (April 2022–August 2023)



All Figures are based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

Looking at Figure 16, we see that Ukrainian officials have more consistently estimated the category of children under state care. It is, however, unclear whether the numbers announced by Ukrainian officials include children under state care from territories occupied since 2014. Russian Presidential Children’s Ombudswoman Lvova-Belova acknowledged that up to 1,500 children from these territories have

40 Human Rights Watch, “We Must Provide a Family, Not Rebuild Orphanages”: *The Consequences of Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine for Children in Ukrainian Residential Institutions*, report, 13 March 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/03/13/we-must-provide-family-not-rebuild-orphan-ages/consequences-russias-invasion> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

41 Georgette Mulheir et al., *Bridging the Gaps: Four Studies on the Situation of Ukrainian Children with Disabilities and Their Families since the War Began*, European Disability Forum, report, 15 February 2023, 43–45, 61–62, <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2023/02/221215-BRIDGING-THE-GAPS-extended-summary-FINAL.pdf> [accessed: 12.07.2024].

been (at least temporarily) transferred to Russia since February 2022.⁴² To note, many were born after the occupation of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in 2014 and have not been registered in Ukraine at all.

Overall, data circulated by Ukrainian officials about the number of Ukrainians forcefully displaced to Russia reflect the uncertainty and speculations about the potential scale of such displacement. Even though Ukrainian authorities are creating a database of verified and documented individual cases,⁴³ time and changing realities in the occupied territories (in 2014 and 2022) complicate tracing people, who gradually fall beyond the registers of living, missing, or deceased Ukrainian citizens. Those displaced to Russia, unfortunately, become part of the inflated number spread by the government-controlled Russian media.

Official Russian Data

In this section, I analyse three types of data coming from the Russian authorities: 1) data from the state media source TASS (and other outlets quoting TASS), which regularly reported on the dynamic of the overall number of displaced people from February 2022 to March 2023; 2) statistics on the migration registrations of Ukrainian citizens after their arrival to Russia; and 3) statistics on the number of Ukrainian nationals who received any kind of legal status in Russia in 2022/2023.

A. TASS Reporting from a Source in Russian Security Services

In March 2023, the official Russian press agency TASS reported a staggering number of people displaced from Ukraine to Russia: 5.4 million, including 744,000 children (see Figure 17 and Figure 18).⁴⁴ However, this independently unverified number is misleading. It most probably reflects the overall number of crossings between Russia and the occupied Ukrainian territories during 2022. For instance, according to a report by the Civic Assistance Committee – one of the few NGOs advocating for

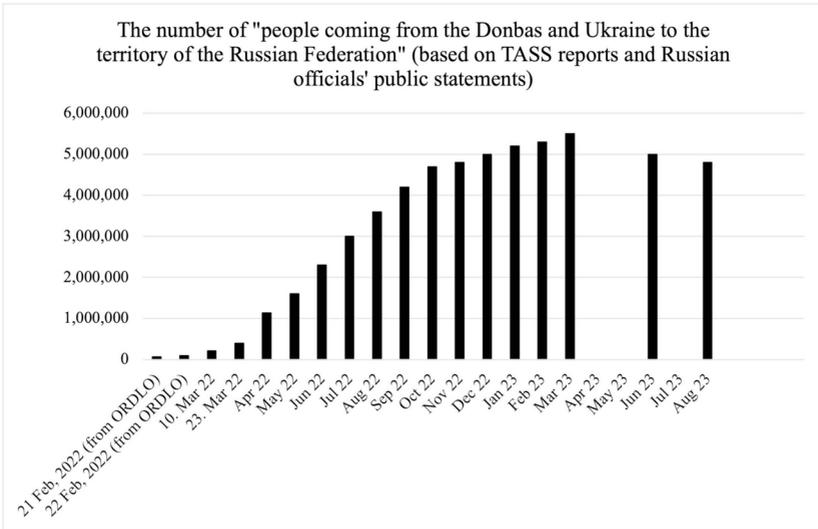
42 Lvova-Belova, *Doklad o deyatelnosti*, 117.

43 See: Dity viiny, <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>. Also, since May 2023, the Unified Database of Missing Persons has registered over 24,000 Ukrainian citizens (military and civilian) as missing due to war. Alona Mazurenko, “Do reestru znyklykh bezvisty vnesly informat-siiu pro ponad 24 tysiatchi osib – upovnovazheni” (“More than 24,000 Persons Were Registered in the Database of Missing Persons”), *Ukrainska Pravda (Ukrainian Truth)*, 12 July 2023, <https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2023/07/12/7410945/> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

44 TASS, “Chislo pribyvyshikh v RF bezhentsev s territorii Ukrainy i Donbassa prevysilo 5,4 mln chelovek” (“The Number of Refugees Coming to Russia from the Territory of Ukraine and the Donbas Surpassed 5.4 Mil People”), 13 March 2023, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/17248303> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

refugee rights in Russia – this manipulation is covered using multiple, often contradictory, and mutually exclusive labels to describe who is moving and their motives and intentions.

