



# March 2024

## Report from the Polish–Belarusian border

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## Introduction

The following study contains first-hand data from people participating in the events described. We would like to thank all humanitarian organisations operating in the Polish-Belarusian border area and individuals working with them for providing us with reports of their interventions. Our sources include organisations, informal initiatives as well as individuals, often wishing to remain anonymous, so we do not mention them by name unless they have given us permission to do so. Special thanks are due to all those on the move who have chosen to share their own experiences with us.

Humanitarian workers and those working with them emphasise that the difficult context and ethics of their work often prevent them from obtaining more detailed information about the stories and situations of people on the move. During interventions, many are in such a poor psycho-physiological state that it is not possible to obtain more data without putting them at risk of retraumatization or making them feel that they owe humanitarian organisations any

answers to their questions by virtue of receiving material or legal support from them.

The described interventions and support provided to persons on the move took place on the territory of the Podlaskie and Lubelskie Voivodeships. For persons in Belarus, information is provided on the legal situation and access to procedures for applying for international protection in Poland and Belarus.

We hope that this brief outline of the context will help you to better understand the current dynamics of events in the border region with Belarus. For additional questions and recommendations from individuals or organisations who might also be interested in receiving the reports, please contact [wearemonitoring@gmail.com](mailto:wearemonitoring@gmail.com).

### Definitions

At the end of the report you will find a list of terms and definitions we have adopted.

## Situation on the border

In March 2024, there was a significant increase in the number of notifications from both sides of the barrier on the Polish–Belarusian border. As in previous years (2022–2023), the number of border crossings increased with the end of winter and warming weather. The scale of the incoming requests for assistance – 626, most of which, as many as 484 in the second half of the month, can be compared with the spring of 2023, during which the highest number of notifications was registered. The amplification then already occurred at the end of February, and between 02–09 March 2023, a total of 968 requests from individuals were registered.

Both Podlasie residents, humanitarian workers and people on the move themselves mentioned large groups of several dozen people crossing the barrier, as well as references to large groups of up to several hundred people camped on the eastern side of the barrier with no possibility of returning inside Belarus. Among the people trapped in the strip between the barrier on the Polish territory and the fortifications on the Belarusian side, there were also said to be women, minors and people in need of medical assistance.



Fig. 1 Comparison of the number of requests in March 2024, 2023 and 2022.

On 21 March alone, a total of 16 groups of people on the move approached humanitarian organisations working on the border asking for support. On the following days, the applications remained at between 9 and 17 groups per day, and on Easter Sunday, the highest number of groups asking for support was 18. Groups ranged from individuals, who most often became separated from their travelling companions as a result of pushback, escaping from the services or difficulties in crossing the barrier, to almost 30 people who

reported from the strip between the barrier on the Polish territory and the fortifications on the Belarusian side. This area is called a 'muharrama'<sup>1</sup> by Arabic-speaking people on the move.

The increase in traffic on the Polish–Belarusian border is also visible in the statistics of the Border Guard. These concern the number of attempts made by persons on the road to 'illegally cross the Polish–Belarusian border'. Data published by the Border Guard

<sup>1</sup> *Muharrama* (المحرمة) in Arabic means 'forbidden'. Arabic speakers on the road also use the longer term المنطقة المحرمة (al-muntaqa al-muharrama) – 'forbidden zone'.

Headquarters on 5 February shows that from the beginning of 2024 until 4 February: [...] 105 attempts to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border were recorded on the section protected by the Podlaski Branch of the Border Guard<sup>2</sup>. In the publication from 1 March, the following sentence appears: *In February 2024, officers from the Podlaskie Branch of the Border Guard recorded 356 attempts to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border*<sup>3</sup>. In publications of the Border Guard Headquarters from March and the beginning of April, there is no summary, while analysing subsequent published entries we learn that:

- *More than 2,300 attempts to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border have been recorded since the beginning of this year. – publication of 22 march 2024*<sup>4</sup>.
- *In the first days of spring (22-24 March this year), 444 attempts to enter Po-*

*land illegally were recorded. – publication of 25 march 2024*<sup>5</sup>.

