



LA  
STRADA  
Moldova



# Mapping of services existing in the Republic of Moldova

for displaced people  
from Ukraine.

Identification of risks of  
exploitation and human  
trafficking

RESEARCH REPORT

Chisinau, 2022



**The study was carried out by SocioPolis Consultancy, at the request of the International Center „La Strada”**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**APC** – Assistance and Protection Center for victims and potential victims of human trafficking

**BMA** – Bureau for Migration and Asylum

**BP** – Border Police

**CCHT** – Center for Combating Human Trafficking

**CES** – Commission for Emergency Situations

**CSO** – Civil society organizations

**EU** – European Union

**GBV** – Gender-based violence

**HT** – Human Trafficking

**Intersectoral mechanism** – Regulations regarding the establishment of the intersectoral cooperation mechanism for the identification, assistance, and monitoring of children at risk coming from Ukraine during the declaration of war in Ukraine

**IOM** – International Organization for Migration/UN Agency for Migration

**MD** – Multidisciplinary teams (community and district)

**MIA** – Ministry of Internal Affairs

**MLSP** – Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

**NEA** – National Employment Agency

**NSAA** – National Social Assistance Agency

**PSA** – Public Services Agency

**RM** – Republic of Moldova

**SATS** – Social Assistance Territorial Structures

**SLI** – State Labour Inspectorate

**SPC** – Special Placement Centers for victims and presumed victims of human trafficking and gender-based violence

**TCCHT** – Territorial commissions for combating Human Trafficking

**TPCR** – Temporary Placement Centers for Refugees

**UNHCR** – UN Refugee Agency

**UNICEF** – United Nations Children’s Fund

**UNO** – United Nations Organization

**VNET** – Violence, Neglect, Exploitation, and Trafficking in children

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Social context

The war in Ukraine has caused a high level of forced displacement of the civil population in Europe, with a significant impact on neighboring countries in particular. Since February 24, 2022, until now, the Republic of Moldova (RM) borders have been crossed by more than 650 thousand displaced people (90% Ukrainian citizens and 10% third-country nationals). The large majority of displaced people were transiting the territory of the RM.<sup>1</sup>

More than 80 900 people have remained in Moldova, of which about 14 thousand Ukrainians returned to the territory of the RM after the displacement from Ukraine to European countries. Women (60% of the number of adult people displaced from Ukraine) and children (49% of the total displaced people) represent the large majority of displaced people.<sup>2</sup> *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report* reveals that RM hosts the highest displaced people per capita.<sup>3</sup>

Moldovan authorities have immediately responded to challenges determined by the war in Ukraine, creating a Single Crisis Management Center to coordinate the assistance and protection provided by various state and non-state actors. It is also important that more than 90 external development partners provide support to RM authorities.<sup>4</sup>

Various surveys, and analyses have been conducted with the support of development

partners, amongst which: *Gender mainstreaming to meet the needs of refugees in Moldova*<sup>5</sup>, *Brief gender-based analysis during the crisis from Ukraine: Republic of Moldova; Survey on the displacement of Ukrainians and third-country nationals*<sup>6</sup>, *Rapid gender analysis*<sup>7</sup>, *Preventing human trafficking in refugees from Ukraine. A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response*<sup>8</sup>, *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report*<sup>9</sup> etc. The analysis revealed that the war in Ukraine increases gender-based risks and vulnerabilities.<sup>10</sup> The risks of human trafficking (HT) and exploitation are also high. Among the displaced people, there are adolescents and children unaccompanied or accompanied by third parties, as well as people with reduced economic and informational resources.<sup>11</sup>

## Goal, objectives, and methodology of the study

This research aims to reveal the peculiarities of the existent services for displaced people from Ukraine, particularly women and children, and to identify the risks of exploitation and HT to ensure a more effective national anti-trafficking response. The expected goal was achieved according to the **objectives:**

- Mapping of services available to displaced people from Ukraine, in particular women and children, with a special focus on services available to victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation;

1 Data presented by the Single Crisis Management Center on 13.09.2022. Current data is available at <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&geo=680>

2 Ibidem.

3 *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report. Ukraine Refugee Response, Republic of Moldova*. RREUS, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, August 2022, p.6.

4 UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, OIM, UN Women, OHCHR, USAID, UNAIDS, OSCE, World Vision, Terre des Hommes, ACTED, ADRA, Caritas, CLEAR Global, Keystone, Palladium, Help Age, OXFAM, Medical Corps, etc.

5 *Gender mainstreaming checklists to inform refugee response in Moldova*.

6 *Displacement survey: Ukrainians and third-country nationals crossing to Ukraine*

7 *Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine*

8 *Preventing human trafficking of refugees from Ukraine. A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response*. La Strada International, The Freedom Fund. May 2022.

9 *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report. Ukraine Refugee Response, Republic of Moldova*. RREUS, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, August 2022,

10 *Brief gender-based analysis during the crisis from Ukraine: Republic of Moldova*. <https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/O%20scurt%C4%83%20analiz%C4%83%20a%20impactului%20de%20gen%20%C3%AEn%20criza%20din%20Ucraina%20-%20Republica%20Moldova.pdf>

11 *Rapid Gender Assessment of Ukraine*. UN Women, CARE International. May 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/rapid-gender-analysis-of-ukraine>

- Assessment of the vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine;
- Analysis of interventions to prevent and fight HT and exploitation among displaced people, in particular women and children;
- Identification and analysis of existing gaps in the social protection of displaced people, including victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation;
- Development of relevant recommendations for public authorities to streamline anti-trafficking activities.

The **research methodology** was focused on mapping existing services for displaced people from Ukraine, especially women and children, as well as on the experience of representatives from various public institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and international agencies engaged in the protection and assistance of displaced people, prevention and combating of trafficking and exploitation, thus enabling data triangulation.<sup>12</sup> The research plan comprised: (i) a desk review of statistics and recent reports about the situation of displaced people from Ukraine in RM, focusing on the identification of risks to trafficking and exploitation; (ii) the conduction of 25 individual in-depth interviews (III) with representatives of international organizations, different social service providers, representatives of central and local authorities; (iii) application of 10 questionnaires to collect quantitative data from service providers for displaced persons from Ukraine: Temporary Refugee Placement Centers (TRCP) and Special Placement Centers for victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation. Field data collection was carried out between 13.09.2022-20.10.2022. The reference moment for the data presented is 13.09.2022.

In this study, was used the term *displaced person/s* from Ukraine (and its synonym, the term *refugee/s*), but different from that of the *refugee status*, as it is stipulated by the Law no.270/2008 on asylum in RM „*displaced*

*persons*– foreigners who had to leave their country or region of origin, unable to return in safe conditions due to the situation prevailing in that country and who may fall within the scope of Article 1 A of the Geneva Convention of July 28 1951 relating to the status of refugees or other national or international instruments under which international protection is given, in particular: a) people who have fled areas of armed conflict or endemic violence; b) people at serious risk according to the Article 45 or who have been victims of systematic or generalized violation of their rights.”<sup>13</sup>

## The response of Moldovan authorities to the needs of displaced people from Ukraine

Moldovan authorities have responded promptly to challenges caused by the war in Ukraine, creating a Single Crisis Management Center. The [dopomoga.gov.md](http://dopomoga.gov.md) site was created to meet the information needs of displaced people as well, as a *Green line* (0 800 800 11) and the *Helpline of the Bureau of Migration and Asylum (BMA)* (0 800 015 27) were established to provide information support 24/7 on all issues.

Measures taken by Moldovan authorities in providing protection to displaced people from Ukraine were supported by more than 90 development partners (UN agencies in Moldova, international organizations, foreign non-governmental organizations, etc.). All the activities carried out by the UN agencies in Moldova comply with objectives set by Moldovan authorities, while certain agencies also have separate memorandums of collaboration with several structures. Working groups were created, including representatives of public authorities, international organizations, and CSOs, with the support of development partners to ensure the effective coordination of activities. Amongst them, there are the groups: Gender equality, coordinated by UN Women; Prevention and combating of HT, coordinated by IOM and

<sup>12</sup> Validation technique that combines several data collection methods to reduce inherent biases. Triangulation enables cross-checking of the reliability and stability of results.

<sup>13</sup> Law no 270/2008, art.3.

UNCHR; Child protection, coordinated by UNICEF; Prevention and combating of gender-based violence (GBV), coordinated by UNHCR; etc.

CSOs have also been included in providing services to displaced people alongside the international stakeholders: International Center „La Strada”, Tdh Moldova, Social Mission „Diaconia” Public Association „Casmed”, Caritas Moldova, Moldovan Branch of the organization „Help Age International”, Association „Keystone Moldova”, Women’s Law Center, Child, Community, Family”, Public Association „Home Care”, National Center for Preventing Child Abuse (CNPAC), Association for Child and Family Empowerment „AVE Copiii” etc.

A special role in providing social services at the local level is played by Social Assistance Territorial Structures (SATS). Engagement of SATS by international and local organizations streamlined assistance to displaced people, avoidance of conflict situations, disappointment, etc.

National legislation regulates in detail the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners on/from the territory of RM, granting and prolongation of the right of residence, etc. In accordance with international obligations, Moldova established four forms of protection for foreigners: (i) *refugee status*; (ii) *humanitarian protection*; (iii) *temporary protection*; (iv) *political asylum*.

Taking into account the massive flow of displaced people from Ukraine, Moldovan authorities have established a special visa-free regime for them. Consequently, the displaced citizens of Ukraine can enter and remain legally on the territory of the RM with different types of documents (birth certificates, delegated authority documents, electronic documents, expired documents, etc.). Protection for displaced persons from Ukraine, used in the RM under an emergency, goes beyond what can provide temporary protection.

The BMA has registered 9350 asylum applications since the beginning of the armed conflict in Ukraine. Men fleeing war

from Ukraine, especially those who crossed the state border illegally, apply for asylum more often. Claiming asylum allows them to avoid punishment for illegal entry or stay on the territory of RM. Of the 9350 asylum applications, only 3604 are active. In other cases, the examination of the asylum request was stopped because the displaced people have left or later refused this form of protection.<sup>14</sup>

Moldovan authorities, together with external partners, are planning to develop an assistance and protection system to cope with larger flows of displaced people who may transit RM or settle in the country at the beginning of the cold season.

### Challenges related to unaccompanied children from Ukraine or accompanied by third parties

A challenge faced by Moldovan authorities lay in the fact that not all children coming from Ukraine were accompanied by a legal representative. The flows of displaced people included: (i) unaccompanied children; (ii) children accompanied by third parties, including foreign nationals (unauthorized people). These circumstances prompted representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) to take immediate action to develop the legal framework for the protection of unaccompanied children or accompanied by third parties, from Ukraine, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, the *Regulations establishing the intersectoral cooperation mechanism for the identification, assistance, and monitoring of children at risk, coming from Ukraine during the state of war in Ukraine (Intersectoral mechanism)* were developed and approved by Commission for Emergency Situations (CES) Decision no. 14 of 14.04.2022. According to this document, the following categories of children at risk from Ukraine require the immediate intervention of guardianship authorities: (i) unaccompanied children, (ii) children

14 In-depth individual interview with the head of BMA (III\_5).



accompanied by unauthorized people, (iii) children accompanied by legal representatives who raise suspicion regarding their identity (both, children and legal representatives), (iv) children declared at risk or the presumption of imminent danger, (v) children without identity documents, expired or damaged documents, (vi) other categories of children at risk.

Moldovan authorities tried not to limit the rights of Ukrainian children to free movement; including children aged 16-18 who, according to Ukrainian laws, have the right to freedom of movement without being accompanied by an adult. On the other hand, they did not intend to institutionalize children in placement centers when, outside RM borders, there were members of the extended family and relatives who wanted to take care of these children. Therefore, MIA and MLSP, via the joint Order no. 169/34 of 22.04.2022, have established specific implementation measures of the Decision no. 14 of 14.02.2022 of the CES from RM regarding the approval of the form of the document authorizing the crossing of the state border of RM, on the exit direction, of unaccompanied children or accompanied by unauthorized people. Subsequently, by the MLSP Order no.36 of 05.05.2022, *The form of the document of rapid assessment of the best interests of the child at risk coming from Ukraine during the declaration of the state of war in Ukraine and the Sheet for observing the behavior actions, statements and condition of the child and the adult accompanying the child*. These additional orders established two other methods of control: (i) authorization to cross the state border of RM, the exit direction of unaccompanied children or accompanied by an unauthorized person (ii) assessment of children's interests taking into account child's desire to continue the journey with that person without being influenced from outside and signs to call attention to.

## Services for displaced people from Ukraine

132 authorized TPCRs were open to provide housing to displaced people beginning on February 24, 2022, 71 were operating at the

time of this assessment. By the CES decision, National Social Assistance Agency (NSAA) was delegated to authorize the activity of TPCR. Subsequently, NSAA has developed the *Guidelines for the creation and approval of TPCR*, being also in charge of the development of the draft regulations for TPCR approved through the MLSP order.<sup>15</sup> Different institutions had the possibility to open TPCR: SATS, state-owned enterprises, public institutions subordinated to central public authorities, non-commercial organizations, local public authorities of the first level, etc., while NSAA authorized all TPCR that submitted the application and have a capacity of more than 20 people. However, the research data shows that NSAA authorized not all TPCRs.

Certain specialized placement centers (SPC), providing services to vulnerable categories of people from RM, have continued their activities and have also offered available spaces to displaced people. They didn't require authorization.

Children from Ukraine benefit from all forms of protection and all services that are designed for children from RM. Thus, unaccompanied children from Ukraine are entitled to the following forms of protection existing on the territory of RM: guardianship/trusteeship and custody. These forms of protection were established on relatives (aunt, uncle, elder brother/sister, etc.). For example, in the Basarabeasca district, there are 26 unaccompanied children living with relatives that have been given guardianship of these children. In Falesti, 7 unaccompanied children were living in custody. Reporting on these forms of protection is done regularly to the MLSP.

Assuming the right of every child to a family and the observance of his best interest, but also considering the deinstitutionalization reform from RM, alternative solutions have been identified for unaccompanied children from Ukraine: services of professional parental assistance and Community Family-Type Centers. Still, the demand for such services is extremely low.