Figure 17: The total number of “people coming from the Donbas and Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation” (the label most used by TASS⁴⁵)



This Figure is based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

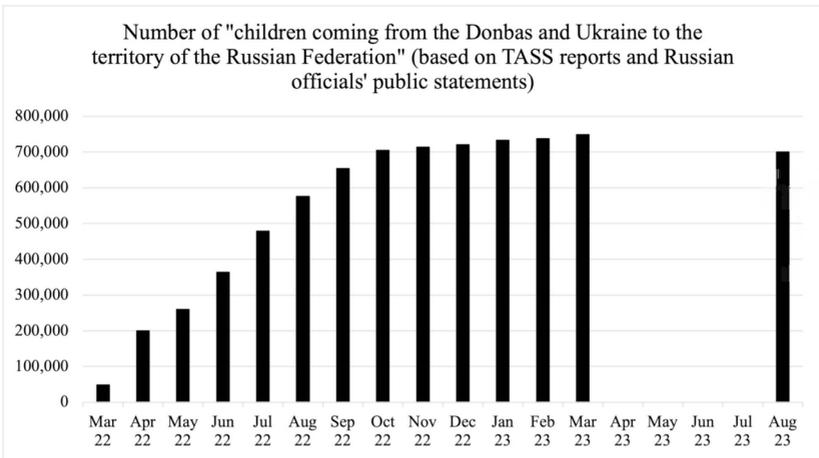
A range of labels has been used to categorise this migration flow, such as ‘arriving people’ (*pribyvshie*), ‘refugees’ (*bezhtentsy*), ‘people who crossed the border’ (*peresekshyie granitsu*), ‘people currently in the Russian Federation’ (*nakhodyashchiesya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii*), ‘people accepted by the Russian Federation’ (*lyudi, kotorykh prinyala Rossiiskaya Federatsiya*), ‘evacuees’ (*evakuirovannyye*), the ‘(self)-evacuated’ (*evakuirovavshiesya*), and the ‘forcibly resettled’ (*vynuzhdennyye pereselentsy*). The labels are also political. They signal a relationship of power and have consequences in terms of status as well as the aid and moral obligations the host state and society have towards them.⁴⁶ Noteworthy are the absence of any mention of the reason

45 See, for example: TASS, “Chislo pribyvshikh v RF bezhtentsev s territorii Ukrainy i Donbassa prevysilo 5,4 mln chelovek” (“The Number of Refugees Coming to Russia from the Territory of Ukraine and the Donbas Surpassed 5.4 Mil People”), 13 March 2023, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/17248303> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

46 Rebecca Hamlin, *Crossing: How We Label and React to People on the Move*, Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2021, 12–13.

why people were displaced as well as an emphasis on either the humanitarian (e.g., ‘evacuees’) or neutral (e.g., ‘arriving’, ‘accepted’) character of their migration. These labels and consequently their numbers presented by the authorities do not distinguish between Ukrainian nationals and other cross-border travellers (Russian or third-country nationals) or between those displaced by war and those travelling for other reasons; they also include people who transited through Russia and left its territory, as well as those who returned to live in the occupied territories.⁴⁷ Combining all these different categories of travellers and labelling them ‘refugees from Ukraine in Russia’ is thus misleading.

Figure 18: *The number of children who are part of the “people coming from the Donbas and Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation” (the label most used by TASS)⁴⁸*



This Figure is based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

By the end of 2022, Georgia recorded 25,204 Ukrainian refugees, Azerbaijan almost 7,000, Armenia 360, and Kazakhstan around 7,000. As these countries do not share direct land borders with Ukraine, and considering that air travel has been suspended in Ukraine since the first day of the invasion, Ukrainian refugees reached

47 Konstantin Troitskii, *Skolko bezhentsev s Ukrainy nakhoditsya v Rossiiskoi Federatsii?* (How Many Refugees from Ukraine Are in the Russian Federation?), Komitet “Grazhdanskoe sodeistvie” (Civic Assistance Committee), report, 2023, https://refugee.ru/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/troiczikij-k.e.-skolko-bezhenczev-iz-ukrainy-v-rossijskoj-federaczi_-1-1.pdf [accessed: 31.07.2024].

48 See previous footnote.

these countries predominantly by transiting through Russia. The number of registered Ukrainian refugees in these countries does not account for those Ukrainian citizens who entered from Russia and transited onwards, so the overall number of exits from Russia is even higher than the number of registered refugees in these countries.⁴⁹ For example, a report by UNHCR and World Vision Georgia indicates that at least half of the Ukrainian refugees in the country entered from Russia and originated from the Donetsk and Kherson Oblasts.⁵⁰ Similarly, looking westward, in 2022, Estonia and Latvia respectively recorded (in addition to those Ukrainian refugees who stayed) 53,000 and 230,000 Ukrainian citizens entering from Russia or Belarus and transiting through their territories to reach other EU countries or Ukraine.⁵¹ We can also assume that some Ukrainian nationals who were already holders of Russian citizenship left Russia in 2022 as part of the larger Russian anti-war and draft evasion emigration.⁵²

We should also take into account that, according to TASS, in the first months of the full-scale invasion, the majority and later at least half of the crossings reported as part of the overall 5.4 million were done (in March–June 2022) by residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, which have been occupied since 2014.⁵³ This is significant, as many of these residents travelled using either their Russian passports or documents issued by the self-proclaimed ‘republics’.⁵⁴ Technically, they did not cross