- *During the extended holiday weekend from 29 March to 1 April this year, 736 persons attempted to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border. – publication of 2 april 2024*<sup>6</sup>.

In total, therefore, we received information from the Border Guard Headquarters about at least 3,000 "attempts to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border" in March 2024, and this figure still does not include data from the three-day period of 26-28 March 2024<sup>7</sup>.

Spring's improving weather does not guarantee safe travel conditions for people on the road. Strong temperature fluctuations, especially at night, as well as prolonged rainfall and strong winds are a major threat to the health and, in extreme cases, the lives of people on the road. According to the weather station in Białowieża, there were 12 days in March when the air temperature fell below 0°C.

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<sup>2</sup> E. Szczepańska, Weekend on the Polish-Belarusian border, 2024, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/12921,Weekend-na-polsko-bialoruskiej-granicy.html> [accessed 08.04.2024].

<sup>3</sup> K. Szwed, Illegally to Poland, 2024, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/13019,Nielegalnie-do-Polski.html> [accessed 08.04.2024].

<sup>4</sup> K. Szwed, They tried to cross into Poland, 2024, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/13098,Probowali-przedostac-sie-do-Polski.html> [accessed 08.04.2024].

<sup>5</sup> K. Szwed, Weekend on the Polish-Belarusian border, 2024, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/13103,Weekend-na-polsko-bialoruskiej-granicy.html> [accessed 08.04.2024].

<sup>6</sup> K. Szwed, Busy Christmas weekend at the border, 2024, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/aktualnosci/13122,Pracowity-swiateczny-weekend-na-granicy.html> [accessed 08.04.2024].

<sup>7</sup> We present Border Guard statistics only to illustrate the trend, pointing out that they do not concern people, but situations of crossing the border, and that they present data in a selective way, omitting, among others, the number of people who managed to cross the border barrier.

