

JULY 2026

Report from the Poland–Belarus border

I had surgery on my leg. I cannot walk and I have no friends to help me, except for some Sudanese friends who left Belarus. Currently I am alone, unable to move or do anything. I haven't eaten anything for two days because I can't walk.

Excerpt from a conversation with a teenager from Sudan staying in Belarus

In July we registered reports from 24 people, of whom 13 requested support while on the territory of Poland. Among the 11 people we managed to reach were three young men from Mali and a teenager from Guinea travelling with them.

They were in fairly good condition. We treated one person's trench foot. They received food, drink, a full set of clothes, shoes, and power banks. They looked very young. From the conversation that followed, it turned out that all the Malians were 18–19 years old, and the Guinean was not yet 16. They had been in the Belarusian forest for two weeks, and in Poland for one day. One of them had been in Belarus since May 2024, on a student visa. He had been studying, but the authorities cancelled his visa and threatened him with imprisonment and deportation. The second had arrived in spring, entering without visas from Russia. The third also reached Belarus via Russia.

Excerpt from a humanitarian intervention report

Eleven of the recorded requests for support came from people stranded in Belarus. Among them were two women, both of whom described problems accessing even basic medical care. The first, from Cameroon, has been struggling for months with recurring pain caused by physical labor beyond her strength that she took on while still in Russia. The second, a pregnant student from Nigeria, wrote:

I am currently in Belarus, but I do not have access to proper prenatal care or safe shelter because I am a student. [...] Nigeria is not safe for me. There are ongoing kidnappings, killings, and widespread insecurity in many parts of the country. In my region, armed groups have carried out abductions this year. I have no safe home to return to. As a pregnant woman alone, I would be at extreme risk if I go back.

A man from Guinea currently in Belarus also requested support. He is currently in Minsk, while his pregnant wife has already been in Poland for several months. He would like to join her and be present for the birth of his child.

Also among those who reached out from Belarus were three people from the Central Africa region, one of whose reasons for leaving their country of origin was persecution based on belonging to the LGBTQI+ community. Two of them spoke about the difficulties and violence they had experienced both in their place of origin and in Belarus.

I am a homosexual man. However, I have never had the courage to disclose this fact to my family or to anyone else, although I suspect that they may have their own assumptions due to my effeminate demeanor. The primary issue is that, in my home country of [...], homosexuality is a criminal offense. Worse still, one may be subjected to public attacks simply on the basis of appearing effeminate. For a long time, I was the victim of harassment—including insults and mockery—yet I have always maintained my composure and dignity, which unfortunately only made me more withdrawn and timid in public spaces.

Excerpt from a conversation with one of the men

We LGBT people are not accepted here, even in my own country, we are not accepted, which is why I was forced to leave. Now, even here, I'm not accepted. I couldn't even finish my studies this year because my classmates treated me differently. I even have trouble going to the supermarket.

Excerpt from a conversation with the other man

Key Figures

REQUESTS JULY 2026				
	groups	individuals	children* (incl. UASC)	women and girls* (incl. pregnant)
Total	14	24	1 (1)	4 (1)
incl. in Poland	3	13	1 (1)	2 (0)
incl. in hospitals	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
incl. in Belarus	11	11	0 (0)	2 (1)
incl. in muharrama	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
* Girls are included both in the category of children (based on age) and in the category of women (based on gender).				

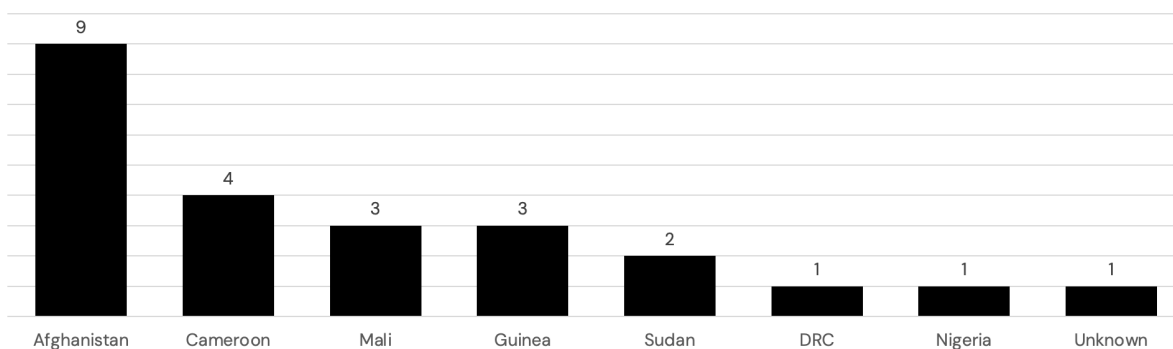


Fig. 1 Countries of origin of those reporting a need for support in July 2026.

SUPPORT PROVIDED JULY 2026				
	groups	individuals	children* (incl. UASC)	women and girls* (incl. pregnant)
Total¹	4	13	1 (1)	1 (0)
Material aid	2	11	1 (1)	2 (0)
Legal aid	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
Medical aid²	2	2	0 (0)	1 (0)
First aid	2	4	0 (0)	0 (0)
Assistance in hospitals	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
# of undertaken interventions			3	
# of successful interventions			2	
* Girls are included both in the category of children (based on age) and in the category of women (based on gender).				

¹ Explanations of the individual categories can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.

² As part of medical assistance, 2 teleconsultations were conducted, concerning 2 people, including 1 woman.