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- 49 International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), *ICMPD Migration Outlook: Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, 2023, report, 2023, 20, https://www.icmpd.org/file/download/59104/file/230215_ICMPD_Migration_Outlook_EasternEuropeCentralAsia_2023_final.pdf [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 50 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and World Vision Georgia, *Ukrainian refugees in Georgia: Profile, Intentions and Needs*, report, November 2022, 3, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97675> [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 51 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Ukraine Regional Refugee Response Plan (January–December 2023)*, report, 2023, 84, 120, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/97958> [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 52 Emil Kamalov et al., *Russia's 2022 Anti-War Exodus: The Attitudes and Expectations of Russian Migrants*, PONARS Eurasia, report, September 2022, https://www.ponarseurasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Pepm790_Kamalov-Kostenko-Sergeeva-Zavadskaya_Sept2022.pdf [accessed: 12.08.2023]; and Athina Anastasiadou, Artem Volgin, and Douglas R. Leasure, “War and Migration: Quantifying the Russian Exodus through Yandex Search Trends”, *SocArXiv Papers*, 18 May 2023, 1–25, <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/92zam/> [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 53 TASS, “Svyshe 2,3 mln bezhentshev pribyli v Rossiyu s Ukrainy, iz DNR i LNR” (“More than 2.3 Mil Refugees Arrived to Russia from Ukraine, from the DNR and the LNR”), 04 July 2022, <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/15112613> [accessed: 31.07.2024].
- 54 An estimated 1.44 million people received Russian citizenship on the occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts between 2014 and 2021. Komitet “Grazhdanskoe sodeistvie” (Civic Assistance Committee), *Ubezhyshche dlya 0,04% bezhentshev v mire: rossiiskaya migratsyonnaya statistika za 2021 god i ee analitika (Asylum for 0.04 Per-*

the Ukrainian–Russian border as Ukrainian nationals and did not have the obligation to undertake migration registration in Russia (see the following subsection). They could come and go as many times as they needed; however, we must note that the occupying administrations imposed a strict ban on men (ages 18–55) leaving the territories of the self-proclaimed republics due to forced conscription.⁵⁵

On 22 February 2022, Russia recognised these occupied territories as the independent so-called Donetsk and Luhansk ‘People’s Republics’ (the DNR and LNR). Therefore, the migration flow data between these territories and Russia is available for the period between the end of February and the beginning of October 2022, until their annexation by Russia. For instance, according to the information reported by the Russian *Mediazona* outlet, Russian Border Guards recorded a total of 1,129,441 crossings of Russian nationals to these territories in 2022.⁵⁶ Separately, 142,991 border crossings of Russian nationals to Ukraine (apart from those crossing to the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk ‘People’s Republics’) in 2022 have been recorded since the start of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022.⁵⁷ Therefore, looking

cent of World Refugees: Russian Migration Statistics in 2021 and Their Analysis), report, 2022, 15, <https://refugee.ru/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/migraczionnaya-statistika-za-2021-god-i-ee-kratkaya-analitika.docx.pdf> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

55 5:00 AM Coalition, *Forced conscription of Ukrainian citizens in the occupied territory of Ukraine by the Russian Federation: facts and legal classification*, report, 2023, https://zmina.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/01/mobilization_eng.pdf [accessed: 31.07.2024].

56 Sergei Golubev, “Rossiyane postavili rekord po vyezdiam v Tsentralnuyu Aziyu. Chto govoryat poslednie dannye o peresecheniyakh granitsy” (“Record Entry of Russians into Central Asia: What the Latest Data Says About Border Crossings”), *Mediazona (Mediazona)*, 08 November 2022, <https://zona.media/article/2022/11/08/exit> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

57 This number comes from the following calculation: the total number of border crossings of Russian nationals from Russia into Ukraine reported in 2022 was 471,326. From this, we need to deduct the number recorded in the first quarter of 2022 (largely before the full-scale invasion), which was 328,435. Data source: *Mediazona (Mediazona)*, “Kuda vyez-zhali grazhdane Rossii” (“Where Russian Citizens Went”), graphic in a Telegram post, 03 February 2023, <https://t.me/mediazzzona/10585> [accessed: 31.07.2024]. Having in mind that Ukraine introduced a visa regime with Russia in July 2022 and strictly controls the entry of nationals of the aggressor state, we can assume that this number of 142,991 may be an estimate of Ukrainian nationals receiving Russian passports and travelling back to Ukraine through available humanitarian corridors throughout the rest of 2022. However, this number does not match the 18,000 Ukrainians travelling back from Russia to Ukraine through humanitarian corridors in the Sumy and Volyn Oblasts from February 2022 to August 2023, which were recorded by the Ukrainian Border Guards. Data source: *Radio Svoboda (Radio Freedom)*, “Cherez zakryti dilianky kordonu vid pochatku povnomasshtabnoho vtorhnennia povernulos ponad 18 tysyach ukrayintsiiv – DPSU” (“Over 18 Thousand Ukrainians Have Returned through Closed Border Sections since the Beginning of the Full-Scale Invasion – SBGS”), 08 September 2023, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-kordon-poverennya-ukrayintsi-rosiya-demchenko-viyana/32538868.html> [accessed: 31.07.2024]. In any case, further research is necessary.

at the migration balance, we can assume at least 1.26 million border crossings from Russian to Ukrainian territory (both occupied and government-controlled) in 2022 based on the Russian Border Guard's data. Adding this to the available numbers of transit migration to other countries through Russian and Belarusian territory in 2022 (as indicated above, approximately 300,000 people), we end up with at least 1.56 million exit border crossings of Ukrainian nationals (or those with Ukrainian and Russian citizenships) from Russia.

Keeping in mind that people might have been travelling multiple times between the occupied territories and Russia, we can stress that it is incorrect 1) to equate the number of border crossings with the number of individuals; 2) to assume that all individuals travelled because of the war; 3) to frame all individuals as 'arriving' in Russia and not staying temporarily, returning, or travelling onwards; 4) to think that all travellers were only Ukrainian citizens; and 5) to ignore the fact that such large-scale, supposedly permanent displacement of 5.4 million people could not have been managed by such limited government resources as the state-provided TAP accommodations (which is used by 40,000 people – less than one percent of the supposed 5.4 million) and the onetime 10,000 RUB cash payments, which were distributed to a maximum of 1.4 million people based on government funding data.⁵⁸ What about the other millions of supposedly existing 'refugees'? This scale of displacement could not have been simply dispersed across the country.