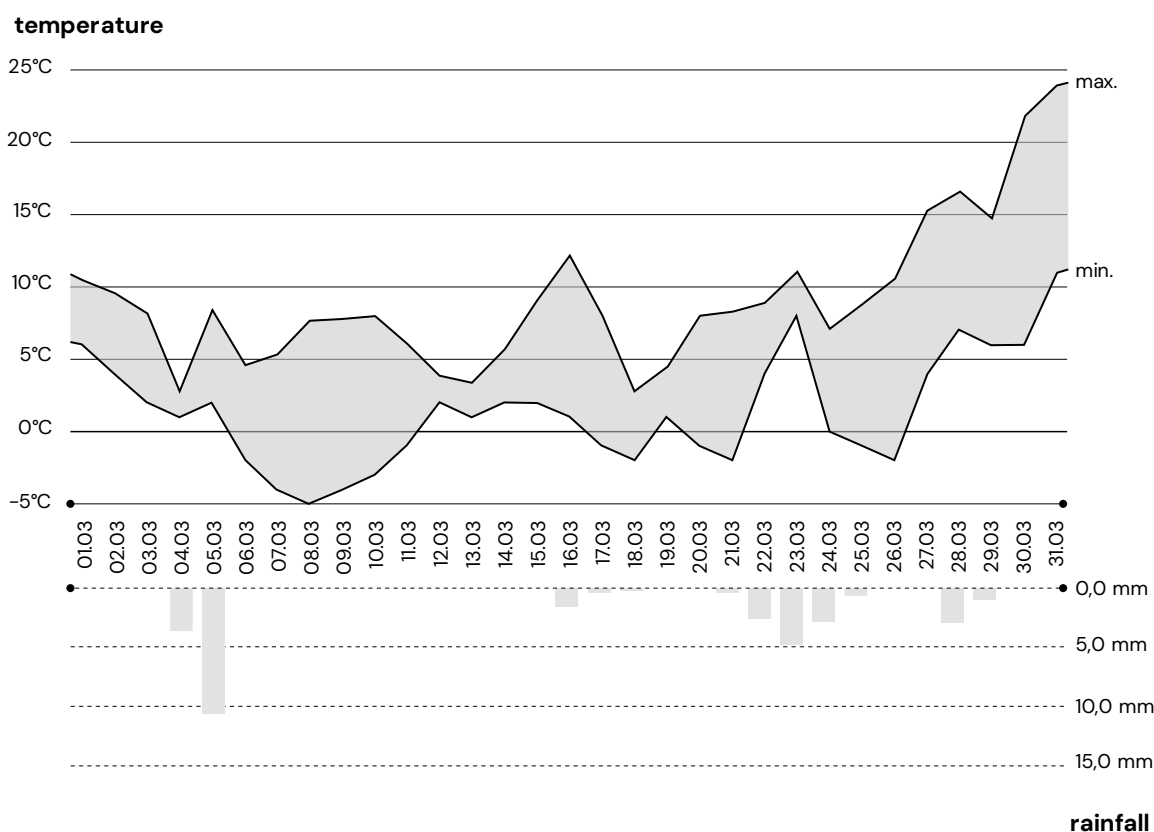


Fig. 2 Daily maximum/minimum temperature in degrees Celsius in Białowieża in March 2024.

**At the beginning of March**, the Provincial Administrative Court examined two further complaints from people on the road who experienced pushbacks at the hands of the Polish Border Guard in the spring of 2023. In both cases, the court ruled in a non-final judgment that pushbacks to the border line were ineffective. The cases concerned citizens of Ethiopia and Afghanistan, who had been deported to Belarus despite serious injuries preventing movement<sup>8</sup>.

**14 March**, the head of the Hajnówka District Prosecutor's Office, Jan Andrejczuk, announced that a human skull found in February 2024 near the Stara Białowieża-Narewka road in the Białowieża Forest was being investigated. Forensic expert reports are to indicate that it belonged to a person from Middle Eastern country. The prosecution therefore assumes that it was the skull of a migrant<sup>9</sup> and plans to commission further expert reports, including DNA and anthropological tests. At the moment we do not have any more data on this case.

<sup>8</sup> Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. Man with a broken leg taken to the border in a trunk, 2024, <https://hfhr.pl/aktualnosci/kolejne-wyroki-w-sprawach-migracyjne> [accessed 10.04.2024]

<sup>9</sup> W. Stelmach. The body of a migrant was found at the border with Belarus, 2024, [https://www.rmf24.pl/regiony/bialystok/news-zwloki-migranta-znaleziono-przy-granicy-z-bialorusia,nld,7390081#crp\\_state=1](https://www.rmf24.pl/regiony/bialystok/news-zwloki-migranta-znaleziono-przy-granicy-z-bialorusia,nld,7390081#crp_state=1) [access: 10/04/2024]



Photo: archives of the Egala Association

## Demography

In March, the vast majority of those reporting a need for support were invariably from countries in the Middle East, in particular Syria, which was indicated as a country of origin by as many as 138 people, or just over 22% of all those asking for help. After the Middle East, the second most common region of origin for people on the move was the countries of the

Horn of Africa. 65 people cited Somalia, Ethiopia or Eritrea as their country of origin – 43, 11 and 11 people respectively. There were also 23 reports from people from Afghanistan and 15 from people from Yemen. Due to unfavourable interview conditions, the country of origin of 40 people could not be determined.