15 <https://www.anas.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Ordin26022022.pdf>

## **The strengths in providing services to displaced children from Ukraine are:**

- Development and approval of the *Intersectoral mechanism*, enabling the Border Police (BP) representatives, but also other specialists, to notify the representatives of guardianship authorities if there is any suspicion regarding the child's situation.
- Approval of Order 34 and Order 36, which provide for the rapid assessment of the best interests of the child at risk and the issue, if necessary, of the document authorizing the crossing of the border of RM on the exit of unaccompanied children or children accompanied by an unauthorized person.
- Engagement of child protection specialists from the district level (II level), sometimes for twenty-four hours, seven days a week (24/7).
- Establishing the form of protection for unaccompanied children or accompanied by third parties: guardianship/trusteeship or custody, etc.
- Development of certain services in the context of the displaced people crisis (*mobile teams for children and youth*), other services have diversified their target groups, including displaced children (Youth Centers, creative centers, public libraries, summer camps, etc.).
- Children's integration into kindergarten or school at parent/caregiver's request, including the provision of school supplies.
- Engagement of CSO psychologists to provide counseling for children, including therapy for war trauma.
- Establishment of the program of activities and services for children hosted in TPCR and SPC with their managers but also parents/caregivers.
- Organization of various recreational activities: holidays, concerts, quilting bees, and trips all over the RM.

## **Amongst the strengths in providing services to displaced people from Ukraine, especially women, are:**

- Empathy towards displaced people is proved by social workers, police officers, healthcare workers, etc., including citizens of RM.
- Medical aid provided: emergency care, opportunity to benefit from primary care services, dialysis services for people with acute kidney failure, and chemotherapy for cancer patients.
- Wide variety of help and services, such as material aid, support for transportation, identification of possibilities of expensive medical treatments in European Union countries, as well as Romanian language courses.
- Information and employment guidance, including, in certain cases, professional development/economic empowerment courses for women, provided by certain SPC.
- Partnerships were created between different stakeholders: government institutions, TPCR, SPC, CSO, and international organizations.
- Mobile teams that reach the displaced people from communities, TPCR, and SPC meet the needs of displaced people.
- Appointment of cultural mediators in TPCR, in communities that host displaced people of Roma ethnicity from Ukraine, to improve their information.
- Within several mobile teams, employment and engagement of displaced women from Ukraine.
- Advertising of services via various mass media, including the organization of several information campaigns. For example, the campaign in Chisinau, „Help me, to help you”, launched on May 30, 2022, to inform displaced people about free services available for them.

### **As weaknesses of the services offered to displaced children in Ukraine:**

- Lack of child protection specialists at the community level (I level). The lack of specialists has increased the workload of community social workers, their overload, leading to professional burnout and high staff turnover.
- The small number of preschool children enrolled in educational institutions and the small number enrolled in the educational system.
- Lack of specialized services for certain categories of children (children victims/witnesses of crimes) and rehabilitation services for children.
- It is sometimes unclear how the documents should be compiled so children can benefit from services in RM. For example, disabled children displaced from Ukraine are entitled to personal assistance services, but SATS employees do not know how to compile the file (what documents, what diagnosis, etc.).
- Lack of data regarding the distribution of displaced children, by administrative-territorial units. Dissimilarity in the data about the number of children provided by central authorities and data collected by CSO.

### **Weaknesses of services for adults, especially women:**

- There is no coordination, at the district level, of services provided to displaced people, consequently, the activities are not always systematic, they do not begin with the identification of needs, and provision of the necessary assistance and do not allow the monitoring of the situation. CSOs providing services in communities for displaced people do not always collaborate with SATS which leads sometimes to overburdening of displaced people in some TPCRs and localities.
- TPCRs for displaced people are mixed, hosting children together with adults (women and men). According to certain

respondents, the quality of accommodation services could be improved.

- Existence of unauthorized TPCR that did not notify NSAA („the ombudsman also carries out filed missions and identifies, from time to time, unauthorized centers that provide services”). A few respondents mentioned that they witnessed situations when the managers of such centers had abusive behavior toward the displaced people.
- Staff turnover, especially in the field of social assistance. There is also a shortage of staff in TPCR, but also in some SPC. As a result, the specialists are already exhausted and overworked.
- Certain TPCRs have not been adjusted to the needs of people with locomotor disabilities. For example, TPCR Basarabeasca and TPCR Cahul did not have wheelchair ramps.
- The staff of TPCR hosting displaced persons of Roma ethnicity is not acquainted with some of their cultural traditions.
- Lack of a centralized identification and monitoring mechanism, which would exclude multiple registrations, in different regions, of beneficiaries.

### **Challenges faced by institutions providing services**

The legal framework in the RM regarding the integration of foreigners does not cover displaced people. Moreover, challenges occur relating to human resources and their monitoring of the situation. Social service providers pointed out the following challenges they face:

- The lack of a legal status of the displaced persons associated with one of the forms of protection provided by the legislation determines the lack of responsibility and affects their integration process. In the opinion of some specialists, the lack of a clear status of displaced persons also influences their employment process in the labor field. The lack of a status of the displaced persons also contributes to some situations of abuse by them, through the

regular crossing from Ukraine, in order to benefit from financial assistance.

- Difficulties in providing placement and services in CPTR for displaced people from Ukraine, citizens of other countries (Russians, Syrians, Moldovans, etc.).
- Difficulties in registering and ensuring legal procedures on death among displaced people from Ukraine.
- Winter/cold time of the year and heating of TPCR. In some old centers, the power grid will not be able to work if there are many heaters.

### Other challenges reported by research participants include:

- Lack of interoperability of information systems owned by different institutions (BP, BMA, etc.) „we could manage better if we had an interoperable information system. We could provide services much faster”.
- Increase in the flow of displaced people during the autumn-winter time. However, at the time of assessment, the *Sectoral Winterization Strategies* were being developed in a participatory way for the following sectors: protection, child protection, and GBV. The strategies have established the needs, priority interventions, standard package of sectoral response, measures planned by the Government, challenges, risks, and constraints. International agencies and organizations as well as their partners have been engaged in the development of these strategies.

### Vulnerability of displaced people and the risk of trafficking and exploitation

The large majority of research participants emphasized that they haven't identified any suspicious cases of trafficking or exploitation. The „few dozen” cases reported to the Center for Combating Human Trafficking (CCHT), and other institutions have not been confirmed as a result of the investigation.

Research data reveal the following categories of displaced people **vulnerable to HT**:

- Unaccompanied children, including children aged 16-18 years, children accompanied by unauthorized people.
- Children from families of Roma ethnicity „not all are registered”. There were situations when the first documentation of the child was done when the child was 14-15 years old, based on a document certifying the birth.
- Roma people with a low level of education frequently do not have valid identity documents.
- Women that came alone or women with children.
- People face economic challenges because the living costs in RM are high.
- Women victims and survivors of GBV.
- People with disabilities, especially mental disorders, as well as sensory disabilities.
- Lonely older people.

The war's outbreak also brought up the issue of transporting children from surrogate mothers from Ukraine. The specialists claimed that „falsifying the data about a baby is the easiest thing”, because the baby doesn't have distinct signs that will make him/her stand out from other children. Thus, the same document can be used for several children. This aspect warns of a sensitive, long-standing issue for which CCHT representatives have to be prepared.

The following categories of displaced people are **vulnerable to labour exploitation**: (i) vulnerable people; (ii) people with disabilities; (iii) boys aged 15-17 years; (iv) men; (v) older people accommodated in communities.

The level of education represents an essential factor, both in the case of HT and exploitation. The risk of trafficking and exploitation increases in the case of displaced persons with incomplete secondary education.

Specialists employed in preventing and combating trafficking and exploitation believe

the mentality of displaced people is also a risk. They „do not identify themselves in such situations and are firmly convinced that this could not happen to them.

## Prevention of trafficking and exploitation on the territory of the Republic of Moldova

RM has an institutional framework for preventing and combating TFU, oriented more towards cases when its citizens are subject to trafficking and exploitation. After the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the Moldovan authorities tried to adjust this institutional framework to the new circumstances related to the flow of displaced people from Ukraine, including the identification, assistance, and monitoring of risky situations of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people.

The war in Ukraine determined the amendment of the normative framework of RM decisions of CES, but also internal Orders of MIA and MLSP to cope with the needs of Ukrainian children at risk during the declaration of the state of war. Moreover, MIA, by order no.485 of 05.10.2022, has approved the *Guidelines on the identification of victims and presumed victims of human trafficking in mixed migration flows* that were developed with the support of the International Center „La Strada”.

The national anti-trafficking response represents an increased interest to the entire international community. In collaboration with international organizations and field-related CSOs, Moldovan authorities have undertaken several measures to prevent the trafficking and exploitation of displaced people, providing training and support in risk mitigation.

### Activities to prevent trafficking and exploitation among displaced persons include:

(i) permanent checking of the platform created by the government [dopomoga.md](http://dopomoga.md), but also other sites on which advertising is placed regarding accommodation, transport, and employment in the labor field by CCHT employees; (ii) informing displaced persons about the particularities of TFU and exploitation for prevention; (iii) informing

the displaced persons about the possibilities of movement and offering support to help them go safely abroad; (iv) information on job vacancies, orientation, and guidance on the employment of displaced people; (v) providing transportation across RM to prevent HT, etc.

The International Center „La Strada” ensured the management of the Anti-trafficking Hotline and the Trust Line for Women twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, providing information to all people requiring their services. Another critical aspect of the prevention of HT and exploitation referred to the **training of specialists**: border police officers, TPCR managers, child protection specialists, community social workers, employees of airlines, as well as members of multidisciplinary teams (MT), Territorial Commissions for Combating Human Trafficking (TCCHT), etc.

### The strengths in preventing trafficking and exploitation are:

- Immediate intervention of relevant authorities, international organizations collaborating with the authorities, and CSO in preventing trafficking and exploitation „a proactive strategy”. The mobile teams created visit the communities providing them with information and counseling.
- SPC specialists with certain expertise in the prevention and assistance of victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation have also benefited from additional training provided by IOM, UNICEF, APC, International Center „La Strada” etc.
- Training of the frontline specialists regarding the peculiarities of HT, but also those who are engaged in providing support to people in TPCR, communities, etc.
- Participation of several displaced women in information activities for displaced people.

### The research data enables the following challenges of the anti-trafficking system of RM:

- Insufficient coordination of activities at the central level, as well as at the level of administrative-territorial units, including those for the prevention and combating of risks of trafficking and exploitation.

- Lack of a systemic approach, single register, and monitoring of the situation. CSOs providing services in communities for displaced people do not always collaborate with SATS, sometimes leading to the duplication of activities and overburdening of displaced people in some TPCRs and villages or to lack of activities in others.
- Continuous transformation of the phenomenon of HT: increase in the use of information technologies during all stages of HT.
- Existence of certain unauthorized TPCRs that did not notify the authorities and limit the access of CSO in their centers, including the implementation of certain information activities.
- Employee turnover and the need for continuous adjustment of information about contact people, as well as the shortage of human resources.
- Lack of child protection specialists at the community level. The lack of these specialists has caused an increase in the workload of community social workers and their overload, leading to professional burnout.
- Lack of data on the distribution of displaced people, including children, by administrative-territorial units and the discrepancy between the information provided by central authorities and CSOs.
- Failure to grant the legal status associated with the protection forms for foreigners stipulated by the law affects the integration of displaced children in educational institutions (preschool and school) and the employment of adults.
- Displaced people lack awareness of the risks of trafficking and exploitation, including online.
- Difficulties in providing placement and services in CPTR for displaced people from Ukraine, citizens of other countries (Russians, Syrians, Moldovans, etc.).Lack of interoperability between information systems owned by various institutions (BP, BMA, etc.).
- Moldovan people's lack of awareness of the key signs of trafficking and exploitation.
- Lack of coordination of training for different specialists and the need to organize continuous training for specialists in different fields.
- Occurrence of people of Roma ethnicity discrimination due to the lack of documents, low level of education, not speaking the Russian language, and the need for a deeper explanation, including repetition of information.
- Need for the training of MD providing services in communities hosting displaced people, but also of TCCHT, giving factual information about situations they face.
- Low engagement of mayors in activities targeting the prevention of HT and exploitation of displaced people.
- Lack of certain methodological resources to help specialists identify victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine.

Research data allow the submission of the following **recommendations for authorities, UN agencies, international organizations and CSOs to streamline the anti-trafficking system in RM:**

### Legal

- Need to grant a legal status, clearly associated with the protection forms for foreigners stipulated by national laws, to displaced people from Ukraine. The status will entitle them to rights as well as obligations.

## Coordination

- Development of a systemic approach regarding the assistance of displaced people as well as their situation. Strengthening the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating HT to be acquainted with the overall situation, including related challenges in the following areas: health and medical care, social services, educational services, employment, etc.
- Coordination by NSAA of training related to social assistance, by using the training platform for specialists employed in this field.
- Periodic monitoring of the situation by consulting local and central authorities, international organizations, and CSO, including the participation of displaced people.
- Development of collaboration between SATS and CSO by appointing a SATS representative to mentor the activities of CSO providing services in the district.

## Methodological

- Development of specific tools to support professionals: Displaced people route, with the presentation of risks and methods to cope with them as well as their validation in discussions with the victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation, and with local and international experts.
- Simplification of certain protocols provided to specialists for the identification of victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation.
- Adjustment of national tools of the National Referral System to the circumstances related to the war in Ukraine, including their application „*to be friendlier*”.
- Introduction in the future training of social workers of specific modules related to Humanitarian Assistance in armed conflicts, Models of immediate response in emergencies, Signs of HT and exploitation in refugees, etc.

## Practical

- Training of specialists should be done according to needs identified via discussion sessions and should tackle the following subjects: (i) signs of identifying suspected situations, (ii) communication with children and people accompanying them; (iii) aspects related to non-discrimination, (iv) changes in the phenomenon of trafficking and exploitation at the regional level.
- Dissemination and exchange of good practices in combating HT with specialists from other countries hosting displaced people, about the areas of activity, specific institutions, organization of activities, and challenges, including those related to trafficking (information, exchange of experience, and improving practices).
- Training of CCHT employees and the BP regarding identifying potential cases of trafficking related to the transportation of children from surrogate mothers from Ukraine.
- Prolongation of information activities and employment support, including the development of alternative employment – remote work, part-time job, etc.
- Organization of personal development activities and empowerment of displaced women from Ukraine.
- Employment of displaced women from Ukraine within specialized services, including the Anti-trafficking Hotline and Child Helpline.
- Digitalization of the registration process of displaced people and asylum seekers at BMA.
- Development of informative materials of online safety for displaced children from Ukraine.
- Need to supervise specialists working with displaced people to prevent their occupational burnout as well as to provide the guidance required.
- Need to develop online anti-trafficking mechanisms.
- Training of transportation service providers.

## **Information and awareness-raising campaigns**

- Information and awareness-raising campaigns in media and online for the entire population of RM, including displaced people from Ukraine, available in Ukrainian, Russian, English, and Romanian languages to ensure access to information.
- Community sensitization to reduce stigma and discrimination in schools and communities, as well as reporting cases of trafficking and exploitation.
- Organization of information activities in communities, including work in agriculture, and other risky areas, that could help in the identification of cases of trafficking and labour exploitation.
- More measures related to the information and prevention of online risks of trafficking and exploitation by the participation of influencers, and bloggers from Ukraine.
- Promotion of developed ads and their translation into Ukrainian.