B. Migration Registration Data (from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs)

As noted above, Ukrainian nationals entering Russia and staying at least temporarily must complete a migration registration (*vstat' na migratsionnyi uchet*), indicating their personal information, place of residence, and reason for entering Russia. Migration registration is a necessary first step in their legalisation and a prerequisite for receiving any kind of social support, employment, or educational placement. In principle, after changing their place of residence, a person has to deregister in their current Russian region and reregister in the new one, or deregister completely if they intend to leave the Russian territory. These (de/re)registrations are not always done or not done on time, so this data is not an accurate reflection of the current situation on the ground but is mostly indicative of the dynamics of migration flow.

58 TASS, "Svyshe 14,1 mlrd rublei vyplatili bezhentsam pribyvshim v Rossiyu s Ukrainy i iz Donbassa" ("Over 14.1 Billion Roubles Paid to Refugees Arriving in Russia from Ukraine and the Donbas"), 05 May 2023, <https://tass.ru/obshchestvo/17683379> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

Figure 19: Russian migration statistics on Ukrainian nationals in 2022/2023 (based on information from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs).

	January–December 2022 ⁵⁹	January–June 2023 ⁶⁰
Total number refugees recorded in the country (UNHCR, as of 31 December 2022)	1,275,315	No updated number

59 This is based on the 2022 statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation and a Civic Assistance Committee report. See: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Otdelnye pokazateli migratsionnoi situatsii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii za yanvar-dekabr 2022 goda s raspredeleniem po stranam i regionam* (Selected Indicators of the Migration Situation in the Russian Federation for January–December 2022 with Distribution by Countries and Regions), report, 18 January 2023, <https://мвд.рф/deyatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/item/35074711/> [accessed: 31.07.2024], (please note that since March 2024 the migration statistics information is no longer publicly available; you can access the previously downloaded copy of this document here https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aChBCaO7V2-QlQ1LcQlPBzAofGE9P1kd/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=118041966722631615728&rtpof=true&sd=true); and Komitet “Grazhdanskoe sodeistvie” (Civic Assistance Committee), *Passport RF stal “toksichnym aktivom”. Statistika MVD za 2022 god: 277 oftssialnykh “bezhtentsev”, snizhenie interesa k grazhdanstvu* (The Russian Passport Has Become a “Toxic Asset”. Ministry of Internal Affairs Statistics for 2022: 277 Official “Refugees”, Declining Interest in Citizenship), report, 23 February 2022, <https://refugee.ru/dokladyi/stats-2022-toxic/> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

60 Based on the 2023 statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation and a Civic Assistance Committee report. See: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Otdelnye pokazateli migratsionnoi situatsiji v Rossijskoj Federatsiji za janvar-ijun 2023 goda s raspredeleniem po stranam i regionam* (Selected Indicators of the Migration Situation in the Russian Federation for January–June 2023 with Distribution by Countries and Regions), report, n.d., <https://мвд.рф/deyatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/item/40034334/> [accessed: 31.07.2024] (please note that since March 2024 the migration statistics information is no longer publicly available; you can access the previously downloaded copy of this document here https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tjUoXnt18asWmCtTVQyab5MCzM1FL96Y/edit?usp=share_link&ouid=118041966722631615728&rtpof=true&sd=true); and Komitet “Grazhdanskoe sodeistvie” (Civic Assistance Committee), *Statistika MVD: chislo oftisialnykh “bezhtentsev” upalo na tret za god, prodolzhaetsya padenie interesa k grazhdanstvu RF* (Ministry of Internal Affairs Statistics: The Number of Official “Refugees” Fell by a Third over the Year, Interest in Russian Citizenship Continues to Fall), report, 28 July 2023, <https://refugee.ru/dokladyi/stats-1q-2023/> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

MIGRATION REGISTRATIONS (<i>migratsionnyi uchet</i>)		
Migration registration (there can be multiple instances per person)	1,069,896	125,903
Migration deregistration (there can be multiple instances per person)	831,611	150,075
Migration registration balance in the given period	+238,285	-24,172
UKRAINIAN NATIONALS – LEGAL STATUS HOLDERS IN RUSSIA BY THE END OF THE PERIOD	January–December 2022	January–June 2023
Temporary asylum status (<i>vremennoe ubezhyshe, VU</i>)	65,374 status-holders by the end of Dec 2022 (97,591 persons received the status in 2022) ⁶¹	51,549 status-holders by the end of March 2023 (2,050 persons received the status between January–March 2023)
Refugee status (<i>status bezhentsa</i>)	26 status-holders by the end of 2022 (5 persons received the status in 2022)	25 status-holder by the end of March 2023
Temporary residence permit (<i>razreshenie na vremennoe prozhivanie, RVP</i>)	35,603 permit-holders by the end of 2022 (29,389 persons received it in 2022)	25,418 status-holders by the end of June 2023 (356 persons received it during the six months of 2023)
Permanent residence permit (<i>vid na zhitelstvo, VNZh</i>)	71,258 permit-holders by the end of 2022 (25,489 persons received it in 2022)	57,351 permit-holders by the end of June 2023 (5,396 persons received it during the six months of 2023)
Citizenship acquisition (excluding passports issued in the occupied territories)	296,901 persons received it during 2022	39,053 persons received it during the six months of 2023
Total number of people with any kind of legal status by the end of 2022	469,162	

61 The lower overall number of temporary protection status-holders by the end of 2022 (65,374) compared to the total number of people who receive the status during 2022 (97,591) is explained by people changing their status to a more permanent one, receiving the Russian citizenship or leaving Russia altogether.