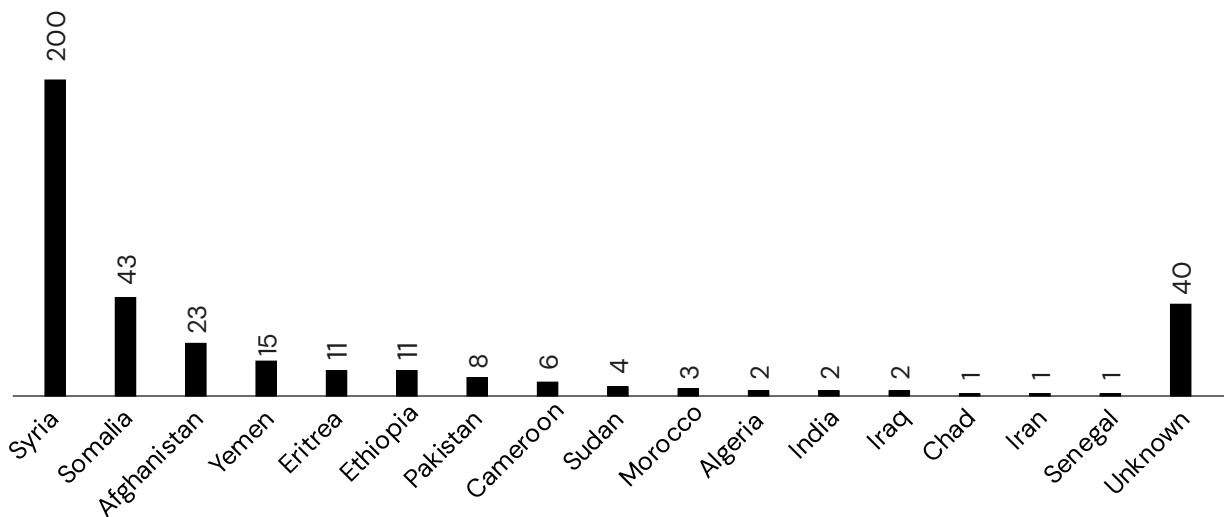


Fig. 3 Countries of origin of those requesting support in March 2024.

As in the same period last year, in March 2024 women accounted for more than 5% of the total number of all people registered – 33 out of 626, with two of them reporting that they were pregnant. In March 2023, there were 63 out of a total of 968 people registering for support. Reports from 41 minors were also recorded during the reported period. More than half, 27 of them, were travelling unaccompanied by a legal guardian or carer.

It is noteworthy that in March 2024, the scale of support provided significantly exceeded that of the same period in 2023 and is comparable to that of 2022. A total of 320 people were assisted in the reported period, 73 last year and 365 the year before.

### **Belarus and the border area**

Humanitarian organisations recorded reports from 351 people contacting the eastern side of the border barrier. 151 people reported during the call that they were stuck in the strip between the barrier located on Polish territory and the fortifications on the Belarusian side (muharram). Some of them had already been in the area before making their first attempt to get through the border barrier, some had experienced pushback and had been turned back there by Polish border guards. 46 were contacted from within Belarus, mainly from Minsk and other major cities.

The 151 people contacted from the muharram area were part of 30 groups, the largest of which was 27 people. Among them were at least 30 minors, including eight travelling unaccompanied by a legal guardian, and nine women, one of whom was pregnant.

It is worth noting the scale of health problems declared among those trapped in the

muharram. Of all 626 people registered by humanitarian organisations in March 2024, as many as 158 declared a need for medical assistance. Almost a third of them, 48 people, were on the eastern side of the barrier at the time of reporting their condition, a place without any possibility of medical support. Attempts to get out of the muharram, if their condition allows them to do so at all, often result, according to the accounts of those on the road, in experiencing violence from Belarusian services or having to pay for permission to return to the city – most often Minsk. The most common medical problems included:

- general weakness of the body due to the prolonged stay in the forest;
- gastrointestinal problems (abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting) caused by ingestion of contaminated water from sources such as rivers, swamps;
- limb injuries caused by falls from the boundary barrier;
- lacerated wounds caused by razor wire crowning the Polish barrier;
- injuries resulting from violence used by Belarusian and Polish services officers;
- irritation caused by contact with irritants such as pepper spray.

The above data was collected from operational data of organisations operating in the border area, which do not have full access to or knowledge of all persons residing in the muharram belt. For this reason, they do not allow us to estimate, even roughly, the actual number of persons residing there during a given period. We present them because they allow us to identify downward and upward trends and to note moments of increased migration activity in the Polish–Belarusian border area.



