



# May 2024

## Report from the Polish–Belarusian border

## 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.

This time, we only present quantitative data regarding the reporting period.

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 [dane@wearemonitoring.org.pl](mailto:dane@wearemonitoring.org.pl).

## Definitions

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

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## REQUESTS

	groups	individuals	children (UASC)	women (pregnant)
<b>Total</b>	463	1269	99 (77)	178 (9)
<b>from Poland</b>	386	1072	70 (64)	111 (7)
<b>from Sistiema</b>	77	207	37 (20)	75 (5)
<b>from hospital</b>	69	84	10 (5)	30 (4)

## SUPPORT PROVIDED

	groups	individuals	children	women
<b>Total</b>	330	855	61	95
<b>material aid</b>	322	837	43	82
<b>legal aid</b>	219	526	29	79
<b>medical aid PL</b>	27	49	2	7
<b>first aid</b>	100	188	11	16
<b>aid in hospital</b>	66	79	10	26
<b>Number of interventions</b>		<b>349</b>		

## PUSHBACKS AND VIOLENCE

	groups	individuals	children (UASC)	women (pregnant)
<b>Reported pushbacks</b>	154	369	29 (26)	44 (1)
<b>Reported violence PL</b>	75	191	21 (18)	25 (1)
<b>Reported violence BY</b>	63	211	13 (13)	15 (0)

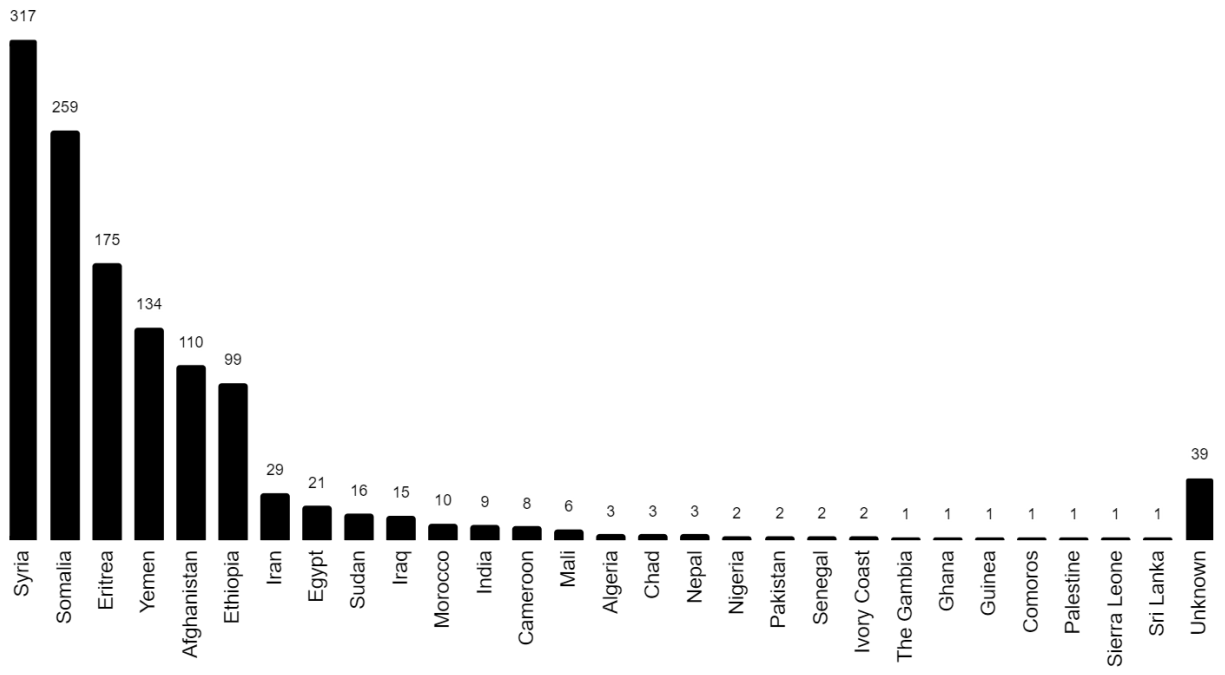


Fig. 1 Countries of origin of people who demanded support in May 2024.



Photo from the archives of the Egala Association

## Definitions

**Total requests** — The total number of reported groups/persons on the move, located in Poland, Belarus, Lithuania or Latvia. It does not consider 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** — number of groups that consist of 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.

**Individuals** — number of 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. Including support at the hospital.

**Legal aid** — support in procedures relating to the prevention of pushbacks and deportation and enabling the submission of an application for international protection. Including support at the hospital.

**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.

**Aid in hospital** – material and/ or legal aid

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

**Reported violence PL** — 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 BY** — 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