When we look closer at the migration registrations of Ukrainian nationals in Russia in 2022 and 2023 (Figure 19), we see that the UNHCR number of ‘refugees recorded in the country’ – 1.27 million people as of December 2022 – is closer to the number of all migration registrations than any other estimates of the number of displaced Ukrainians. The combined number of migration registrations (and there can be multiple instances per person) in 2022 was over 1 million, but the overall migration balance in that year is an addition of only 238,285, which means that people were registering and then either moving elsewhere in Russia or leaving the Russian territory altogether. The situation in the first six months of 2023 is even more telling, as the migration registration balance is negative (a subtraction of 24,172). Ukrainians either exiting Russia more than entering it or receiving Russian citizenship (which means the person must deregister as a Ukrainian national on Russian territory) might explain this dynamic.

In the entry goals that Ukrainian nationals indicated when doing migration registrations in 2022 and the first months of 2023 (Figure 20), ‘private’ matters – meaning visiting relatives or friends or temporary stays for other reasons – were indicated in two-thirds of all registrations (Figure 21). As the simplest reason (looking the ‘safest’ and requiring the least documented confirmation), this entry goal far exceeded ‘humanitarian’ reasons (totalling 9,029 in 2022 and 581 in the first six months of 2023), which presumably should have been the main entry goal in a situation of mass displacement and people looking for refuge.

We need qualitative data to explain why Ukrainian nationals prefer to indicate ‘private’ matters as their entry goal for migration registration in Russia, but we can assume that it implies fewer bureaucratic hurdles in the future and less questioning from the authorities. Moreover, to decrease the burden on the state, the authorities might only register those residents in the state-run TAP accommodations who enter for ‘humanitarian’ reasons. Since we do not have publicly available and detailed statistics according to region and district (*raion*) on the entry goals, we cannot verify this assumption.

Figure 20: Migration registration of Ukrainian nationals in Russia (2022–2023) by entry goals.

The number of migration registrations of Ukrainian citizens in Russia (January–December 2022) by entry goals. ⁶²	
Total number of registrations during the period: 1,069,896	
Private	759,110
Work	102,258
Tourism	25,656
Education	14,479
Humanitarian	9,029
Other	94,235

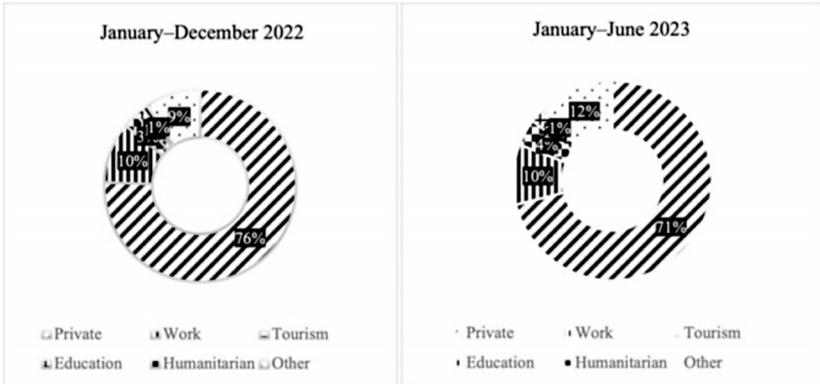
Figure 21: The migration registration of Ukrainian nationals in Russia (2022–2023) divided into entry goals.

The number of migration registrations of Ukrainian citizens in Russia (January–June 2023) by entry goals. ⁶³	
Total number of registrations during the period: 125,903	
Private	82,212
Work	11,258
Tourism	4,987
Education	2,405
Humanitarian	581
Other	14,154

All Figures are based on the sources/numbers in Figure 23 (see the Appendix).

62 Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Otdelnye pokazateli migratsionnoi situatsii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii za yanvar-dekabr 2022 goda s raspredeleniem po stranam i regionam*, 2022.

63 Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Otdelnyje pokazateli migratsionnoj situatsiji v Rossiiskoi Federatsiji za janvar-ijun 2023 goda s raspredeleniem po stranam i regionam*, 2023.



C. Legal Statuses (from the Data of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs)

Finally, let us focus on the number of Ukrainian nationals who received any kind of legal status in Russia in 2022 and in the first months of 2023 (see Figure 19 and Figure 22). Ukrainian nationals can enter and remain in Russia without registering for legal status for up to three months. Ukrainians applying for any status in Russia need to undergo mandatory dactyloscopy (the classification of fingerprints) and medical examinations and provide notary-certified translations of relevant documents from the Ukrainian language into Russian. However, Ukrainian nationals will not be able to access any state support or services if they do not regularise their stay through one of the four statuses listed below.

The first is the refugee status (*status bezhentsa*). It is almost non-existent in reality; only five Ukrainian nationals received it in 2022. In total, 26 Ukrainians have received refugee status since 2014. The application for it is lengthy and highly discouraged by Russian officials.