## **Cooperation**

- Improvement of cooperation between RM and other countries in the preventing and combating of HT.
- Establishment of a clear mechanism for granting foreigners the status of the victim of HT and exploitation, including displaced people, and the cooperation of Government institutions and CSOs in this regard.
- Increasing access to the labor market of displaced persons by ensuring cooperation between territorial employment structures and employers.



## INTRODUCTION

The war in Ukraine has caused a high level of forced displacement of civil population in Europe, with a great impact on neighboring countries in particular. Since February 24, 2022 until now, the borders of the RM have been crossed by more than 650 thousand displaced people (90% Ukrainian citizens and 10% third-country nationals). The large majority of displaced people were transiting the territory of the RM. Moldovan authorities, together with external partners, have taken action and helped to the transportation of more than 52 thousand displaced people (35 thousand by air, 16 thousand by railway and over 2 thousand by land).<sup>16</sup>

The flow of displaced people varied in intensity. Within February-March about 10-15 thousand daily entries and exits have been recorded, in April – about 5 thousand, while within May-August – 3 thousand.<sup>17</sup>

More than 80 900 people have remained in Moldova, of which about 14 thousand Ukrainians returned to the territory of the RM after the displacement from Ukraine to the European countries. Women (60% of the total number of adult people displaced from Ukraine) and children (49% of the total number of displaced people) represent the large majority of displaced people.<sup>18</sup> *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report* reveals that RM hosts the highest number of displaced people per capita.<sup>19</sup>

Moldovan authorities have immediately responded to challenges triggered by the war in Ukraine, creating a Single Crisis Management Center to coordinate the

assistance and protection provided by various state and non-state actors. It is also important that more than 90 external development partners provided support to RM authorities.<sup>20</sup>

In accordance with the state of emergency declared by the Moldovan Government, displaced people from Ukraine can enter with various types of documents and stay legally on the territory of RM, without being subject to the 90-day limit. Moreover, Ukrainian displaced people can apply for asylum, access public services free of charge, including educational services, emergency and primary medical care.

BMA recorded 9,350 asylum applications, most from men who have crossed the border of RM illegally. Still, a large number of asylum applications have not yet been adjudicated.<sup>21</sup>

Various surveys, analyses have been conducted with the support of development partners, amongst which: *Gender mainstreaming to meet the needs of refugees in Moldova*<sup>22</sup>, *Brief gender-based analysis during the crisis from Ukraine: Republic of Moldova; Survey on the displacement of Ukrainians and third-country nationals*<sup>23</sup>, *Rapid gender analysis*<sup>24</sup>, *Preventing human trafficking in refugees from Ukraine. A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response*<sup>25</sup>, *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report*<sup>26</sup> etc.

Surveys coordinated by UN Women Moldova, including meetings held with women running non-governmental organizations from Moldova, revealed that the war in

16 Data presented by the Single Crisis Management Center on 13.09.2022. Current data is available on <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&geo=680>

17 Ibidem.

18 Ibidem.

19 *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report. Ukraine Refugee Response, Republic of Moldova*. RREUS, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, August, 2022, p.6.

20 UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, OIM, UN Women, OHCHR, USAID, UNAIDS, OSCE, World Vision, Terre des Hommes, ACTED, ADRA, Caritas, CLEAR Global, Keystone, Palladium, Help Age, OXFAM, Medical Corps etc.

21 In-depth individual interview with the head of the BMA (III\_5)

22 *Gender mainstreaming checklists to inform refugee response in Moldova*.

23 *Displacement survey: Ukrainians and third-country nationals crossing to Ukraine*

24 *Rapid Gender Analysis of Ukraine*

25 *Preventing human trafficking of refugees from Ukraine. A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response*. La Strada International, The Freedom Fund. May, 2022.

26 *Gender-Based Violence Safety Audit Report. Ukraine Refugee Response, Republic of Moldova*. RREUS, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, August, 2022.

Ukraine increases gender-based risks and vulnerabilities.<sup>27</sup> It is well known that wars and displacement represent the main causes of increased incidence of gender-based violence (GBV), especially domestic violence and sexual abuse. Consequently, the hypothesis according to which the reported incidence of GBV against displaced women in Moldova is increasing as a result of war is still true, and the risks of sexual violence continue to be a concern. Sexual violence as a weapon of war has already been reported on the territory of Ukraine.<sup>28</sup>

The risks of HT and exploitation are also high. Among the displaced people, there are adolescents and children unaccompanied or accompanied by third parties (unauthorized people), as well as people with reduced economic and informational resources.<sup>29</sup> In this context, certain researchers underlined the categories of people exposed to the risk of trafficking and exploitation, submitting recommendations to the authorities of Ukraine's neighboring countries, but also to international organizations, CSOs that provide services to victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation.<sup>30</sup>

This study highlights actions undertaken by Moldovan authorities in providing services for Ukrainian displaced people and ensuring their protection, including measures to prevent and combat HT and exploitation.

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27 Brief gender-based analysis during the crisis from Ukraine: Republic of Moldova. <https://moldova.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-08/0%20scurt%C4%83%20analiz%C4%83%20a%20impactului%20de%20gen%20%C3%AEn%20criza%20din%20Ucraina%20-%20Republica%20Moldova.pdf>

28 The aspect of insecurity (April 2022). Sexual abuse and the conflict from Ukraine, available on: link; Presented in UN Women and Care International.

29 Rapid Gender Assessment of Ukraine. UN Women, CARE International. May, 2022. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/rapid-gender-analysis-of-ukraine>

30 Preventing human trafficking of refugees from Ukraine. A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response. La Strada International, The Freedom Fund. May, 2022. <https://respect.international/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Preventing-human-trafficking-of-refugees-from-Ukraine-A-rapid-assessment-of-risks-and-gaps-in-the-anti-trafficking-response.pdf>

# I. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

## 1.1. Research goal and objectives

The **goal** of this research is to reveal the peculiarities of the existent services for displaced people from Ukraine, in particular, women and children, and to identify the risks of exploitation and HT, in order to ensure a more effective national anti-trafficking response. The expected goal was achieved according to the **objectives**:

- Mapping of services available to displaced people from Ukraine, in particular women and children, with special focus on services available to victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation;
- Assessment of the vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine;
- Analysis of interventions to prevent and fight HT and exploitation among displaced people, in particular women and children;
- Identification and analysis of existing gaps in the social protection of displaced people, including victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation;
- Development of relevant recommendations for public authorities to streamline the anti-trafficking activities.

## 1.2. Displaced people from Ukraine and the risks of exploitation and human trafficking: conceptual aspects

### Displaced person/refugee

Displaced people are those fleeing war or persecution. Their situation is complicated, having to cross state borders to seek safety in neighboring countries. Thus, they become internationally recognized as *refugees* with access to assistance from different countries, UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and other

international organizations. These people could apply for asylum, claiming protection in countries of their settlement, as it is very dangerous for them to return home.

Refugees are protected by the international law. The Geneva Convention of 1951, relating to the status of refugees and its Additional Protocol of 1967, represent the benchmarks of refugee protection. The legal principles have been integrated into numerous international, regional and national practices.

This research will use the term *displaced person/s* from Ukraine (and its synonym, the term *refugee/s*), but different from that of the *refugee status*. The *Law no.270/2008 on asylum in RM* stipulate „displaced persons–foreigners who had to leave their country or region of origin, unable to return in safe conditions due to the situation prevailing in that country and who may fall within the scope of Article 1 A of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the status of refugees or other national or international instruments under which international protection is given, in particular: a) people who have fled areas of armed conflict or endemic violence; b) people at serious risk according to the Article 45 or who have been victims of systematic or generalized violation of their rights.”<sup>31</sup>

### Human trafficking and exploitation

The international legal definition of human trafficking, accepted by the UN in 2000, describes the phenomenon as „*recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation*”.<sup>32</sup> This phenomenon could imply also exploitation of prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery

31 Law no 270/2008, art.3.

32 Art. 3, *United Nations Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, 2000.

or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

At the European level, human trafficking is defined by the *Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings*<sup>33</sup>, by analogy to the UN definition. The European Union has issued several directives on HT:

- i. Council Directive 2004/81/CE of 29 April 2004, on the residence permit issued to third-country nationals who are victims of HT or who have been the subject of an action to facilitate illegal migration, who have cooperated with competent authorities;
- ii. Directive 2011/36/UE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011, on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

On the basis of these regulatory documents, we can analyze the HT phenomenon specifying several important aspects:

- Human trafficking affects women, men and children involving a range of exploitative practices. Although trafficking was initially associated only with the sexual exploitation of women and girls, the international legal definition presented above reveals that both, women and men, girls and boys could become victims of HT and this exploitation includes forced labor, practices similar to slavery etc.
- HT and migrant smuggling represent two different types of crime. Migrant smuggling is the illegal movement, facilitated across an international border for profit. Although it may involve deception and/or abusive treatment, the purpose of migrant smuggling is to profit from movement, not the eventual exploitation as in the case of trafficking.
- Exploitation of a person can occur not only in the country of destination but also in a country of transit.

- HT cannot be „consented”. International human rights law considers consent irrelevant to circumstances when personal freedom is taken away.<sup>34</sup>

Definition provided in the UN Protocol had a particularly important role in the development of Moldovan legislation related to combating HT, focused on the implementation of this Protocol into practice. The Article 165 of the Criminal Code of RM defines human trafficking as a crime involving *„recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person, with or without his/her consent, for the purpose of commercial or non-commercial sexual exploitation, for forced labour or services, for begging, deprivation of allowances and social benefits, for illegal participation in testing and human experimentation, for slavery or similar conditions, for use in armed conflicts or criminal activities, for the removal of human organs, tissues and/or cells, as well as use of the woman as surrogate mother for reproduction, committed by violence not dangerous to person’s life or health, or by threat of violence; kidnapping; concealment, mutilation or obliteration of documents; servitude for the purpose of paying a debt; threat of disclosure of confidential information to the family of the victim or other persons, individuals or legal entities; deception; abuse of vulnerability or abuse of power, giving or receiving certain payments or benefits to get the consent of a person controlling another person.”* It is important to note that child trafficking is addressed separately in Article 206 of the Criminal Code. Thus, trafficking in children is defined as the *„recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring and receipt of a child, as well as giving or receiving money or benefits to obtain the consent of the person who exerts control over the child for the purpose of: commercial or non-commercial sexual exploitation; exploitation by forced labour or services; practicing begging or other base purposes; deprivation of allowances and social benefits, for illegal participation in testing and human experimentation; exploitation in slavery or in other conditions similar to slavery; participating in armed conflicts; participating in criminal activities;*

33 *Convention against Trafficking in Human Beings*. Council of Europe Warsaw, 16.05.2005.

34 *Human Rights and Human Trafficking, Fact Sheet nr. 36*. OHCHR. New York and Geneva, 2014.

*removal of human organs, tissues and/or cells; sale or purchase; as surrogate mother or for the purpose of reproduction; illegal adoption.”*

Over the years, the art. 165 and art. 206 have been completed with new aspects related to the deprivation of allowances or social benefits; illegal participation in testing and human experimentation, exploitation in slavery or in other conditions similar to slavery etc.

The experts from RM recommend the use of two groups of distinct signs for the identification of trafficking victims, established within the National Referral System 2009-2016<sup>35</sup>: direct signs and indirect signs.

Direct signs refer to the three elements of HT, from the internationally acknowledged definition:

- *Actions taken (what is done)*: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people with or without their consent;
- *Methods of coercion (how it is done)*: threat or use of force, constraint, kidnapping, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, payments or other benefits to a person controlling the victim.
- *Purpose of exploitation (why it is done)*: commercial or non-commercial exploitation, forced labour or services, begging, slavery or in conditions similar to slavery, in armed conflicts or criminal activities, removal of organs or tissues.

Therefore, in order to identify the trafficking victim, according to direct signs, it is necessary to establish the correlation of any illegal actions, with any means of coercion, for any purpose of exploitation.

If the specialist doesn't have enough information that would prove the direct signs of HT, he/she would use indirect signs,<sup>36</sup> for

the prior identification of trafficking victims, such as:

- Social profile of the trafficking victim, taking into account to statistical averages;
- Psychological profile of the trafficking victim, taking into account statistical averages;
- Way of crossing the border;
- Circumstances and environment the victim lives in;
- Legal status of the victim in the country of transit or in the country of destination etc.

## Labour exploitation

The Convention 105/1957 on the Abolition of Forced Labour of the International Labour Organization, Criminal Code and Labour Code of RM use the term of „forced labour”, which involves any kind of labour, service imposed to a person by threatening or without his/her consent (Article 7, Labour Code); obtaining labour from a person against his/her will by deception or coercion (Article 168, Criminal Code). There is no notion of „labor exploitation” in the national legislation.

### 1.3. Research methodology

A comprehensive methodological approach was proposed to achieve the research goal and objectives, focused on mapping of the existent services for displaced people from Ukraine, in particular women and children, as well as on the experience possessed by representatives of various public institutions, CSOs, UN agencies and international organizations engaged in the protection and assistance of displaced people, prevention and combating of trafficking and exploitation, thus enabling data triangulation<sup>37</sup>. The survey relied on primary and secondary data sources.

35 Decision of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova no. 257-XVI of December 5, 2008 regarding the approval of the *Strategy of the National referral system for protection and assistance of victims and potential victims of human trafficking and the Action Plan on the implementation of the Strategy of the National referral system for protection and assistance of victims and potential victims of human trafficking for 2009–2011* (Official Monitor of the Republic of Moldova, 2009, no. 27-29, art. 66).

36 *Guidelines on the identification of victims and potential victims of human trafficking*, approved by Order no. 33 of 20.02.2012 of the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family.

37 Validation technique that combines several data collection methods to reduce inherent biases. Triangulation enables cross-checking of the reliability and stability of results.

The research plan comprised:

- Desk review of statistics and recent reports about the situation of displaced people from Ukraine in RM, focusing on the identification of risks to trafficking and exploitation;
- In-depth interviews with representatives of UN agencies providing assistance to displaced people from Ukraine, including support to Moldovan authorities in the management of displaced people flows. 3 interviews were conducted with the representatives of UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF.
- Primary data collection from service providers for displaced people, mainly women and children, focusing on the evaluation of services existing for victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation. 14 interviews were conducted with different social services providers (10 accommodation providers and 4 providers of other kind of services). Moreover, 10 questionnaires were applied to collect quantitative data from service providers for displaced people from Ukraine: Temporary Placement Center for Refugees (TPCR) – 5 and Special Placement Centers for victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation (SPC) – 5.
- Individual interviews with various experts from public and private organizations in charge with the management of flows of displaced people from Ukraine, including prevention and combating of trafficking and exploitation. 8 in-depth individual interviews were carried out with the representatives of the next organization: Bureau for Migration and Asylum (BMA), Center for Combating Human Trafficking (CCHT), Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP): Department for protection policies on child rights and families with children and the Division of policy ensuring equality between women and men, National Social Assistance Agency (NSAA), State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), representatives of Territorial commissions for preventing and combating HT (TCCHT) etc.