## Humanitarian Interventions

	groups	individuals	children (unaccompanied minors)	women (pregnant)
<b>Total requests</b>	200	626	41 (27)	33 (2)
<b>Requests from Sistiema</b>	30	151	20 (8)	9 (1)
<b>Support provided</b>	124	320	17 (17)	18 (1)
<b>Reported pushbacks</b>	55	142	5 (5)	7 (-)

Table 1. Number of groups and individuals reported to WAM in the reporting period.

In March, activists working in the Polish-Belarusian border area undertook 150 interventions, during which they managed to provide support to 320 people travelling in 124

groups. This is a significant increase in activity compared to February, when only 6 interventions in total were undertaken.

	groups	individuals	children (unaccompanied minors)	women (pregnant)
<b>Support provided</b>	124	320	17 (17)	18 (1)
<b>material assistance / incl. hospital</b>	120/33	307/44	15(15)/1(1)	18 (1)/8(1)
<b>legal assistance / incl. hospital</b>	42/30	61/38	7(7)/1(1)	12(1)/8(1)
<b>medical assistance PL</b>	13	24	3 (3)	1 (1)
<b>first aid</b>	44	92	7(7)	8(0)
<b>Number of interventions</b>			150	

Table 2. Number of groups and people who received a given form of support in the reporting period.

23 of the 150 interventions undertaken were unsuccessful, meaning that people on the move could not be reached. These situations are usually due to problems in locating the group or a lapse in contact, which may be due to the phone losing battery power or the group being stopped by the services before help can reach the site.

The first of the unsuccessful field interventions was a search launched on 13 March to find a Pakistani man believed to be travelling alone in the area of Sorocza Nóżka. The following day, information about the man's corpse found in the area by Border Guard officers was provided by the Hajnówka District Prosecutor's Office<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> TNV24 portal, The body of a man in the forest near the border with Belarus, 2024, <https://tvn24.pl/bialystok/sorocza-nozka-zwloki-obywatela-pakistanu-w-lesie-przy-granicy-z-bialorusia-st7821725> [accessed: 04.04.2024].



Photo: archives of the Egala Association

In the case of 7 unsuccessful interventions, it was confirmed that the persons were pushbacked by Polish officers. It is noteworthy that all of these persons were travelling alone and came from countries such as Afghanistan, Syria or Somalia, to which Poland has committed not to carry out deportations<sup>11</sup>. One such situation took place in the last week of March and was documented by humanitarian workers, who described it as follows:

*I saw a man lying on the road and by his side two soliders. They tried to prevent me from reaching him. The boy was in a bad condition, lying face down on the ground, moaning, not moving, and had a bloody hand.*

*I asked if an ambulance had been called to this boy. I heard that the SG was already on their way. When they arrived, the female guard also asked me to call for medical*

*help. I told them not to move him without consulting a medic as he could have various injuries.*

*More soldiers appeared and started emptying the BG vehicle to make room on the seat, because there was no way to seat the boy. They tried to move him but couldn't manage. I heard from the BG officer that an ambulance was on its way.*

Meanwhile, another staff member arrived and managed to speak to the man, who relayed that he had fled Afghanistan from the Taliban and could not stay there because he was afraid they would kill him.

After a while, an ambulance arrived and the man was placed in it. At the same time, more aid workers joined in.

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<sup>11</sup> KGSG response of March 18, 2024 regarding the list of countries to which deportations are prohibited (Letter No.: KG-OI-VIII.0180.33.2024).

*We arrived at the scene when the person was already in the ambulance, which was about to start. We got out of the car for a while, and at that time a dark blue volkswagen transporter with police registration drove in between the ambulance and our car and started blocking and obstructing our way. [The car eventually pulled over and we moved off, but the ambulance was no longer visible. We drove to the facility in [...], however, the duty officer informed us that the ambulance had taken him to the hospital in [...]. We went to the hospital, where the gentleman was not there and is still not there after several hours.*

Locations reached by fieldworkers turned up empty in 11 cases. At the end of March, despite an all-night search, a lone Syrian minor who reported bleeding and mobility problems could not be found. Unfortunately, we have not been able to establish what happened to the teenager.