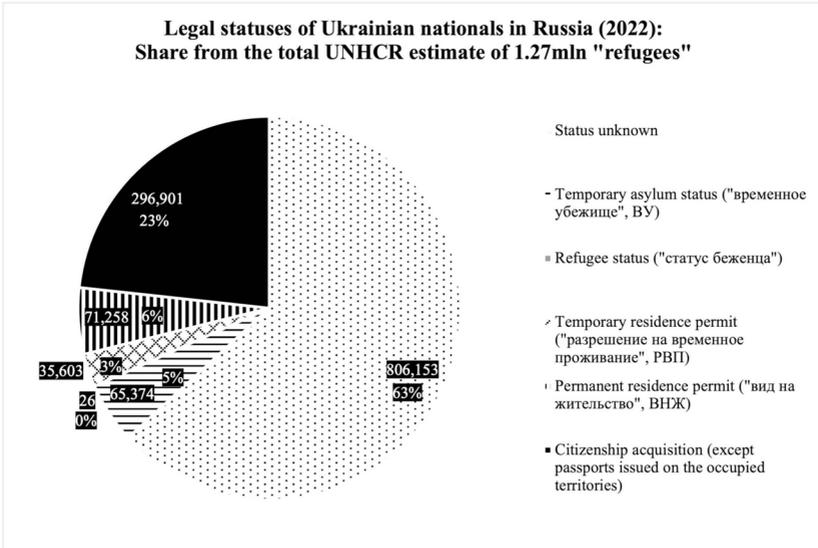
The second is the temporary asylum status (*vremennoe ubezshishche*). Upon receiving this, a person can stay in Russia for one year (with a possibility of extension), apply for the 10,000 RUB onetime cash allowance, work, and study, but cannot leave the Russian territory without losing the status. In 2022, 97,591 Ukrainian nationals received temporary asylum status in Russia, but only 65,374 held it by the end of the year. Some of the previous status holders left the country, and some applied for other statuses or were naturalised.⁶⁴ 65,374 is almost the same as the UNHCR number of persons who applied for any kind of status in Russia (see Figure 13), which is 65,400. We can safely conclude that this is where the UNHCR data is coming from.

Third are the temporary or permanent residencies (*razreshenie na vremennoe prozhivanie, vid na zhitelstvo*). These are not very popular due to lengthy procedures

64 Troitskii, *Skolko bezhentsev s Ukrainy*.

with few of the immediate cash and service benefits necessary for war-displaced people and many restrictions on travel and work.

Figure 22: Ukrainian nationals in Russia divided into their legal statuses or a lack thereof (2022).



based on data from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs as summarised in Figure 19. The percentages are based on the UNHCR total estimate of 1.27 million "refugees from Ukraine in Russia" as of December 2022.

Finally, naturalisation, the fourth option, is the most favoured by Russian officials. Since 2019, Russia has sped up its naturalisation requirements for Ukrainian nationals, especially those from the occupied Donbas region. In May–July 2022, after the occupation of Ukrainian south-eastern territories, the naturalisation procedure for Ukrainian nationals became even more simplified and de facto mandatory in the occupied territories.⁶⁵ For war-displaced Ukrainians already on Russian territory, naturalisation is often the only way to access the state services that citizens are entitled to. For instance, full state medical insurance (beyond emergency care), free medication, social benefits, and pensions – all of which are essential for the

65 Yale School of Public Health Humanitarian Research Lab, *Forced Passportization in Russia-Occupied Areas of Ukraine: Conflict Observatory Report*, report, 2023, <https://hub.conflictobservatory.org/portal/sharing/rest/content/items/e280a7eeb7bf4dc588ed50ee655b9858/data> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

elderly, people with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, and/or those wounded in the war – are only available after receiving Russian citizenship. Similarly, access to legal employment, education, mortgages, and bank loans is facilitated for citizens with permanent residency and difficult to access for foreigners with temporary residency. Overall, 300,000 Ukrainian nationals received Russian citizenship in 2022.⁶⁶ Many refuse the push for naturalisation, as they are afraid of the repercussions back in Ukraine, where they left family members and/or property and eventually expect to return. Others are afraid of being drafted into the Russian Army shortly after or not being allowed to leave the Russian territory.

Even though a substantial number of Ukrainians could still be waiting for their legal statuses in Russia, their number is far smaller than both the official Russian and UNHCR numbers of border crossings. According to independent Russian demographer Alexey Raksha and his colleagues, only 0.5–1 million Ukrainian nationals stayed in Russia due to the full-scale invasion.⁶⁷ Based on all the data sources discussed above – and particularly the data from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs – the number seems to be at most 1 million Ukrainian nationals displaced to the Russian Federation since February 2022. It is more difficult to estimate the number of Ukrainian nationals originating from the territories occupied since 2014, because they might also be Russian passport holders. Their cross-border and intra-Russian travel is harder to track. Still, as the Ukrainian government does not recognise the forced giving out of passports, they remain Ukrainian citizens and retain their right to return to Ukraine at any time.

Conclusions

As suggested by Peter Andreas and Kelly M. Greenhill, “[i]f it is not measured, it doesn't exist. If it is not counted, it doesn't count”.⁶⁸ The creation, selection, promotion, and proliferation of data are political processes, yet we need data for a problem to be recognised, defined, prioritised, and debated by policymakers and societies.⁶⁹ What will happen to Ukrainians displaced to Russia after the war? What kinds of resources will be necessary to support them and ease their return? Distortions in num-

66 Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, *Otdelnye pokazateli migratsionnoi...*, 2022.

67 Nina Polyanskaya, “‘Eslı my dozhivem do kontsa etogo goda, ya budu udivlen i rad’. Demograf Aleksei Raksha o vliyanii voyny na budushchee rossiyan” (“‘If We Survive until the End of This Year, I Will Be Glad and Surprised’: Interview with Demographer Aleksei Raksha about the Impact of the War on the Future Of Russians”), *Diskurs (Discourse)*, 24 March 2023, <https://discours.co/articles/social/aleksey-raksha-about-russian-demography> [accessed: 31.07.2024].