In-depth individual interviews were conducted based on semi-structured interview guides, specific to the groups of people and experts involved. The list of all research participants is given in Annex 1. Field data collection was carried out within 13.09.2022-20.10.2022. The reference moment for the data presented is 13.09.2022.

#### 1.4. Research limitations

The purpose of the research was to reveal the peculiarities of existent services for displaced people from Ukraine, in particular women and children and to identify the risks to exploitation and trafficking, in order to ensure an efficient national anti-trafficking response. The research team sought to understand strengths, weaknesses and challenges in providing services to displaced people from Ukraine, in particular women and children, as well as to identify the risks to trafficking and exploitation, according to the respondents. During discussions, it was emphasized that there were no confirmed cases of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine, consequently, an attempt was made to identify the most vulnerable categories of displaced people to trafficking and exploitation, signs that raised suspicions of specialists and to identify measures taken by different authorities in preventing and combating these phenomena.

The assessment relies on data collected from 9<sup>38</sup> out of the 35 administrative-territorial units of RM, with a high number of displaced people, but also with operational TPCR and SPC. In the research process, the in-depth individual interviews were conducted only with certain representatives of UN agencies, as well as national CSOs, providing services for displaced children and women from Ukraine.

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38 Soroca, Glodeni, Drochia, Falesti, Chisinau, Ungheni, Cahul, Basarabasca, Stefan Voda.

## II. SITUATION OF DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM UKRAINE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

### 2.1. Stages and peculiarities of the response of Moldovan authorities to the needs of displaced people from Ukraine

Study participants mentioned the importance of differentiating the 3 stages in the management of displaced people flows from Ukraine:

- **I stage** „chaotic” –when the authorities were trying to find ways to meet the urgent needs of displaced people from Ukraine, to establish a displaced people crisis management system, to identify and remove certain gaps of this process, to establish partnerships with international organizations and CSO. This stage is characterized by the massive flow of displaced people, most of displaced people being in transit on the territory of RM. The displaced persons, at this stage, were mainly women with children and men „wealthy, with very expensive cars not requiring support from Moldovan authorities”. The time span refers to February-April 2022.

- **II stage** – when the crisis management system became more functional, but also the flow of displaced people has decreased. A large number of those who crossed the state border were staying in the RM. At this stage, the flow of displaced people had a high level of vulnerability „people who have nothing... really in need, especially women and children, we did not see men anymore.” Mainly, the most needy people have remained in RM: mothers with small children, elderly people, including with serious health issues unable to travel or travel with difficulty, people without ID, people that do not speak other foreign languages (except Russian), people who have left behind close relatives in Ukraine (spouses, parents) and those who wanted to turn back home as soon as possible. The time span refers to May-September 2022.

- **III stage**, for which Moldovan authorities together with external development partners are preparing for the „autumn-winter period” ,

when the flow of displaced people could increase due to weather conditions, but also due to the damage to Ukraine’s energy system.

Study participants mentioned that the situation regarding the flow of displaced people „calmed down” and people crossing the border are more informed and come with a clearly established destination: relatives, acquaintances, TPCR and SPC. Those who are staying in the RM are: (i) people that have relatives/kinship with RM citizens, (ii) people who do not speak foreign languages, (iii) people with limited financial resources, (iv) elderly people or with many children, (v) Roma people or other categories of Ukrainians, without identity documents etc.

Moldovan authorities have responded promptly to challenges caused by the war in Ukraine, creating a Single Crisis Management Center. The [dopomoga.gov.md](http://dopomoga.gov.md) site was created to meet the information needs of displaced people as well as a *Green line* (0 800 800 11), and the *Helpline of BMA* (0 800 015 27), were established to provide information support 24/7 on all issues.

Measures taken by Moldovan authorities in providing protection to displaced people from Ukraine, were supported by more than 90 development partners (UN agencies in Moldova, international organizations, international and local non-governmental organizations, etc.). All the activities carried out by the UN agencies in Moldova comply with objectives set by Moldovan authorities, while certain agencies have also separate memorandums of collaboration with several structures (for example, UNICEF with MLSP, Chisinau City Hall, General Directorate for the Protection of Children’s Rights of Chisinau related to capacity building and support to meet the needs). Working groups were created, including representatives of public authorities, international organizations, CSOs, with the support of development partners to ensure the effective coordination of activities. Amongst them, there are the groups:

Gender equality, coordinated by UN Women; Prevention and combating of HT, coordinated by IOM and UNCHR; Child protection, coordinated by UNICEF, Prevention and combating of GBV, coordinated by UNHCR etc.

CSOs have also been included in providing services to displaced people, alongside with the international stakeholders: International Center „La Strada”, Tdh Moldova, Social Mission „Diaconia” Public Association, „Casmed”, Caritas Moldova, Moldovan Branch of the organization „Help Age International”, Association „Keystone Moldova”, Women’s Law Center, Child, Community, Family”, Public Association „Home Care”, National Center for Preventing Child Abuse (CNPAC), Association for Child and Family Empowerment „AVE Copiii” etc.

It was more complicated to manage the flow of displaced people during the first period because there were unpredictable situations and coordination was not always successful, *„displaced people said that some people had come, gave us some money and told us that in 2-3 hours they will take us to Europe”* (III\_22). There were many such cases, although people proposing such services were not traffickers, the reality in fact was unpredictable and unknown *„the risks were high, so the displaced people were naive”*. People currently possess more information, are given contact data (links, addresses, telephone numbers) where they can seek help.

RM is still a country of transit. Displaced persons use all the possibilities offered by Moldovan authorities to transit or to benefit from humanitarian assistance. According to certain specialists, *„RM is not attractive to traffickers not for displaced people”* (III\_4).

*Law about the regime of foreigners in RM* no. 200/2010 regulates in detail the entry, stay and exit of foreigners on/from the territory of RM, granting and prolongation of the right of residence, etc. In accordance with the international obligations, Moldova is committed to *Law on asylum in RM*, no.270/2008 established four forms of protection for foreigners: (i) *refugee status*; (ii) *humanitarian protection*; (iii) *temporary*

*protection*; (iv) *political asylum*. Temporary protection is an exceptional measure to provide protection to foreigners in case of a massive and spontaneous flow of displaced people who cannot return to their country of origin. The temporary protection is granted by Government’s Decision at the request of MIA.

Taking into account the massive flow of displaced people from Ukraine, Moldovan authorities have established for them, a **special visa-free regime**. Consequently, the displaced citizens of Ukraine can enter and remain legally on the territory of the RM with different types of documents (birth certificates, delegated authority documents, electronic documents, expired documents, etc.). The decision to grant temporary protection to displaced people from Ukraine has not yet been taken by the Government.

The BMA has registered 9350 asylum applications since the beginning of the armed conflict in Ukraine. Men fleeing war from Ukraine, especially those who crossed the state border illegally, apply for asylum more often. Claiming asylum allows them avoid punishment for illegal entry or stay on the territory of RM. Of the 9350 asylum applications, only 3604 are active. In the other cases, the examination of the asylum request was stopped because the displaced people have left or later refused this form of protection.<sup>39</sup>

The head of BMA mentioned that protection tools for displaced people from Ukraine, within the framework of the state of emergency in RM, exceed those of temporary protection *„legal stay according to different types of documents provides the opportunity of being granted a personal code facilitating the employment. Employers who offer jobs to displaced people from Ukraine are exempted from paying the state fee of 1440 lei for a residence permit for the purpose of employment”* (III\_5).

Moldovan authorities, together with the external partners, are planning to develop the assistance and protection system to cope with larger flows of displaced people who may transit RM or settle in the country with the

39 In-depth individual interview with the head of BMA (III\_5).



beginning of the cold season (Winterization Strategy, see certain details in 3.5.).

A special role in providing social services at the local level, is played by SATS. Engagement of SATS by international and local organizations streamlined assistance to displaced people and avoidance of conflict situations and disappointment etc.

## 2.2. Challenges related to unaccompanied children from Ukraine or accompanied by third parties

A challenge faced by Moldovan authorities lied in the fact that not all children coming from Ukraine were accompanied by a legal representative. The flows of displaced people included: (i) unaccompanied children; (ii) children accompanied by third parties, including foreign nationals (Table 1). These circumstances prompted representatives of the MLSP and MIA to take immediate action to develop the legal framework for the protection of unaccompanied children or accompanied by third parties, from Ukraine, in accordance

with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, the *Regulations establishing the intersectoral cooperation mechanism for the identification, assistance and monitoring of children at risk, coming from Ukraine during the state of war in Ukraine (Intersectoral mechanism)* were developed and approved by CES Decision no. 14 of 14.04.2022. In this way, Intersectoral cooperation mechanism was established for the identification, evaluation, assistance, referral and monitoring of children at risk, coming from Ukraine, during the war in Ukraine and establishing conditions for their return to Ukraine. According to this document, the next **categories of children at risk from Ukraine** require the immediate intervention of guardianship authorities: (i) unaccompanied children, (ii) children accompanied by unauthorized people, (iii) children accompanied by legal representatives who raise suspicion regarding their identity (both, children and legal representatives), (iv) children declared at risk or the presumption of imminent danger, (v) children without identity documents, expired or damaged documents, (vi) other categories of children at risk.

**Table 1.** Information about unaccompanied children and children accompanied by third parties<sup>40</sup>

Category of children	Number of children
Unaccompanied children	414
Children accompanied by third parties	912
<i>Authorizations to cross the border of RM for children (exit)</i>	337

These regulations established the key stakeholders to be engaged in the identification, referral and assistance of children from Ukraine, as well as their responsibilities. Control was established at the RM borders due to the development and approval of the Intersectoral mechanism in order to prevent potential risk situations in children displaced from Ukraine, including child trafficking. If a child was identified in a risk situation at the RM border by the border guard/other specialists, the child protection

specialist from SATS was called ensuring child's transportation and establishment of form of child protection „our colleagues, development partners, helped us a lot in taking the children to placement centers or host families” (III\_3).

Moldovan authorities tried not to limit the right of Ukrainian children to free movement; including children aged 16-18 that according to Ukrainian laws, have the right to freedom of movement without being accompanied

<sup>40</sup> Data presented by the head of the Department for protection policies on child rights and families with children, within 24.02.2022-13.09.2022. In-depth individual interview (III\_3).

by an adult. On the other hand, they did not intend to institutionalize children in placement centers, when, outside RM borders there are members of the extended family, relatives who wanted to take care of these children. Therefore, MIA and MLSP via the joint Order no. 169/34 of 22.04.2022, have established certain implementation measures of the Decision no. 14 of 14.02.2022 of the CES from RM, regarding the approval of the form of the document authorizing the crossing of the state border of RM, on the exit direction, of unaccompanied children or accompanied by unauthorized people. Subsequently, by the MLSP Order no.36 of 05.05.2022, *The form of the document of rapid assessment of the best interests of the child at risk, coming from Ukraine, during the declaration of the state of war in Ukraine and the Sheet for observing the behavior, actions, statements and condition of the child and of the adult accompanying the child.* These additional orders established two additional methods of control: (i) authorization to cross the state border of RM, the exit direction, of unaccompanied children or accompanied by an unauthorized person (ii) assessment of children's interests taking into account child's desire to continue the journey with that person without being influenced from outside and signs to call attention to „we focused on preventing any risk situation, via questions to which everyone who identifies the child at risk has to answer before taking the decision” (III\_3).

In this way, the Intersectoral mechanism and the additional documents contributed significantly to the prevention of risks, including those of trafficking and exploitation. The representative of the Department for protection policies on child rights and families with children of the MLSP pointed out that there were cases when they issued the decision to separate the child from the accompanying person „there were many cases when the children were very young, up to a year old. Consequently, it was impossible to ask the child where he/she is from and there was no document proving who is the person accompanying the child. We could not take

*the risk of allowing them to cross, because this child could have been stolen from Ukraine and then sold abroad” (III\_3).*

### 2.3. Support provided to Moldovan authorities by certain international partners in the context of the war in Ukraine

The research carried out includes only a few UN agencies that provide assistance to the government authorities in Moldova. The agencies dealing with the prevention of risks of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people, especially women and children were selected.

**UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** contributes to the development of services for displaced people, mostly in communities outside Chisinau. Assistance provided by UNHCR is focused on the following directions: (i) cash assistance (more than 80 thousand displaced people benefited from this kind of assistance to prevent the risk of trafficking and exploitation, certain received it for a month, the others for several months); (ii) assistance in maintaining certain authorized TPCRs; (iii) creation, together with other partners (UNICEF), of child-friendly services in safe spaces (9 Blue Dots operational in RM and 1 Blue Dot on the left bank of Dniester). The services are provided by a multidisciplinary team: social worker, psychologist, child protection specialist etc.; (iv) assistance provided to displaced people via mobile multidisciplinary teams etc.

UNHCR uses the *ProGres internal tool*<sup>41</sup>, for monitoring displaced people, which they try to apply with all local partners providing services in the communities. This tool offers the opportunity to get acquainted with the situation regarding the day the displaced person registered, how long he/she stays in RM, what kind of services he/she received, including referral to benefit from services, certain data (fingerprints etc.). This tool shows also the movement direction of displaced people, countries of transit, etc. and could

41 <https://www.unhcr.org/registration-guidance/chapter3/registration-tools/>

help to the identification of certain situations of trafficking and exploitation.

The Protection Strategy of the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** in RM, has 3 objectives: (i) immediate response to the displaced people crisis in Ukraine, including prevention of trafficking and exploitation; (ii) developing resilience for the time when the crisis will end; (iii) assistance in the development of the new National Referral Mechanism, to provide support to victims of crimes, including victims of HT in their reintegration process.

Most measures undertaken by IOM and local partner organizations, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, come to respond to the urgent needs of displaced people, however fewer actions are addressing reintegration of victims of HT. Support and services provided by IOM through local partners, include: (i) mobile teams consisting of a social worker and a lawyer, (ii) assistance in cases of voluntary return and reintegration, (iii) support given to the authorities, by ensuring the green corridor and transportation services (land and air) together with other stakeholders.

Coordinating activities for displaced people, IOM together with UNHCR administers the coordination group against trafficking, providing assistance in the assessment and understanding of gaps and challenges related to trafficking system in RM, but also capacity building of specialists to identify and provide assistance to victims and presumed victims of HT.

The intervention of **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** in Moldova is focused on two directions: (i) strengthening the child protection system to be able to meet the needs of more than 42 thousand displaced children and unaccompanied children, (ii) providing services to children.