PUSHBACKS AND VIOLENCE JULY 2026

	groups	individuals	minors* (incl. UASC)	women* (incl. pregnant)
Reported pushbacks	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
Incl. from a hospital	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
Reported violence PL	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
Reported violence BY	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
Reported violence N.N	0	0	0 (0)	0 (0)
* Girls are included both in the category of children (based on age) and in the category of women (based on gender).				

Definitions

Total requests – the total number of reported groups/people on the move, located in Poland, Belarus, Russia, Lithuania or Latvia. It does not consider individuals 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 or residing together at the time of reported event such as pushback, humanitarian/legal/medical intervention. These individuals may or may not be related by family or social ties.

Individuals – number of individual persons.

Children/minors – all individuals under 18 years old.

Unaccompanied Children/Minors – individuals under 18 years of age travelling without a legal guardian. This category also includes minors travelling with older siblings or other relatives who are not their legal guardians under Polish law.

Border barrier (also: wall, barrier, fence) – a fortification located on Polish territory several to several-teen metres from the border with Belarus, in the form of a steel fence topped with coils of razor wire, with additional entanglements of concertina razor wire positioned alongside it.

Concertina – razor wire formed into large coils, constituting an additional element of border infrastructure.

Muharrama – a term used by Arabic-speaking people on the move to describe the strip of land located between the Polish border barrier and the fortifications on the Belarusian side (referred to as the sistema). In Arabic, muharrama means “forbidden”. People on the move also use the longer term المنطقة المحرمة (“forbidden zone”). Individuals stay there either before attempting to cross the barrier or immediately after being subjected to a pushback. The zone takes the form of a strip ranging from several metres to several kilometres in width, with an approximately 1.5-metre section directly adjacent to the barrier located on Polish territory. The entire area

remains under the strict control of Belarusian services which, according to peoples' accounts, often hold individuals in specific locations, preventing them from returning further into Belarus and at times forcing them to attempt another crossing into Poland or forcibly moving to another location. The frequency and character of these interventions vary.

Sistema – the fencing and electronic security system separating the militarised Belarusian border zone (muharrama) from the rest of Belarusian territory.

Support total – total number of people or groups reached by organisations and entities operating in Podlasie who agreed to share information with us (Grupa Granica, Ocalenie, unaffiliated residents and inhabitants of Podlasie, collectives, individuals, Podlaskie Ochotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe)

Material aid – support in the form of basic humanitarian aid packages (food, clothing, water, information), provided during field interventions or in hospitals.

Legal aid – support in procedures aimed at preventing pushbacks and enabling the submission of an application for international protection, provided during field interventions or in hospitals.

Medical aid – professional support provided by individuals with formal medical education during field interventions or remotely.

Medical first aid – assistance provided by individuals without formal medical education or after basic first-aid / rescue training (e.g. wound cleaning or treatment of trench foot).

Aid in hospital – material and/or legal aid provided to individuals hospitalised as a result of crossing the Polish-Belarusian border.

Pushback – the forced return of migrants to the border line or compelling them to leave Polish territory without proper examination of their individual circumstances; regardless of whether they received return decisions, and even if they explicitly expressed their intention to apply for international protection in Poland. Experts monitoring human rights violations at the EU's external borders note that pushbacks constitute a form of violence per se and are commonly accompanied by additional physical or verbal violence.

Reported pushback events – pushbacks reported to us during the given reporting period by individuals who experienced them directly or witnessed them firsthand. The number of pushback events may be higher than the number of individuals.

Reported violence – reported cases of violence experienced by people on the move that do not constitute the act of pushback itself. Subdivided into categories depending on the perpetrators: Polish services, Belarusian services, or unidentified (Polish or Belarusian). One person may experience violence from multiple perpetrators; the categories must not be summed to determine the number of individuals.

Reported violence PL – reported cases of violence experienced directly by people on the move, 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 – reported cases of violence experienced directly by people on the move, the perpetrators of which, according to the victims' accounts, were people belonging to the Belarusian uniformed services.

Reported violence N.N. – reported cases of violence in which, based on the wording of the account and the location provided, it is not possible to determine whether the perpetrators were Polish or Belarusian services.

Number of field interventions – number of interventions undertaken by field teams in response to a report of a need for assistance or a chance encounter of people on the move in a border

area.

Number of deceased – all known victims of the border regimes of Poland (also acting as a member state of the European Union) and Belarus are individuals who died along the Eastern European migration route, on the Polish–Belarusian border, and on its both sides. Cases of people who died outside of these areas but whose deaths are connected to the attempt to cross this particular border are considered individually by the Border Death Monitoring Group (BDMG), in order to avoid the arbitrary inclusion or exclusion of specific individuals. The data continues to be verified and updated. It is expected that, over time, additional information may surface regarding further deaths, including from the period covered here.

Injuries from the wall – injuries sustained while crossing border fortifications at the Polish–Belarusian border, such as orthopaedic injuries, fractures, sprains, or wounds caused by razor wire.

Individuals from vulnerabilised groups – individuals who are facing specific risks in the context of Poland–Belarus border regime based on following grounds:

Age	– minors – unaccompanied minors – individuals over 45 years of age – senior citizens aged 60 and over
Medical reasons	– pregnancy – chronic illness or illness – disability – injury
Protection Needs*	– survivors of sexual violence – individuals subjected to gender-based violence – survivors of torture – individuals affected by human trafficking

* often difficult to identify at the intervention stage unless disclosed by an individual

The study is based on data obtained from individuals who witnessed or participated in the events described. We would like to thank all non-governmental organisations, collectives, activists operating at the Polish–Belarusian border for sharing their reports and notes from the interventions carried out. Special thanks are due to all people on the move who decided to share their own experiences.

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