68 Andreas and Greenhill, *Sex, Drugs and Body Counts*, 1.

69 *Ibid.*, 2.

bers might result from either carelessness or intentionality, so we must be aware of the sources and agendas of data producers and those who circulate it. Russia intentionally inflates the number of those fleeing Ukraine to embarrass its enemy and prove its own 'humanitarianism'. The announcement of a big, shocking, and attention-catching number connected to sensitive issues – and amplified by press coverage – legitimises and perpetuates data that might be difficult to correct later.⁷⁰

The speculations about the number of forcibly displaced Ukrainians (and in particular children) in Russia – ranging from thousands to millions – illustrate that numbers have become yet another war tool. The numbers of border crossings transform into people, and diverse categories of travellers are reported under one label. Numbers provided by the Russian side are repeated by the UNHCR and enter official Ukrainian rhetoric. At the same time, the sources for the data are unreported, unreliable, or based on unknown methodologies. The 'politics of numbers' pose the risk of missing the needs of the individual people behind these numbers because state, international, and civil society actors lack the basis to plan realistic interventions and the necessary resources to identify, reach out to, and support Ukrainians still on Russian territory and to assist them in returning to Ukraine or relocating elsewhere. Even though I conclude that a more realistic estimate of the number of Ukrainian citizens displaced to Russia since the full-scale invasion is neither 5.4 million nor 2.85 million but, rather, one million people at most, each of them still needs this protection and support.

Appendix

Methodological note

The following table is based on daily monitoring of selected official Russian and Ukrainian media sources in search of relevant information about the number of forcibly displaced Ukrainians in Russia. For instance, on the Ukrainian side, this includes the announcements of Iryna Vereshchuk (the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for the Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories); Dmytro Lubinets (the Ukrainian Ombudsman) and his predecessor, Lyudmyla Denisova; the National Information Bureau; and Daria Gerasymchuk (the Children's Ombudswoman). On the Russian side, I monitored TASS announcements and the statements of Maria Lvova-Belova (the Russian Presidential Children's Ombudswoman) and combined these with information on the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs' website. I obtained the data from UNHCR Russia from their monthly digests. Below, I reference all numbers and sources.

70 Ibid., 26.

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Figure 23: Combined UNHCR, Russian, and Ukrainian data on the number of Ukrainian citizens displaced to Russia (February 2022–August 2023).

	UNHCR data (based on data from the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations) ⁷¹	Official Russian numbers (based on regular TASS updates)	Official Ukrainian numbers (a source is indicated for each number)
18–23 February 2022	105,000	68,500 from the ORDLO (21 February) ⁷² 93,500 from the ORDLO, including 30,000 Russian citizens (22 February) ⁷³	No data
24–28 February 2022	148,322	No data	No data
March 2022	285,537	213,152, including 48,788 children (10 March) ⁷⁴ 400,000 (23 March) ⁷⁵	No data
April 2022	688,400	1.13 million, including 200,000 children; most people from the ORDLO ⁷⁶	500,000, including 121,000 children ⁷⁷
May 2022	1,041,095	1.6 million, including 260,000 children; most people from the ORDLO ⁷⁸	No data

71 Data for each month taken from the UNHCR Russia Monthly Digests and the UNHCR Ukraine Data Portal: UNHCR Russia, “Otchety o deiyatelnosti v Rossii”.

72 Nesterov, “V Rossii nazvali chislo pribyvshykh iz Donbassa bezhentsev”.

73 Izvestiya (News), “Nazvano chislo privyvshykh v RF bezhentsev is Donbassa”.

74 Kulikova, “Nazvano chislo pribyvshykh v Rossiyu bezhentsev iz Donbassa”.

75 Kiryanov, “V MChS utohnili kolichestvo pribyvshykh v Rossiju bezetszev is Ukrainy i Donbassa”.

76 Agafonov, “Pochti 200 000 detiej-bezhenstvev”.

77 Statement by Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN, at the UN Security Council meeting on the “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine”: Sergiy Kyslytsya, “Check against delivery...”.

78 Agafonov, “V Rossiyu pribyli uzhe 1,6 mln bezhentsev”.

June 2022	1,460,650	2.3 million, including 364,000 children; half of all people from the ORDLO ⁷⁹	1.2 million, including 240,000 children, among them 2,000 orphans ⁸⁰
July 2022	1,952,037	3 million, including 478,000 children ⁸¹	2 million, including a “couple hundred thousand children” ⁸² 5,600 children according to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs ⁸³
August 2022	2,414,075	3.6 million, including 576,000 children ⁸⁴	No data
September 2022	2,820,288	4.2 million, including 654,000 children; almost half of all people from the ORDLO (approximately 2 million) ⁸⁵	2.5 million, including 38,000 children ⁸⁶
October 2022	2,852,395	4.7 million, including 705,000 children ⁸⁷	1.6 million ⁸⁸

79 Agafonov, “V Rossii uzhe 2,3 mln bezhentsev”.

80 Tyshchenko, “V uriadi povidomyly, skilky ukrainsiv uzhe deportovano do Rosii”.

81 Agafonov, “V Rossiyu prybyli uzhe boleje 3 mln bezhentsev s Ukrainy i iz respublik Donbassa”.

82 Balachuk, “Okupanty deportuvaly 2 miliony ukrainsiv”.

83 Andreeva, “U MVS povidomyly, skilky ukrainskykh ditei deportuvaly v Rosiiu”.

84 Izvestiya (News), “Chislo prybyvshykh v RF bezhentsev s territorii Donbassa i Ukrainy prevysilo 3,6 mln”.

85 Agafonov, “Chislo bezhentsev v Rossiju prevysilo 4,2 mln chelovek”.

86 Baltic News Network (BNN), “Ukrainian official: 2.5 million people forcibly deported to Russia”. See also the full notes from the UN Security Council meeting on 07 September 2022.

87 Shevtsova, “Bolee 4,7 mln bezhentsev iz Ukrainy”.

88 President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Official Website, “Nam potribna vasha pidtrymka, shchob pryskoryty nastannia myru”.