UNICEF's work is focused on coordinating services provided by BlueDots centers located near the border, which represent the first emergency response to the needs of displaced people from Ukraine (in collaboration with UNHCR and CSO). Due to the collaboration with authorities, the child protection specialists, from the local guardianship

authorities, have been delegated to work within BlueDots, enabling the documentation and quick intervention in situations when there are unaccompanied children or children separated from their parents. UNICEF is trying to extend the activities of BlueDots, through mobile teams consisting of entertainers, psychologists, social workers, who travel to localities and carry out activities with children and their parents.

UNICEF, together with local partner organizations, is piloting the *open source software platform PRIMERO*, which will ensure more effective monitoring so that displaced children could receive protection and services required. PRIMERO is an electronic system of case management that also enables the early identification of potential situations of violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking (VNET), as well as taking all necessary measures to ensure and protect children rights. Identification and registration of children is carried out only on the basis of consent. After the initial evaluation and assessment of the risk level, each child is referred to institutions that can provide the necessary services. UNICEF intends that all information collected in PRIMERO to be transmitted to central authorities of RM and be included in the national electronic system.

### III. SERVICES PROVIDED TO DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM UKRAINE, IN PARTICULAR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

#### 3.1. Services for displaced people from Ukraine

The needs of displaced women from Ukraine, including children, are diverse. However, the most important refer to accommodation, medical aid, psychological support and assistance, inclusion of children in pre-school and school system, vocational training and employment etc.

Moldovan authorities have met the needs for accommodation services of displaced people in a record time. Besides housing provided by volunteers, the authorities have made the activity of existing places more efficient, by setting up new spaces (dormitories that were not used, former residential institutions etc.). Certain placement centers, student dormitories were closed, but reopened to accommodate displaced people from Ukraine, making the necessary renovation and adjustments quickly. Several summer camps, monasteries and military units have also provided support during the massive flow of displaced people.

132 authorized TPCR were open to provide housing to displaced people beginning with February 24, 2022, 71 operating at the time of this assessment. By CES decision, NSAA was delegated to authorize the activity of TPCR. Subsequently, NSAA has developed the *Guidelines for creation and approval of TPCR*, being also in charge with the development of the draft regulations for TPCR approved through the MLSP order.<sup>42</sup> Different institutions had the possibility to open TPCR: SATS, state-owned enterprises, public institutions subordinated to CPA, non-commercial organizations, LPA of the first level, etc., while NSAA authorized all TPCR that submitted the application and have a capacity of more than

20 people. However, the research data shows that not all TPCR were authorized by NSAA.

Certain specialized placement centers (SPC), providing services to vulnerable categories of people from RM, have continued their activities and have also offered available spaces to displaced people. They didn't require authorization.

NSAA supervise the activity of TPCR and the situation of people that are hosted, their needs and problems they face.<sup>43</sup> NSAA has information about the number of authorized TPCR and those who informed them about their opening, but not those who didn't „ *there are some centers in the country that cannot be controlled, because they are not created based on the NSAA order, nor did they notify us about providing services to people*” (III\_7). Several risks arise with regard to these placement centers „*in the context that it is not clear how many people are there, where are they, what they are doing, where they are being taken etc.*” (III\_7).

Several TPCR were closed during the second stage due to the lack of need, as the flow of displaced people has stabilized „*the capacity of active centers is of 5633 places. Currently the TPCRs are occupied at of capacity of 51%*” (III\_7).

The survey data were collected on services provided to people displaced from Ukraine in 5 TPCR and 5 SPC (Table 2 and Table 3). Out of the 5 TPCR, the TPCR Glodeni provides services exclusively to people of Roma ethnicity displaced from Ukraine . Taking into account the peculiarities of this survey, the SPC sample included 6 of the 7 providers of services for victims and presumed victims of trafficking (5 SPC<sup>44</sup> and one non-governmental

42 <https://www.anas.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Ordin26022022.pdf>

43 [https://www.anas.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Round-01.-REACH\\_MDA\\_Factsheet\\_RAC-Weekly-Needs-Monitoring\\_2022-03-14\\_RO.pdf](https://www.anas.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Round-01.-REACH_MDA_Factsheet_RAC-Weekly-Needs-Monitoring_2022-03-14_RO.pdf)

44 APC, Service of assistance and protection for male victims of trafficking, Maternal Center „Incredere”, Maternal Center „Ariadna”, Maternal Center „Pro-Familia”.

organization<sup>45</sup>). Only the Maternal Center „Pro-Femina” from Hincesti did not provide any services to women and children fleeing war from Ukraine within this period. Meantime,

the Maternal Center „Incredere” from Cahul provided services exclusively to women and children displaced from Ukraine.

**Table 2.** Data about the activity of certain TPCR

TPCR location	When the TPCR started working/to provide services to displaced people	TPCR capacity	Number of displaced people hosted at the time of the research
TPCR Basarabasca	28.02.2022	30	30
TPCR Popeasca, Stefan Voda	25.02.2022	81	60
TPCR Glodeni	26.02.2022	100	79
TPCR Ungheni	07.03.2022	77	55
TPCR Cahul	24.02.2022	100	98

**APC** is a public institution that provides highly specialized social services, intervention in crisis cases for women victims or presumed victims of HT, women victims of GBV, mother-child couples, citizens of RM. The center provides beneficiaries with temporary placement, food, medical aid, social services, legal advice and counseling. Center’s services are available to victims identified outside the RM borders as well as to victims and/or people at risk, identified on the territory of RM. In exceptional situations, APC provides placement, medical aid, food, etc. also for foreign nationals, victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation (children and women). APC began providing services to mother-child couples and displaced women from Ukraine since March 12, 2022.

**Services of assistance and protection for male victims of HT** offers highly specialized social services for men, victims of HT, being located on the territory of the Placement Center for the Elderly and People with Disabilities. The services, created with the support of IOM, started to provide services for men, women and children from Ukraine on February 26, 2022.

**Maternal Centers** from Cahul, Causeni and Drochia provide special services: temporary placement, medical aid, social assistance, legal advice, counseling for women, mother-child couples facing abuse, victims and presumed victims of trafficking. These maternal centers, together with APC and Services of assistance and protection to male victims of HT have been approached within the research as SPC because they provide services to mothers and children fleeing war from Ukraine, and already had a team of field related specialists as well as „*better conditions for mothers and children*” (III\_14). Food, often, can be cooked individually. SPC have also been helped by CSO creating the places to play games „*we have arranged a room for kids. If mothers need a particular activity with children: drawing, clay, board games, they can join their children and play*” (III\_18). Also, they were equipped with refrigerators, washing machines, clothes dryers, bed clothes.

The comparative analysis of data on the capacity of TPCR and SPC providing accommodation services to displaced people, reveals that TPCR has a much higher capacity, compared to SPC and has offered, since the beginning of the armed conflict,

45 NGO International Center „La Strada”, coordinates the activity of the Anti -trafficking Hotline and the Trustline for Women.

accommodation to a larger number of people. Moreover, the specialists of certain SPC provide services in communities for displaced

people, activity that is not done by employees of TPCR (see 5.2).

**Table 3.** Data about the activity of certain SPC providing services to displaced people

Institution	When did it start to provide services to displaced people	SPC capacity	Number of displaced people, at the time of the research	Total number of displaced people assisted by the center	Services provided in communities
APC from Chisinau	12.03.2022	15	15	45	225
Assistance and protection services for men – HT victims from Chisinau	26.02.2022	60	55	225	-
Maternal center „Incredere” from Cahul	24.02.2022	24	10	96	-
Maternal center „Ariadna” from Drochia	26.02.2022 <sup>46</sup>	24	0	10	500
Maternal center „Pro-Familia” from Causeni	26.02.2022	24	8	57	107

Comparative analysis of the typology of beneficiaries from TPCR and SPC (Table 4) shows that TPCR provides placement to displaced people regardless of age or sex, compared to SPC that provides placement to women with small children, the exception being **Services of assistance and protection to male victims of HT**. According to the internal regulations, no women or children with mental disabilities were placed in SPC,

except for women or children with sensory disabilities. The only exception to this rule is the Service of assistance and protection to male victims of HT located on the territory of the Placement Center for the Elderly and People with Disabilities. Thus, 19 disabled people (18 adults and 1 child): 11 men and 8 women, benefited from placement and other services within this center.

**Table 4.** Types of displaced persons, beneficiaries of TPCR and SPC

Sociodemographic data about displaced people from TPCR and SPC	Number of TPCR	Number of SPC
children (under 3 years old)	5	3
children (aged 3-18)	5	4
women (+18 years old)	5	4

<sup>46</sup> Only at the beginning of the conflict, for a short period of time.

Sociodemographic data about displaced people from TPCR and SPC	Number of TPCR	Number of SPC
men (+18 years old)	5	1
women (+60 years old)	5	3
men (+60 years old)	5	1
<b>Social data about beneficiaries of TPCR and SPC</b>		
children or adults with locomotor disabilities	2	1
children or adults with mental disorders	0	1
children or adults with sensory disabilities ( <i>vision, hearing, speaking</i> )	1	3
bedridden elderly people	1	1
pregnant women	2	1

The wide range of services and support offered within TPCR and SPC was developed based on partnerships with international organizations, CSOs and religious denominations, being extremely diverse (Table 5). CSOs have created mobile teams consisting of psychologists, educators, lawyers, social workers that provide psychosocial support, recreational activities for children, information, recreation and referral for parents/caregivers. Thus, in TPCR and SPC, but also in communities where displaced people were accommodated, CSO carries out various activities for children: pottery classes, sports activities, etc. For example, services provided by the National Child Abuse Prevention Center (CNPAC) focus on children and their caregivers. The activities are diverse, organizing individual and group meetings. In the large majority of cases, during the group

meetings, structural programs of CNPAC are applied: *12 plus, Chico și mâna (Chico and the hand), Fără palme (No slapping), Art club, Parenting program CONECT*. The programs and activities are focused on non-violent communication, parent education. If any signs of child abuse are identified, psychological support is provided individually. Trips were organized for displaced children during the summer, but also during the year „we were also taking them to a potter from RM, to help them overcome this psycho-emotional trauma” (III\_9).

TPCR and SPC have signed agreements with the National State-Guaranteed Legal Aid Center and the Law Center of Lawyers, whose representatives provide the necessary legal assistance, discuss their problems, identify asylum seekers and refer them to the BMA.

**Table 5.** Services and support provided by TPCR and SPC

Type of services	Number of TPCR	Number of SPC
Medicine	5	5
Medical care, including referral	5	5
Food	5	5

Type of services	Number of TPCR	Number of SPC
Accommodation	5	5
Clothes and footwear	3	5
Personal hygiene products (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, pads etc.)	5	5
Space and recreational activities for children	5	5
Support in integrating children in kindergarten, crèche	4	4
Support in integrating children in schools	5	4
Psychological counseling	5	5
Protection against violence, harassment, exploitation. Reporting cases of abuse	5	5
Financial support (by international agencies)	5	5
Information and support regarding documents, consular services, legal aid	5	5
Information and support on their further relocation to another country/ resettlement assistance	5	5
Information and support on their employment	5	5
Romanian language courses	3	3
Transportation (on the RM territory)	2	2
Support in their return to Ukraine	2	3
Free Internet access	5	5
Free access to the equipment for online communication (laptop, computer, web camera etc.)	2	5
Personal development courses	0	3
Vocational training/economic empowerment	0	2

TPCR managers mentioned that services provided by CSOs to displaced people are necessary. Thus, the importance of psychological counseling was emphasized in addition to financial and material support they benefit from „*they almost all require counseling but also information, vocational orientation, legal advice as they disoriented, scared and do not know what kind of services to access*” (III\_15). They are supported by various CSO trainers who explain them the

peculiarities of HT and labour exploitation. TPCR managers are happy that they have not detected such situations in institutions they administer „*thanks God, at the moment we do not have such problems*” (III\_9).

The information about activities, employment conditions in RM, vacancies, claiming asylum, etc., is displayed on the information boards within TPCR and SPC.



Research data revealed certain dissimilarities in services provided by TPCR and SPC. Thus, the SPC, besides providing better accommodation services (only for women and children, small number of people in the room, conditions closer to the family environment), have also the opportunity to offer courses of personal and professional development/ economic empowerment, support in returning to Ukraine and more often, they provide free access to equipment for online communication.

TPCR and SPC have received donations from the citizens of RM, Diaspora, including humanitarian aid provided to displace people „ *we have received two very large batches of humanitarian aid*” (III\_18).

### 3.2. Services for displaced children from Ukraine

The maximum number of TPCR open and authorized by NSAA was 132, including a placement center for unaccompanied children fleeing war from Ukraine (TPCR Carpineni, Hincesti) with a capacity of 150 places. Only 10 children were accommodated there at the moment of the research.<sup>47</sup> Assuming the right of every child to a family and the observance of his best interest, but also taking into account the deinstitutionalization reform from RM, alternative solutions have been identified for unaccompanied children from Ukraine: services of professional parental assistance and Community Family-Type Centers „*at the moment we are ready to open, during the year, 20-30 professional parental assistance services where we could place about 100 children*” (III\_3). Still, the demand for such services is extremely low.

Children from Ukraine benefit from all forms of protection and all services that are designed to children from RM. Thus, unaccompanied children from Ukraine are entitled to the next forms of protection existing on the territory of RM: guardianship/trusteeship or custody. These forms of protection were established on relatives (aunt, uncle, elder brother/ sister etc.). For example in Basarabeasca district there are 26 unaccompanied children,

living with relatives that have been given the guardianship of these children. In Falesti there were 7 unaccompanied children living in custody. Reporting on these forms of protection is done regularly to the MLSP.

Unaccompanied children benefit also from the support of local guardianship authorities (Box 1). Meantime, Moldovan authorities take efforts to develop new services: safe places for pre-teens and teenagers, professional parental assistance focused on displaced children. Not least important are the information campaigns carried out for parents/ caregivers fleeing the war from Ukraine about services provided in RM: (i) available medical aid and service access, (ii) available educational services (formal and non-formal) and service access, (iii) available social services and service access, (iv) rehabilitation services for children with disabilities etc. In this way, the child’s parent//caregiver is informed about services existing in RM for children.

47 In-depth individual interview with the head of the Department of Protection policies on child rights and families with children, MLSP (III\_3).

### **Box 1. Support provided by guardianship authorities to unaccompanied children from Ukraine**

- Assistance in getting identity documents,
- Assistance in applying for asylum,
- Representation of child's interests and rights,
- Use of child support tools (report forms; best interests assessment of the child, initial assessment, visiting the child etc.);
- Assistance in issuing the documents for the authorization to cross the state border of RM, on the exit,
- Providing information to children/caregivers appointed by territorial guardianship authorities, about the international protection terms,
- Providing information to children/caregivers appointed by territorial guardianship authorities, about the Child Helpline to report presumed cases of VNET,
- Immediate best interests assessment of the child,
- Providing assistance according to the Law no. 140/2013,
- Providing placement,
- Providing basic family support,
- Monitoring child's situation, until getting to the destination.