For 22 groups, humanitarian workers intervened more than once. These situations were due to a variety of reasons: changes in the composition of the group, weather conditions (rain, mud) resulting in people needing new dry clothes, or requests for another meeting and assistance in applying for international protection. People on the move know that the presence of female humanitarian workers increases their chances of avoiding pushback and thus successfully applying for international protection.

Representatives of humanitarian organisations assisted 13 persons who chose to apply for international protection during field interventions. In all these cases, the Border Guard initiated the procedure and did not

attempt to pushback any of the applicants. At the same time, reports indicate that when persons on the road on their own, without the assistance of female activists and humanitarian workers, inform Border Guard officers of their wish to apply for protection, they are often not allowed to do so.

Due to the conditions in the Bialowieza Forest, from which most of the calls arrive, the support persons are often unable to estimate how long the route and intervention will take. The distance that field teams realistically have to cover can, in these conditions, vary considerably from that measured in a straight line. In order to reach the group, they have to make their way through sloughs and wetlands, which significantly lengthens and slows down the route to their destination. Depending on the difficulties along the route and the conditions found at the destination, the intervention itself can take many hours, especially when an emergency medical team is required or border guards are called in to apply for international protection.

By accepted standards, a basic supply for one person (water, powerbank, food, tea, something to keep warm) weighs about four kilograms. In the weather conditions that prevailed in March, and as a result of the long time people spent on the road in the muharram, a full supply was necessary in many cases. The basic kit then included footwear and a set of clothes with layers of thermal clothing, a jacket and trousers, and sometimes sleeping bags, carrimats and tarps. The weight of a rucksack with full supplies, packed for two people, was 18 kilograms (including the weight of the large rucksack itself, or 2.5 kilograms). For interventions requiring medics, the backpacks alone weigh an average of 10–15 kilograms.



Photo: archives of the Egala Association

## Hospitals

Due to its location, it is the hospital in Hajnowka that is most often receiving people on the move. In March 2024, 39 patients were recorded there who were admitted after crossing the Polish-Belarusian border irregularly. Among them was one minor and four women, one of whom was pregnant.

Most of those hospitalised were severely hypothermic, weakened and dehydrated, a consequence of being in the forest for long periods with limited access to drinking water and food. 16 people required medical attention due to orthopaedic injuries. Many injuries to the lower and upper limbs were the consequences of falls from the border wall.

Often not only the bones but also the soft tissues around them were damaged. Injuries of this type are characterised by a longer healing time, swelling and accompanying severe, prolonged pain. Falls from the wall result not only in fractures of the limbs and spine, but also in contusions, full-body lacerations and internal injuries. In addition, razor wire (so-called concertina), which crowns the steel barrier and is distributed in successive strips along the Polish border fortifications, is the cause of common cuts and lacerations and resulting infections among male and female patients. In March 2024, at least eight patients were hospitalised precisely because of the need to sew up wounds caused by razor wire.





# Pushbacks and violence by the services

*You can't tell them anything, you can't say anything, they won't respond to you*

	groups	individuals	children (unaccompanied minors)	women (pregnant)
<b>Reported pushbacks</b>	55	142	5 (5)	7 (0)
<b>Reported violence in Poland</b>	23	59	3 (3)	1 (0)
<b>Reported violence in Belarus</b>	21	74	4 (4)	1 (0)

Table 3. Number of people who reported experiencing deportation and violence by Polish and Belarusian services.

In March, reports of experienced pushbacks came from a total of 142 people. This is almost three times as many reports as those recorded in February. Those affected experienced a total of 277 pushbacks. Among them were 5 minors and 7 women. 42 people reported experiencing more than one pushback. This is six times more than in the previous month. 3 people also reported that they were pushed back despite declaring their willingness to apply for international protection in Poland.