November 2022	No updated data published	4.8 million, including 714,000 children ⁸⁹ In November 2022, based on Decree No. 756, ⁹⁰ Russian occupying forces forcibly resettled around 115,000 people from Kherson and the Kherson Oblast ⁹¹	6,032 children (Office of the Ombudsman) ⁹² 11,000 children (President Zelenskyy) ⁹³ 45,995, including 8,140 children (National Information Bureau) ⁹⁴
December 2022	No updated data published	5 million, including 721,000 children ⁹⁵	More than 1 million Ukrainians (Ministry of Internal Affairs) ⁹⁶ 2.8 million (Ombudsman Lubinets) ⁹⁷ 13,000 children (Children's Ombudswoman of Ukraine) ⁹⁸ 3,400 POWs, 15,000 missing persons ⁹⁹
January 2023	No updated data published	5.2 million, including 733,000 children ¹⁰⁰	14,350 children, 20,000 missing persons (Ombudsman Lubinets) ¹⁰¹
February 2023	No updated data published	5.3 million, including 738,000 children ¹⁰²	150,000 children (Ombudsman Lubinets) ¹⁰³

89 Agafonov, "Chislo bezhentsev v Rossii prevysilo 4,8 mln chelovek".

90 Ofitsialnoe opublikovanie pravovykh aktov (Official Publication of Legal Acts), Decree of the President of the Russian Federation from 19 October 2022, No. 756.

91 Keffer, "Saldo: iz Khersona s fevralya uekhali bolee 150 tysyatch chelovek".

92 Ukrainska Pravda (Ukrainian Truth), "Occupiers abduct more than 6,000 Ukrainian children".

93 Pohorilov, "Okupanty deportuvaly 11 tysiach ditei do Rosii".

94 Ombudsman of Ukraine, *Spetsialna dopovid*.

95 Nikolaev, "Chislo bezhentsev s Ukrainy i iz Donbassa v Rossii dostiglo 5 mln".

96 MVS Ukrainy (Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs), "DMS oformylo pershe posvidchen-nia na povernennia v Ukrainu...".

97 Ombudsman Lubinets Dmytro, "Shchonaimenshe 2 800 000 ukraintsiv".

98 Krechetova, "Okupanty deportuvaly".

99 Andalitska, "Nazvano kil'kist polonenykh ta znyklykh bezvisty ukrainskykh biitsiv".

100 TASS, "S fevralya 2022 goda v Rossiyu prybyli bolee 5,2 mln bezhentsev s territorii Ukrainy".

101 Lykhogliad, "Zvilnenia polonenykh, povernennia deportovanykh i perehovory z RF".

102 TASS, "Za god s Ukrainy i iz Donbassa na territoriyu RF prybylo 5,3 mln bezhetsev".

103 Ukrinform, "Kil'kist nezakonno vyvezenykh u rosiu ukrainskykh ditei mozhe siahaty 150 tysiach".

March 2023	No updated data published	5.5 million, including 749,000 children ¹⁰⁴	19,514 children (Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories) ¹⁰⁵ , including 4,390 children under state care (Deputy Prime Minister Vereshchuk) ¹⁰⁶
April 2023	No updated data published	No updated data published	100,000 children (National Resistance Centre) ¹⁰⁷
May 2023	No updated data published	No updated data published	No updated data published
June 2023	1,275,315 “refugees from Ukraine recorded in the country” as of 31 December 2022 100,835 refugees from Ukraine who applied for asylum, temporary protection, or similar national protection schemes (as of 31 December 2022)	Up to 5 million people, including up to 1 million without documents and 1.5–2 million “‘flowing’ wanderers” ¹⁰⁸ (<i>‘peretekaemye skitaltsy</i>) moving back and forth between “new territories of Russia” and Russia, often without documents. 6 June: explosion of the Kakhovka Dam – 7,000 displaced (Vladimir Saldo, the so-called ‘Governor of the Kherson Oblast’ appointed by the Russian occupation administration) ¹⁰⁹	20,000 children, including 4,500 children under state care (Deputy Prime Minister Vereshchuk) ¹¹⁰
July 2023	No updated data	No updated data	No updated data

104 TASS, “V Rossii s territorii Donbassa i Ukrainy pribylo 5.5 mln bezhentssev s fevralya 2022 goda”.

105 Minreintehratsii (Ukrainian Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories), “Natsionalne informatsiine biuro”.

106 Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, “Iryna Vereshchuk”.

107 Tsentr natsionalnoho sprotyvu (Centre for National Resistance), “Rosiiany vyvezly ponad 100 tys. ditei zi Skhodu Ukrainy na ‘likuvannia”.

108 Emelyanenko, “Rossiya prinyala pyat millionov bezhentssev s Ukrainy”.

109 Plamenev, “Saldo soobshchil o 7 tys. evakuirovannykh iz zatoplennykh rayonov Khersonshchiny”.

110 Andreeva, “RF deportovala ponad 4,5 tysiachi ukrainskykh syrit ta ditei bez batkivskoho pikluvannia”.

August 2023	No updated data Corrected number: 65,400 refugees from Ukraine who applied for asylum, TP, or similar national protection schemes (as of 31 December 2022)	4.8 million people, including more than 700,000 children (Russian Children's Ombudswoman Lvova-Belova) ¹¹¹	700,000 children (Ombudsman Lubinets) ¹¹² 19,546 children have been deported (Children of War official portal) ¹¹³
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111 Lvova-Belova, *Doklad o deyatelnosti Upolnomochennogo*.

112 Ombudsman Lubinets Dmytro, "Deportatsiia ditei".

113 Dity viiny, <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>.

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