### **3.3. Strengths of services provided to people displaced from Ukraine**

The data shows that Moldovan authorities in collaboration with external partners, but also with the civil society, have managed to meet the needs of displaced people. Due to the UN agencies, many external development partners, but also to local CSO and citizens of RM it was possible to provide the necessary assistance to displaced people from Ukraine „*help comes from many sides*” (III\_19).

An important aspect consists in the development of the national service system, by developing the already existing services not creating separate services for displaced people „*it is good that no parallel mechanisms were created*” (III\_25). No less significant is the fact that the war in Ukraine opened up additional financing opportunities of the services existing in RM.

### **Services provided to children**

Children from Ukraine are treated the same as children from RM. It was agreed that they should benefit from the same assistance, services, except the allowances and payments. Thus, the child protection legal framework in RM ensures the child protection without any discrimination.

Amongst the strengths in providing services to children from Ukraine we highlight:

- Development and approval of the *Intersectoral mechanism*, enabling the BP representatives, but also other specialists, to notify the representatives of guardianship authorities if there is any suspicion regarding the child's situation. Afterwards, they make an assessment of child's situation.
- Approval of the Order 34, Order 36, which provide for the rapid assessment of the best interests of the child at risk and the issue, if necessary, of the document authorizing

the crossing of the border of RM, on the exit, of unaccompanied children or children accompanied by an unauthorized person „*I think it is a drastic but necessary measure. We are obliged to provide child protection and guarantee the quality and well-being of the child*” (III\_3).

- Engagement of child protection specialists from the district level (II level), sometimes for twenty-four hours seven days a week (24/7).
- A form of protection for unaccompanied children or accompanied by third parties: guardianship/trusteeship or custody etc. „*All children hosted in our center have been appointed legal representatives as their aunt, siblings. They all have supporting documents. We collaborate with SATS in cases of expired power of attorney*” (III\_11).
- Certain services have been developed in the context of the displaced crisis (*mobile teams for children and youth*), others have diversified their target groups, including displaced children (Youth Centers, creative centers, public libraries, summer camps etc.).
- Creation of safe places for activities within the TPCR and SPC.
- Children’s integration into kindergarten or school at parent/caregiver’s request, including school supplies „*we provided schoolbags for children who have to go to school*” (III\_12).
- Engagement of CSO psychologists to provide counseling for children, including therapy for war trauma.
- Establishment of the program of activities and services for children hosted in TPCR and SPC with their managers but also parents/caregivers „*parents are acquainted with activities we are going to implement next week and those who are interested are coming and sometimes have their own suggestions*” (III\_22).
- Gift cards for children (500 lei) at LIBRARIUS bookstore given to displaced children as well as to some children from vulnerable families from RM.

- Organization of various recreational activities: holidays, concerts, quilting bees, trips all over the RM.

## Services provided to women

Amongst the strengths in providing services to displaced people from Ukraine, especially women are:

- Empathy towards displaced people proved by social workers, police officers, healthcare workers, including citizens of RM.
- Medical aid provided: emergency care, opportunity to benefit from primary care services, but also dialysis services for people with acute kidney failure, chemotherapy for cancer patients.
- Wide variety of help and services, such as material aid, support for transportation, identification of possibilities of expensive medical treatments in EU countries, as well as Romanian language courses.
- Information and employment guidance, including in certain cases, professional development/economic empowerment courses for women, provided by certain SPC.
- Partnerships created between different stakeholders: government institutions, TPCR, SPC, CSO and international organizations „*there are 10-15 CSOs we collaborate with*” (III\_2).
- Mobile teams that reach the displaced people from communities, TPCR and SPC that meet the needs of displaced people „*a tremendous work is done to meet all their needs*” (III\_13); “*I don’t know any displaced person who asked for help and didn’t get it*” (III\_12).
- Appointment of cultural mediators in TPCR, in communities that host people of Roma ethnicity from Ukraine, to improve their information.
- Employment and engagement, within several mobile teams, of displaced women from Ukraine „*we have a displaced Ukrainian woman in the team, who contributes to the better communication*”

*with displaced people, especially with Roma people. She convinced mothers to enroll their children in school; including there were cases when the children were vaccinated” (III\_22).*

- Moldovans’ engagement, including the Diaspora, in providing support to ensure the activity of TPCR and SPC *„they bring us food and different hygiene products to support people in centers and families” (III\_2).*
- Collaboration with NSAA to provide not only statistical data about people hosted in TPCR and their profile (age, health issues, etc.), but also the specific needs of institutions offering accommodation *„we created a database we update regularly recording the needs per family or person” (III\_20).*
- Advertising of services via various mass media, including the organization of several information campaigns. For example, the Campaign carried out in Chisinau *„Help me, to help you”,* launched on May 30, 2022, to inform displaced people about free services available and phone numbers they could seek help.
- Displaced people registration by community social workers *„every day, they give us the current information: how many displaced people there are, how many have left or who would like to leave” (III\_9).*

### **3.4. Weaknesses of services provided to displaced people from Ukraine**

#### **Services provided to children**

The main gap, which was identified in RM, regarding children, was the lack of a legal framework to protect the best interests of the child, in cases of unaccompanied children or accompanied by unauthorized people. This gap was removed due to the development and approval on 14.04.2022, of the *Intersectoral mechanism* and the Order 36. The war in Ukraine allowed the identification of the lack of certain services for children, which encouraged Moldovan authorities to develop the current protection system as well as

services, for all children, including displaced children.

As weaknesses of the services offered to displaced children in Ukraine:

- Lack of child protection specialists at the community level (I level). The lack of specialists has increased the workload of community social workers, their overload, which leads to professional burnout, but also to high staff turnover.
- The small number of preschool children enrolled in educational institutions, as well as the small number of children enrolled in the educational system *„only 1766 are integrated in our educational system” (III\_10).* The lack of monitoring children studying online was also mentioned *„how can we check if the child is really sitting in front of the computer and not on the street, at risk. We are responsible for their well-being, because they are on the territory of our country” (III\_14).*
- Lack of specialized services for certain categories of children (children victims/witnesses of crimes) and the lack of rehabilitation services for children.
- It is not always clear how the documents should be compiled so children could benefit from services in RM. For example, disabled children from Ukraine are entitled to personal assistance services, but SATS employees do not know how to compile the file (what documents, what diagnosis etc.) *„The ministry should issue a directive with explanations” (III\_12).*
- Lack of data regarding the distribution of displaced children, by administrative-territorial units *„we do not have any information about the number of children and their geographical distribution to be able to create services where they are needed” (III\_25).* Dissimilarity in the data, about the number of children, provided by central authorities and data collected by CSO *„Data given by MIA shows that at the moment there are more than 40 thousand displaced children in the country. Our partner that collaborates with SATS from the 25 districts, that via social workers identify*

*the displaced children, said that the latter have identified about 3 thousand children in the 25 districts. Where are the other 37 thousand?" (III\_25).*

## **Services provided to women**

Weaknesses of services for adults, especially women:

- There is no coordination, at the district level, of services provided to displaced people, consequently, the activities are not always systematic, they do not begin with the identification of needs, provision of the necessary assistance and do not allow the monitoring of the situation *„if this sector was given to me, I have to approach it systematically, to monitor and implement activities” (III\_17)*. CSOs providing services in communities for displaced people do not always collaborate with SATS which leads sometimes to overburdening of displaced people in some TPCR and localities *„displaced people seem to be much overburdened with various activities” (III\_21)*.
- TPCR for displaced people are mixed, hosting children together with adults (women and men). According to certain respondents, the quality of accommodation services could be improved *„there was a very high flow at the beginning which required immediate response. Now we have to think more about the quality of these services. We cannot accommodate children, women, men from different families in a room with 10 beds” (III\_7)*; *„a family with 3 children cannot be accommodated in a room with a young or old couple” (III\_10)*.
- Existence of unauthorized TPCR that did not notify NSAA *„the ombudsman also carries out filed missions and identifies, from time to time, unauthorized centers that provide services” (III\_7)*. Research data shows that there are also unauthorized TPCRs with a capacity of more than 20 places that limit CSO access *„ Regina Pacis opposed and did not allow representatives of non-governmental organizations to enter their territory” (III\_7)*. A few respondents mentioned that they witnessed situations when the managers of such centers had an abusive behavior towards the displaced people *„we have reported the case but the center is still working but the non-governmental organizations are no longer allowed to visit this center” (III\_22)*.
- Staff turnover, especially in the field of social assistance. Need for continuous adjustment of information as *„certain implementation partners say that information from the Referral Pathway is no longer valid” (III\_24)*. There is also a shortage of staff in TPCR, but also in some SPC. As a result, the specialists are already exhausted and overworked *„the number of employees is small and it is very difficult for them. They have a lot of new duties that overwhelm them” (III\_24)*.
- Certain TPCR have not been adjusted to the needs of people with locomotor disabilities. For example TPCR Basarabeasca and TPCR Cahul did not have wheelchair ramps.
- The staff of TPCR hosting displaced persons of Roma ethnicity is not acquainted some of their cultural traditions *„they have certain traditions and there are cases when the woman is pregnant and men do not have the right to eat at the same table with the pregnant woman” (III\_9)*.
- Specialized medical services are not provided to displaced people *„we cannot cover specialized medical services as these are very expensive” (III\_15)*.
- Failure to avoid situations when one and the same person benefits from help in 2 villages from different districts or comes to claim help and then go back to Ukraine *„we had certain people who intended to register at the center, submit their documents to receive the money from the authorities and then leave” (III\_2)*.
- Doctors from abroad provide medicine to displaced people, although there should be more control in TPCR and SPC.

### 3.5. Challenges faced by institutions providing services

*The law on the integration of foreigners in the RM no. 274/2011 does not cover displaced people. Moreover, challenges occur relating to human resources and their monitoring of the situation. Survey respondents, in particular those engaged in service delivery, pointed out the following challenges they face:*

- Lack of a refugee status affects the accountability and their integration *„we are in an emergency situation and we have somehow left the displaced people without responsibilities. You benefited from services one month, two months and more but something has to be done as you cannot benefit from services forever”* (III\_1). According to certain specialists, the lack of the refugee status affects their employment too *„out of 80 thousand, less than 1 thousand displaced people found employment, it is very little”* (III\_11); *„Something doesn’t work right. Some displaced people are here for more than 6 months and do not want to find a job. Authorities have to intervene here as it cannot continue like this”* (III\_20). The lack of a status of displaced people leads also to certain situations of abuse from displaced people by regular crossing from Ukraine, in order to benefit from financial assistance *„they are coming organized from Bolgrad to get the cash assistance. They come, take the money and leave. Then they come again”* (III\_11). In this context, the need to introduce a form of international protection that would make them accountable was mentioned *„displaced people who return to RM from European countries say that it is better in Moldova, because here no one obliges them to study, while in Germany, if you don’t study, you don’t get the allowance nor the accommodation. In our country they have already seen that it is possible not to learn the language, stay home all day long and go once a week to get the help”* (III\_1).
- Difficulties related to the placement of third-country nationals from Ukraine (Russians, including Moldovans etc.) in TPCR at the beginning of the war,.

- Difficulties in registering and ensuring legal procedures on death among displaced people from Ukraine.
- Delivery of assistance according to the existent needs: vouchers for food, medical aid and hygiene products to avoid situations when displaced people could receive the same assistance from several institutions *„certain displaced people abuse the help provided. They load their cars with food products”* (III\_1); *„Last week they were given 3000 lei vouchers for food at the Linella store. A few women were selling them as soon as they received them. With this money, they later buy cigarettes and drinks”* (III\_11).
- Winter/cold time of the year and heating of TPCR. In some old centers, the power grid will not be able to work if there are many heaters.

Other challenges reported by research participants include:

- Lack of interoperability of information systems owned by different institutions (BP, BMA etc.) *„We could manage better if we had an interoperable information system. We could provide services much faster”* (III\_5).
- Increase in the flow of displaced people, during autumn-winter time, *„what do we do if the flow suddenly increases 2-3 times”*. However, at the time of assessment, the *Sectoral Winterization Strategies* were being developed in a participatory way for the following sectors: protection, child protection, GBV. The strategies have established the needs, priority interventions, standard package of sectoral response, measures planned by the Government, challenges, risks and constraints. UN agencies and other international organizations as well as their partners, have been engaged in the development of these strategies.

## IV. PECULIARITIES OF THE VULNERABILITY OF UKRAINIAN DISPLACED PEOPLE AND THE RISK OF TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

### 4.1. Vulnerability of displaced people and the risk of trafficking and exploitation

All displaced people are vulnerable, but among them there are a few more vulnerable categories. These are unaccompanied children, families with many children, especially mothers with small children; pregnant women or women who have given birth in the last 2-3 months; families with children who have severe disabilities; people facing serious health issues; elderly people, especially lonely old people.

The risk of trafficking and exploitation increases in the case of vulnerable, displaced people. However, actions taken by authorities, in partnership with UN agencies, international organizations, CSOs, coped with the needs of displaced people, reducing the risk of trafficking and exploitation.

The large majority of research participants emphasized that they haven't identified any suspicious cases of trafficking or exploitation. The „few dozen” cases reported to the CCHT and other institutions have not been confirmed as a result of investigation. Hence, people employed in the prevention and combating of this phenomenon pointed out that „we are glad that such cases have not been identified on the territory of RM” (III\_6). The head of CCHT underlined that in RM, „only a few cases of prostitution in women from Ukraine have been revealed, but no cases of trafficking” (III\_4).

Specialists claim that the causes are multiple: (i) visa free regime for Ukrainian nationals allowing them to travel in the EU space until the war; (ii) Ukrainians' level of education „people know their rights”, including, knowledge of foreign languages; (iii) the large majority of Ukrainian nationals travelling to European countries went to their relatives and acquaintances abroad; (iv) creation of various online information platforms for

displaced people „warning them about certain deceptions” (III\_21).

SPC specialists mentioned that anyone could become a victim of HT - children, women, even men. They also highlighted that skillful traffickers use different recruitment methods and techniques, thus, victims of HT could become not only people from vulnerable families, but also educated people, including people who are acquainted with the peculiarities of the phenomenon „I know qualified specialists employed in preventing and combating HT and who got into such situations” (III\_7).

Research data reveal the following categories of displaced people **vulnerable to HT**:

- Unaccompanied children, including children aged 16-18 years “they are naive and believe what it is told or written”, children accompanied by third parties, but also groups of children, especially until the approval of the Intersectoral mechanism. A few respondents underlined that at the beginning „it was not clear what a green corridor means or if the groups of children are accompanied or not, who are they, where are they going, whom they going with” (III\_25).
- Children from Roma ethnic families „not all are registered”. There are situations when the first documentation of the child was done when the child was 14-15 years old, based on a document certifying the birth.
- Roma people with a low level of education frequently do not have valid identity documents „when someone gives them to sign certain documents, they don't understand and there is no one to explain to them what they are signing for. We had such situations. You have to explain a few times to make them understand” (III\_2).