-  **277** total number of reported pushbacks
-  **42** number of persons who reported to have been subjected to more than one pushback
-  **13** number of persons from vulnerable groups pushed back
-  **1** number of people pushed-back from a hospital

Below we provide a direct account by Omer<sup>12</sup>, who in March decided to share with us his experience of violence at the hands of Polish officers.

Omer was stopped twice on Polish territory. The first time he crossed the border in a group of nine was the previous year, between 25 and 27 November, at around 2 p.m. He remembered that it was very cold that day, snowing. For the duration of the border crossing, his group split up to reunite on the west side of the border barrier. Together they walked about two

kilometres. At one point, they saw uniformed persons in their path and they scattered in different directions. Omer remembered that there were six officers, one of whom he believed was of higher rank:

*You told me there was an officer and five soldiers. How did you know that there was an officer among the soldiers?*

<sup>12</sup> Name changed.

*[It] was obvious from his look, those looked like soldiers, and he was old and [he was] wearing professional clothing. He was wearing badges. I don't know what it looked like. I mean, the uniform is different, and it is obvious that he is an officer, giving orders and so on.*

Last November, Omer was arrested along with another member of the group. He claims that they were tracked down by the footprints left behind them in the snow. He also recalls that at the beginning of the incident one of the officers tried to hit him on the head with the handle of a gun. Omer then shielded himself from the blow with his hand and suffered a fractured wrist as a result of the blow.

*He broke my wrist. Of course, at the time of the arrest, [the officer] was very cool. But when he saw me in pain, he started telling me to apply some snow [to my wrist]. [vague] 'just apply some snow from the ground', as if it was something completely normal.*

According to reports, the officers took the two men's powerbanks and phones and restrained their hands with plastic zip ties. Before their eyes, they also destroyed the charging ports on their smartphones with a knife and one of the officers smashed the screens with an iron part of his gun handle. The second man was then stripped and searched. He was carrying a sum of money, which, according to Omer's account, was taken from him.

*[...] the treatment, pushing and kicking until you reach the dirt road. They [officers] don't leave you in the place where they find you in the forest. They put you on the dirt road so the car could come, so you sit on*

*the side of the road and they start undressing you.. They undressed my friend almost completely, in the snow outside in the forest. They searched us and they undressed him completely. Because he [officer] hit my hand, he didn't make me take off all my clothes.*

The men, Omer recalls, were then led to a car, driven under the border barrier and pushed to its eastern side, where they met the others with whom they had crossed the border. They were pushbacked last.

Omer returned to Minsk, where he sought help from the Red Cross, and was referred to hospital. There, doctors placed a splint on his arm. He spent the winter in Minsk. In the first week of March, with the splint still in place, he decided to make another attempt to cross the border. This time he crossed it in a group of ten and was the last to jump off the wall. In front of him was a young man and a married couple crossing. All four, as in the attempt made by Omer the previous November, were stopped after crossing about two kilometres. This time, the officers did not destroy anyone's phone – according to Omer due to the presence of a woman in the group:

*The rest [of the group] were all men, the woman was with her husband. [...] In this attempt I got caught with them and they didn't break our phones because she was there with us. Oh and they went back, also the woman.*

*And she was pregnant?*

*She said so, but I don't know, but they [the couple] went back [to Minsk] and never tried again.*

The rest of the incident, followed a similar pattern to the November detention. According to Omer's account, the officers restrained all the captured persons with plastic zip ties, in such a way that the persons were connected in pairs, and then placed them in one car – Omer recalls that it was very cramped – and drove them to the border barrier.