- Women that came alone or women with children „I follow one Telegram channel and see there various ads from men: My name is X, I am single and I would like to meet a woman from Ukraine or a single woman with children. I love children” (III\_21).
- People facing economic challenges, because the living costs in RM are high „they realize it won't be easier here and they have to find a solution to go further” (III\_17).
- Women victims and survivors of GBV.
- People with disabilities, especially mental disorders as well as sensory disabilities.
- Lonely elderly people.

The outbreak of the war brought up also the issue of transporting children from surrogate mothers from Ukraine. The specialists claimed that „falsifying the data about a baby is the easiest thing”, because the baby doesn't have distinct signs that will make him/her stand out from other children. Thus, the same document can be used for several children. This aspect warns of a sensitive, long-standing issue for which CCHT representatives have to be prepared.

The following categories of displaced people are **vulnerable to labour exploitation**: (i) vulnerable people; (ii) people with disabilities; (iii) boys aged 15-17 years; (iv) men; (v) elderly people accommodated in communities could be exploited through servitude „I welcomed you into my house and you are obliged to do chores for me”; „People are supervised in the placements centers while renters are at risk of being trafficked, displaced to be forced into exploitation” (III\_18).

The level of education represents an important factor, both in the case of HT and exploitation. The risk of trafficking and exploitation increases in the case of displaced persons with incomplete secondary education.

Labor exploitation could occur in both, rural and urban communities. A few respondents revealed a higher probability outside the municipality of Chisinau as „labour exploitation

could occur often in the suburbs” (III\_8); „people from the municipality of Chisinau have the opportunity to receive and benefit from different kind of support, while those living in rural areas have to find solutions until they get that financial aid” (III\_18).

Certain respondents emphasized that trafficking and labor exploitation are „phenomena hidden from society” and the population of RM, as well as displaced people, are not aware of the risks and do not regard themselves as victims or potential victims that makes them be less attentive to certain details „very often they say that this cannot happen to me, that I have access to Internet and information” (III\_21).

Specialists employed in preventing and combating trafficking and exploitation believe the mentality of displaced people is also a risk. They „do not identify themselves in such situations and are firmly convinced that this could not happen to them” (III\_21). Specialists employed in preventing and combating trafficking and exploitation pointed out also the fact that the HT phenomenon is „in continuous transformation”. Thus, some of them mentioned the increase in online recruitment, highlighting the opportunities to continue education in Poland, actions targeting displaced people from Ukraine. The CCHT employees highlighted that new challenges and changes are witnessed in the flow of displaced people, related to the prolongation of the armed conflict „if current spring the flows of displaced people were focused on moving to RM, finding shelter or going to other countries, now the migration is turning slowly into a long-term migration. Cases of engaging in prostitution are attested” (III\_4).

## 4.2. Signs of trafficking and exploitation in children fleeing war from Ukraine

The representative of the Department for protection policies on child rights and families with children of the MLSP mentioned that until 14.04.2022, he was regularly receiving calls on various supposed cases of child



trafficking, however, after the approval of the *Intersectoral mechanism* and Orders 36, the number of these cases decreased „*there were suspicious cases until we introduced that filter. I was the contact person for all the border checkpoints, for all border guards, 24/7*” (III\_3). A few respondents have also pointed out that there was a gap in preventing and combating child trafficking within 24 February 2022 to 14 April 2022. Consequently, the assumption that cases of child trafficking were possible/inevitable, until the signing of the *Intersectoral mechanism*, Order nr.34 and Orders no. 36 is true. Certain unauthorized persons could have used RM as a transit country, but there is no empirical data to confirm this hypothesis.

RM currently has 2 filters to identify suspicious cases when crossing the border: (i) BP representatives; (ii) child protection specialists from BlueDots centers. Even they managed to pass through the first filter, if the specialists from BlueDots find the relationship between a child and an adult suspicious, they take action

using tools developed to guarantee the best interests of the child.

The new documents developed and approved, together with BP training, prevented the exit from the territory of RM of children unaccompanied or accompanied by third parties from Ukraine without the assessment and authorization of guardianship authorities „*there are no such cases anymore*”.

The research data shows that after the amendment of the legal framework of RM to ensure the best interests of the child from Ukraine, there were only a few cases of supposed risk identified most often at the border by specialists who notified the competent authorities that coped with them immediately. However, none of the reported cases has been confirmed.

Cases identified refer to children accompanied by third parties that had or didn't have supporting documents (power of attorney). A few of the situations that raised the suspicion of specialists are given below.

### **Case 1. Child without documents, accompanied by a third party**

The child without documents, accompanied by an Austrian citizen who was not a relative, was identified when crossing the state border. It was established that this child and the Austrian citizen could not communicate with each other. The case was reported until 14.04.2022 and the Moldovan authorities could not interfere to stop the child from crossing the border of the RM. Suspicious behaviour: (i) lack of child's documents, (ii) lack of the relationship between the child and this person, (iii) lack of communication between the child and the third party.

The existence of such situations determined the improvement of the legal framework of RM, in order to ensure the best interests of children from Ukraine transiting RM „*a week after the outbreak of the armed conflict, we have raised the alarm, but it took time to compile and approve the documents*” (III\_3).

### Case 2. Child accompanied by a third party

The child (girl) possessing a Russian birth certificate, accompanied by a man from Turkey, who said he is cohabitating with the girl's cousin. The man wanted to leave the RM and go to Turkey, together with the little girl. The case was identified when crossing the border. The warning signs were: (i) lack of documents on the child custody, (ii) differences in identification documents: child with Russian birth certificate from Kherson region of Ukraine accompanied by a Turkish citizen; (iii) it was not clear how the citizen of Turkey, got to Kherson and, subsequently, to the RM.

The case was referred to the BMA, still engaging specialists from CCHT and those dealing with the social protection of children. A child protection specialist and a psychologist were invited to assess the child and the person accompanying the child, after their accommodation. The initial assessment and the protection interview revealed that they „knew each other very well. The adult, as well as the girl, were saying the same things” (III\_14).

The authorities collaborated with the child's relatives from Ukraine, trying to reach the parents from the Russian Federation. They asked to communicate with the mother, who is in the Russian Federation, because the girl had father's refusal among her documents. It was not possible to contact the mother, due to the fact she is alcoholic, according to the person accompanying the child, still there is no evidence of this.

The girl's cousin, from the grandmother's side, who raised the child from the age of 3, was identified in Ukraine and called to the RM, providing support in finding employment. Currently, she is on the territory of RM and the guardianship authorities want to establish custody as a legal form of protection.

### Case 3. Unaccompanied children with unclear situation regarding her entry in the RM

The case of a child (girl) that is not clear how did she get to the RM, but was identified at the border crossing point with Ukraine. The girl said that she was in Italy and now she is returning home to Ukraine. BP representatives have checked the information on crossing the Moldovan border but could not find the border checkpoint she entered the country. The case was reported by BP representatives as there was no information about her entry on the territory of the RM. She could not tell which border crossing point she entered the RM.

The mother in Ukraine was identified and contacted, and she authorized a person to come and take the child at the border crossing point.

#### **Case 4. Child separated from the biological mother, on the territory of RM**

This case was reported by a social community worker. The child was separated from the biological mother, who was in an informal placement center for displaced people, while the child was sent to another region to work. The specialists were not clear why the child is separated from his mother and what she is doing in another region „*there were too many questions*” (III\_24), moreover, why the child was working.

#### **Case 5. Child employment**

This case was identified by the representative of a SPC. Once the case was reported, the child’s mother was informed about the legal framework regarding the employment of children, how many hours is the child allowed to work in order to avoid the violation of his right to education, so as not to affect his health, including the need to sign an individual employment contract.

#### **Case 6. Children accompanied by the same third party**

The manager of a TPCR had situations when „*one and the same foreign person showed up 2-3 times with different children, accompanying them*” (III\_15). Such situations have been reported until April, 14, 2022.

#### **Case 7. Unaccompanied child aged 16**

A 16-year-old girl, with a birth certificate, was taken by SATS representatives and placed in the SPC. She wanted to cross the border of the RM by herself, on the way out, mentioning that she was going to her fiancé. The child was placed in a SPC, until the situation was clarified and until the future mother-in-law arrived, with the consent letter from her biological mother. The documents were verified and later on the girl left with the future relative.

#### **Case 8. Child working to help his family**

The case was reported by the representative of a SPC. A 17-year-old young man is in the RM with his mother and 2 younger brothers. His mother has serious health issues requiring medicine daily. The child collects scrap metal from the communities to help his family.

### Case 9. Children engaged in begging

The police identified a few displaced children, of Roma ethnicity, from Mariopol city, engaged in street begging at the shopping center Malldova and the shopping center Zorile from the municipality of Chisinau. Children were about 16-17 years old and „were rising compassion among buyers”. They were detained and their parents identified. This case was not qualified as exploitation through begging, because the teenagers did this voluntarily, to gain personal profit.

### Case 10. Child accompanied by a third party

A TPCR volunteer from Palanca called the Anti-trafficking Hotline of the International Center „La Strada” and informed that a man of Roma origin was accompanying a 6-year-old child. Being asked by the volunteer to present an identification document to prove the kinship with the child, who gave the child in his custody, the man became evasive and tried to avoid answering questions. The man did not also allow the child protection specialist to talk to the child. The call was recorded by the Hotline and directed by its employees to the CCHT.

A few respondents have also reported of child sexual abuse, the abuser being in custody. The law enforcement authorities have been notified by social workers and are conducting the investigation.

### 4.3. Signs of trafficking and exploitation in women fleeing war from Ukraine

There were dozens of presumed cases in women. Most often, such cases were identified by SPC representatives or other specialized

service providers. For example, the **Anti-trafficking Hotline** of the International Center „La Strada” received 3 calls of presumed cases of HT. The research revealed the following presumed cases of trafficking and exploitation, most often the respondents didn't know the finality/course of these cases „we are the contact point, we provide information, redirect them but we do not know the finality of these calls” (III\_21). However, the head of the CCHT stressed that no case of trafficking or exploitation was confirmed in RM at the time of the study.

### Case 1. Prevention of a potential human trafficking case by a SPC specialist

A young woman was looking for different ways to get to Europe seeking advice to the specialists of a SPC. She was very talkative and told the specialists that she has met a man who asked her to go to Germany. He promised her that she could find a job there in IT as she had a degree and some work experience in this field.

SPC employees, working for many years in the field of prevention, combating and reintegration of victims of HT, talked to her about the signs and situations when women become victims of trafficking. One day, during the discussion, that man called the young woman. The specialist interfered to ask some questions and „after that there were no more calls”.

The specialists highlighted the risks of the young woman's leaving „she listened to all the risks she could face and did not leave” (III\_17).

### **Case 2. Prevention of a potential human trafficking case by a SPC specialist**

A girl met a boy online. They were communicating regularly. He invited her to Germany and promised to provide her with accommodation, to find a well-paid job, 4-5 thousand euros per month. SPC specialists informed the young woman that such salaries are unrealistic for Germany and other European countries.

### **Case 3. Prevention of a potential human trafficking case, in the community, by a CSO representative**

After the seminar, during which the specialists discussed the signs of HT and came up with some examples, a woman from Ukraine mentioned that she had a friend who „*could be in danger*” because she was going to Europe to a boy she met online, after the escalation of the armed conflict.

The specialists talked with the woman, emphasizing the existing risks. They also gave her phone numbers she could call and seek further advice.

### **Case 4. Illegal employment, without employment contract and the promised salary**

A displaced woman with two children was employed at a private company, without employment contract, but the employer provided her with accommodation. The employer promised the woman to pay her weekly with 500 lei, as she needed money. However, the established agreements were violated. After the first week, the employee received 200 lei.

The case was identified due to the fact that SPS representative had to monitor the situation of vulnerable displaced family and to bring support packages. The SPC representative explained her necessity of the employment contract and the opportunities of legal employment for displaced people from Ukraine, telling her that this situation represents exploitation. She also provided her with information about employment opportunities in her locality, giving phone numbers of companies.

The woman is currently working at a factory, according to an employment contract and is well-paid. Being asked about her future intentions, the woman mentioned that she would probably stay in the RM forever.

### **Case 5. Prevention of a potential case of servitude, in the community, by a CSO representative**

The CSO representative mentioned the case of a displaced woman, who lived next to the house of a single man. This man proposed to the woman to come live with him, because he is alone „*you will live with me, only like a man with a woman*” (III\_21). The displaced woman refused his „*offer*”. Still, certain displaced women experiencing vulnerability could accept such situations.

### **Case 6. Group of adults with health problems, accompanied by a person who could not show any document**

A volunteer providing services at the Palanca state border crossing point, called the Anti-trafficking Hotline of the International Center „La Strada” and informed about an organized group of men, accompanied by a woman. The men had health issues and were taken to a hospital. The role of the woman was to pass customs and take them to Romania. When the volunteer asked which hospital they were going to, and the woman could not explain why she was accompanying them, the case raised suspicions. The call was recorded by the Anti-trafficking Hotline and directed by its employees to the CCHT

### **Case 7. A call from a Ukrainian mother seeking her 20-year-old daughter**

The International Center „La Strada” received a call from a mother, whose 20-year-old daughter left for Poland, from Moldova, but did not reach the destination. The mother was worried that the girl was not answering the phone and feared that she was trafficked, because many people offered her free transport. This call was redirected by the representative of the Anti-trafficking Hotline to the Embassy of Ukraine in Chisinau.

An important aspect that has to be highlighted refers to the approval of the *Intersectoral mechanism* that decreased the risks of trafficking and exploitation in children, while the prolongation of war and the winter season contribute to the increase of the risk related to the engagement of displaced people in different crimes: theft, begging, prostitution, etc., including trafficking and labor exploitation.

## V. PREVENTING AND COMBATING TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION OF DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM UKRAINE ON THE TERRITORY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

### 5.1. Institutional framework

RM has an institutional framework in the area of migration management, as well as in preventing and combating trafficking. However, the regulation in the field of preventing and combating HT is more oriented towards its own citizens, victims of trafficking

and exploitation. After the outbreak of the armed conflict in Ukraine, the Moldovan authorities tried to adjust this institutional framework to the new circumstances related to the flow of displaced people from Ukraine, including the identification, assistance and monitoring of risky situations of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people (Table 6).