*[...] they handcuffed us, you know. Like, all the attempts, when they catch you and they handcuff you along with your companion. like my friend and I, they put this strong plastic [zip-ties] in our hands, also the girl and her husband. They tied us together, and took us. All four of us were placed on top of each other in the car's back, you get me. It didn't fit, but this is how it goes. So we arrived there and they threw us into the Muharrama.*

During none of the detentions, neither in November 2023 nor in March 2024, Omer was taken to a border guard post, nor were any documents presented to him. Instead, he recalls hearing from others that they were forced to sign documents against their will. These documents were supposed to relate, among other things, to being forced to leave the territory of Poland within seven days or to making a declaration waiving the possibility to apply for international protection in Poland. Asked if he had asked for asylum during any of the pushbacks, Omer replied:

*You can't tell them anything, you can't say anything, they won't respond to you.*

## Definitions

**Total requests** – Total number of reported groups/persons on the move, located in Poland, Belarus, Lithuania or Latvia. It does not take into account persons staying in other European countries during the reporting period, as the report aims to illustrate the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border and the related migration route.

- **Groups** – individuals travelling together at the time of reporting and/or humanitarian/legal/medical intervention. These persons may or may not be related by family or social ties
- **Number of Individuals** – individual members of groups

**Children** – all persons whose confirmed or declared age is 0-18 years.

**Unaccompanied minors** – Persons under the age of 18 travelling without an adult legal guardian, and therefore also minors travelling with older siblings or other relatives who are not their guardians under the law of Poland.

**Requests from Sistiema** – reports of groups/persons staying in the strip of land between the border fortifications of Poland and Belarus, commonly referred to as the *sistema*.

**Muharrama** – a term used by Arabic-speaking people on the move for the strip of land located between the Polish border barrier and the fortifications on the Belarusian side. *Muharrama* in Arabic means 'forbidden'. People on the move also use the longer term المنطقة المحرمة "forbidden zone". In Polish, this area is commonly referred to as *Sistiema*.

**Aid provided** – total number of people reached by organisations and entities operating in Podlasie who agreed to share information with us (GG + Ocalenie, unaffiliated

residents and inhabitants of Podlasie, collectives, individuals, POPH)

- **Material aid** – support in the form of basic humanitarian aid packages – food, clothing, water, information
- **Legal aid** – support in procedures relating to the prevention of pushbacks and deportation and enabling the submission of an application for international protection.
- **Medical aid** – professional support provided by medically qualified persons.
- **Medical first aid** – support provided by people with basic rescue training, such as washing wounds or dressing trench foot.

**Reported pushbacks** – pushbacks reported to us during the reporting period by persons who experienced them directly or witnessed them directly.

**Reported violence Poland** – reported cases of violence experienced directly by persons on the road, the perpetrators of which, according to the victims' accounts, were members of the Polish uniformed services: Border Guard, Police, Polish Army, Territorial Defence Forces.

**Reported violence Belarus** – forms of violence directly experienced by persons on the road, the perpetrators of which, according to the victims' accounts, were people belonging to the Belarusian uniformed services.

**Number of interventions** – number of humanitarian interventions undertaken by field teams in response to a report of a need for assistance or a chance encounter of persons on the road in a border area.



**Number of deceased** — number of persons on the move who died from August 2021 on the Polish side of the Polish–Belarusian border and those cases from the Belarusian side of which we are aware. The data will be verified and supplemented. We expect that there may be data on more deaths from the period considered here as well.

**Number of missing** — persons whose disappearance has been reported by next of kin or companions on the road, with a declared lack of contact of at least two days.

**Injuries from the wall** — injuries which, according to the declaration of persons on the road, occurred while crossing the security at the Polish–Belarusian border.

**Persons from vulnerable groups** — vulnerable persons on the following grounds:

Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- minors</li> <li>- unaccompanied minors</li> <li>- persons over 45 years of age</li> <li>- senior citizens aged 60 and over</li> </ul>
Medical reasons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pregnancy</li> <li>- chronic illness</li> <li>- disability</li> </ul>
Situational considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- victims of sexual violence or subjected to</li> <li>- victims of gender-based violence</li> </ul>
Protection Needs*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- victims of torture</li> <li>- victims of human trafficking</li> </ul>

\* virtually impossible to identify at this stage