**Table 6.** *Competent authorities and organizations dealing with migration management, prevention and combating of HT and categories of people they interact with*

Institution	Particular categories they interact with
BP	All people crossing the border, including foreign citizens.  Children at risk: (i) unaccompanied children, (ii) children accompanied by unauthorized people, (iii) children accompanied by legal representatives, raising doubt (iv) children who state that they are in danger or are presumed to face imminent danger; (v) children without identity documents, expired or damaged identity documents or copies, (vi) other categories of children facing risk
BMA	Foreign citizens, stateless people, people with the right of temporary residence in RM, citizens of RM.  Unaccompanied children, children accompanied by unauthorized persons that applied for asylum
CCHT and other law enforcement agencies	Victims and presumed victims of HT, including children and victims of other related crimes (irregular migration, pimping, illegal removal of children from the country, child pornography etc.).  Children facing imminent danger
SATS	Children at risk  Children separated from parents Victims and presumed victims of HT, including children Displaced people from Ukraine, in vulnerable situation
APC	Displaced people from Ukraine  Victims and presumed victims of HT, including children
SPC for GBV and HT	Displaced people from Ukraine Victims and presumed victims of HT, including children

Institution	Particular categories they interact with
TPCR	Displaced people from Ukraine They could identify victims and presumed victims of HT, including children among displaced people
International organizations and CSOs	Children at risk Children separated from parents Victims and presumed victims of HT, including children Displaced people from Ukraine (Ukrainian citizens and third-country nationals)

The war in Ukraine determined the amendment of the normative framework of RM by decisions of CES, but also internal Orders of MIA and MLSP to cope with the needs of Ukrainian children at risk during the declaration of the state of war. Moreover, MIA by order no.485 of 05.10.2022 has approved the *Guidelines on the identification of victims and presumed victims of human trafficking in mixed migration flows* that were developed with the support of the International Center „La Strada”. The guidebook is intended to law enforcement specialists including: CCHT, local police inspectorates, General Inspectorate of Border Police, National Public Security Inspectorate and BMA. The key objectives of the guidebook include:

- engagement of specialists from various Government structures, that due to their job come into contact with foreigners, in the identification of presumed victims and victims of HT;
- development of cooperation between

these Government structures and other organizations operating in this field;

- information to presumed victims and victims of HT about their rights ensuring their immediate access to assistance and protection required;
- facilitation of criminal proceedings in cases of HT by taking measures to improve the physical and emotional condition of the presumed victims and victims of HT;
- prevention of re-trafficking of victims of HT and
- improvement of the national system of preventing and combating HT in RM.

Consequently, within that period, in addition to their usual job duties, the representatives of the competent authorities and subordinate institutions were also engaged in the management of displaced crisis from Ukraine as well as in the prevention and combating of HT in displaced people (Table 7).

**Table 7.** *Functions of competent authorities and subordinated institutions related to migration management, prevention and combating of HT*

Public authority representative/ Institution	Specific responsibilities related to migration management, prevention and combating of HT and exploitation
BP	Identification of children at risk requiring immediate intervention of the guardianship authorities. Identification of victims and presumed victims of HT Immediate reporting to law enforcement authorities in cases of imminent danger, Authorization of state border crossing, on the exit way, of children at risk etc.



Public authority representative/ Institution	Specific responsibilities related to migration management, prevention and combating of HT and exploitation
BMA	Examination of asylum applications  Management of the Green Line (08001527)
CCHT and other law enforcement agencies	Examination of reports on HT, including other related crimes (irregular migration, pimping, illegal removal of children from the country, child pornography etc.).  Identification of victims of HT and ensuring their access to the necessary protection and assistance through referral to service providers: legal, medical, psychological, social etc.
MLSP	Development of policies in the field of child protection and families with children.  Development of policies to ensure equal opportunities to women and men.  Development of social services
NSAA	Monitoring of activities implemented by authorized TPCR
NEA	Information about employment opportunities for displaced people; registration of displaced people employed (via employers)
SLI	<sup>48</sup> If their duties had not been reduced, they could identify cases of forced labour
SATS and guardianship authorities	Development of services at the local level. A representative of SATS is a member of CCHT  Registration, processing and providing the necessary assistance, including completing the documents of unaccompanied children or accompanied by an unauthorized person.  Immediate assessment of the best interests of the child.  Providing services to Ukrainian children at risk.  Keeping record of unaccompanied children or accompanied by an unauthorized person etc.
APC	Services to women victims and presumed victims of HT, including children
SPC for GBV and HT	Services to women victims and presumed victims of HT, including children
TPCR	Services to displaced people from Ukraine

**BMA<sup>49</sup>** – administrative authority subordinated to MIA responsible for the implementation of state policies related to migration, asylum,

statelessness and integration of foreigners. The mission of the BMA consists in carrying out prerogatives related to the implementation

48 Duties related to a surprise labour inspection of employers have been reduced as well as the possibility to identify illegal employment of foreign workers.

49 The activity of the BMA is carried out in accordance with the Constitution of RM, Law no. 200, of July 16, 2010, on the regime of foreigners, Law no. 270-XVI, of December 18, 2008, on asylum in RM, Law no. 274, of December 27, 2011, regarding the integration of foreigners in RM, Law no. 320, of December 24, 2012, regarding the activity of the Police and status of the police officer, Law no. 133, of July 8, 2011, on the protection of personal data, as well as in accordance with the decrees of the President of RM, Government ordinances and decisions, department and interdepartment documents of MIA, international treaties and conventions RM is committed to observe.

of the migration and asylum policy, migration management by admitting and documenting foreigners with identity documents, recognition of the refugee status and status of stateless person, humanitarian protection, coordination of the integration of foreigners in RM, control the legality of foreigners' stay on the territory of RM, public custody and proper implementation of removal procedures and restrictive measures.<sup>50</sup>

**BMA performs comprehensive responsibilities in migration management.** Thus, *related to migration*, BMA: (i) organizes the activity of documentation centers for foreigners, at the central and regional level; (ii) receives and examines applications for granting/extending the right of temporary and permanent residence and the right of return, the issue of travel documents for foreigners, etc.; (iii) registers workers detached to Moldova for a term up to 90 days; (iv) supervises foreigners; (v) collects and processed personal data of foreigners entering and establishing their residence in RM. *Related to asylum and statelessness* the BMA: (i) grants, terminates and revokes the refugee status or humanitarian protection; (ii) recognizes, denies and revokes the stateless status; (iii) manages the accommodation center for foreigners solving issues related to its operation etc. *Related to the eradication of illegal stay of foreigners* the BMA: (i) supervises the legality of stay and employment of foreigners and stateless people on the territory of RM; (ii) undertakes measures to identify fake marriages between foreign nationals and citizens of RM, as well as files the declaration of their nullity; (iii) issues, regarding foreigners and stateless persons, return decisions, including, under escort, revocation of the right of residence, visa cancellation; (iv) ensures the removal of foreign nationals and stateless people from the territory of RM; (v) initiates court proceedings on taking into public custody of foreigners and stateless people that cannot be removed, within 24 hours, as well as extending its duration; (vi) guarantees tolerance towards foreign nationals and stateless people in RM; (vii) implements the readmission agreements

between the Moldovan Government and the governments of other countries.

BMA streamlined the adjustment of the national laws on migration and asylum to the international standards on the development and harmonization of the legal framework related to asylum (Law no.270/2008), regime of foreigners in RM (Law no. 200/2010) and integration of foreigners (Law no.274/2011). Thus, the organization is accountable for the integration of foreigners according to the Law 274/2011 and coordinates the activities of integration.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, BMA administers 3 centers at the state border of Palanca, Giurgiulesti and Calarasovca, where displaced people receive information and are referred to TPCR, as well as have the opportunity to apply for asylum.

**CCHT** is a department of MIA specialized in combating HT. CCHT is accountable for the investigation and prosecution of trafficking, child trafficking and other trafficking-related crimes (organization of irregular migration, pimping, illegal removal of children from the country, child pornography etc.). Carrying out these duties, the CCHT is not limited to the nationality of the trafficking victim. The criminal law of RM recognizes as a victim of HT any person, from any country „ *we have cases when the victims are foreign nationals*” (III\_4).

CCHT comprises divisions including administrative staff, investigating officers and prosecutors, analysts, officers entitled to provide training, methodological and practical support in preventing and combating HT and related crimes, to other police units. CCHT is empowered with the: (i) detection, investigation, prosecution of cases of HT, child trafficking and related crimes; (ii) analysis of trends and risks related to the trafficking phenomenon; (iii) referral of trafficking victims to support services; (iv) methodological and practical for police units, in the detection, investigation and criminal prosecution of HT cases; (v) prevention of trafficking through proactive police interventions aimed at identifying potential victims; (vi) dissemination

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<sup>50</sup> Government Decision no. 914, of 07.11.2014, on the approval of Regulations on the organization and functioning, structure and staff limitation of BMA subordinated to MIA.

of information, via mass media and relevant CSOs, about the phenomenon of HT.

The CCHT has adopted a new case management policy that consists of focusing resources on the investigation of HT cases, taking into account their complexity.<sup>51</sup> The new practice includes the monitoring and takeover from other unspecialized authorities, of cases of HT and related crimes, specialization of CCHT officers on distinct forms of exploitation, identification and detention of all criminals up to the destination country, not only of those with an episodically role. International police cooperation has also been improved by optimizing the exchange of information and diversifying tools. In this context, a clear assignment of responsibilities between CCHT and other law enforcement authorities was established based on specialization, rather than exclusive competences. In particular, the CCHT has maintained its core competencies in combating HT and related crimes. The duties related to the investigation and prosecution of irregular migration cases were taken over by the BP, a new subdivision of MIA, together with all related tasks, including the analysis of the phenomenon, development and fostering of law initiatives to combat it. The BP was also entitled to investigate cases of HT identified at the border. There was no delimitation based on the assignment of exclusive powers to CCHT, in the field of combating HT and to the BP, in the field of combating the organization of irregular migration. Such delimitation was not considered effective as it doesn't allow the transversal and comprehensive addressing of these phenomena.

Since the beginning of the declaration of the state of war in Ukraine, CCHT representatives have participated in several joint meetings with police agencies of other European countries. During these meetings it was decided to create groups of European police officers besides Europol and at Interpol level. Each of the targeted organizations has specific subdivisions dealing with HT and irregular migration/migrant smuggling. Working groups have also been created and the CCHT representatives communicate with specialists from other countries periodically

*„we exchange information on supposed cases of involvement of Ukrainian displaced people in migrant smuggling or cases of HT” (III\_4).*

Certain risk profiles are established due to the fact that the presumed cases of trafficking, exploitation are reported and referred by specialists engaged in assisting displaced people to the CCHT. For RM, the most suspicious cases of trafficking were related to children from Ukraine unaccompanied by their parents and those accompanied by third parties. Thus, due to the collaboration of CCHT employees with their colleagues from other countries *„measures have been taken to prevent child trafficking in unaccompanied children or accompanied by third parties” (III\_4).* The CCHT investigates these cases checking the identity of third parties accompanying the children in all potential cases *„first of all with the support of Ukrainian colleagues, Embassy of Ukraine in Chisinau and already all relevant international organizations that have possibilities” (III\_4).*

**MLSP** is the specialized body of central public administration responsible for the development of policies related to child protection and families with children, policies to ensure the equal opportunities between women and men, policies for the development of social services in collaboration with **NSAA**. Subsequently, the MLSP was responsible for the development of the Intersectoral mechanism but also the implementation of the Law no.140/2013 regarding the special protection of children at risk and children separated from their parents, Government Decision no.270/2014 on the *Intersectoral mechanism for the identification, assessment, referral, assistance and monitoring of child victims of VNET.*

**NSAA** is the administrative authority subordinated to the MLSP empowered to improve the quality of social assistance provided to people by implementing field-related policies and among the duties we highlight the management of financial resources to subsidize social welfare programs and the minimum package of social services. In the context of the displaced crisis in

<sup>51</sup> *Trafficking in Persons Report*. US Department of State. Washington, 2014.

Ukraine, NSAA is responsible for issuing orders regarding the creation of TPCR and their monitoring.

Although NSAA is also in charge with the capacity building of the staff employed in the social assistance system, the institution was not assigned any responsibilities related to the management of staff training activities in this field, in the context of managing the flow of displaced people from Ukraine. Consequently, specialists' training was done without consulting the public institutions that have direct responsibilities in this field, which proves that there are opportunities for the improvement of the management of the training of specialists employed in social assistance „*the opinion of the central authority representatives should be consulted*” (III\_7).

**National Employment Agency (NEA)** - the administrative authority subordinated to the MLSP provided information to the displaced people from Ukraine about job vacancies, orientation and guidance in finding employment. NEA and its territorial subdivisions provide free services to Ukrainian nationals: information about job vacancies, contact information of the employers eager to hire Ukrainian nationals (about 170 employers), employment advice and support. At the same time, the employers have to notify NEA, within 5 days, about the signing of the employment contract (CES decision of 01.03.2022, paragraph 8).

**SLI** - the administrative authority, subordinated to the MLSP, analyzes the labour relations regardless the fact that that the employees are citizens of RM, foreign nationals or displaced people from Ukraine. The representative of this institution pointed out the impossibility of identifying cases of labour exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine as they were limited in their competences and could not carry out unannounced inspections, but only planned controls<sup>52</sup> „*the reforms provide that controls cannot be carried out at the company's office but the regulatory authorities have to invite the company representative to their office*” (III\_8). Accordingly, SLI is unable to comply with the

international labour organization conventions the RM has signed (Convention no. 81 from 1947, on labor inspection in industry and commerce, Convention no. 129 from 1969, on labour inspection in agriculture).

Another difficulty in identifying cases of trafficking and exploitation lies in the fact that the number of inspectors is very small in RM. Overall there are 79 inspectors in the country, in the territory there are situations when „*a single inspector coordinates activities on 4 administrative-territorial units*” (III\_8). The lack of human resources makes it impossible for an inspector to reach the employers with displaced people. It was also mentioned that the SLI doesn't have a database of employers who have signed employment contracts with displaced people from Ukraine.

In this context we mention that BMA has powers to supervise the employment of foreigners and could identify situations of forced labour (Article 7, Labour Code), but BMA employees are overburdened with other responsibilities in managing the flow of displaced people from Ukraine.

**SATS and guardianship authorities** have been assigned additional responsibilities to manage the flows of displaced people from Ukraine, in particular children, by appointing specialists to take children unaccompanied or accompanied by third parties, to identify a form of protection, as well as to provide protection to children at risk and children separated from parents, to support children at risk and children separated from parents in applying for asylum, including to explain the rights and responsibilities of asylum seekers, to carry out the rapid assessment of the best interests of the child, to provide services for Ukrainian children at risk, to monitor unaccompanied children or accompanied by unauthorized people, to monitor displaced people, etc.

The community social workers are people who, together with the guardianship authorities, should know the situation of displaced people and prepare reports on their number and sociodemographic characteristics. At the same time, specialists

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52 Law no. 131 of 08.06.2012 regarding the state control of business activity.

employed in social assistance emphasized the need to make mayors accountable „*the large majority doesn't get involved*”. Certain mayors don't fulfill their responsibilities, sometimes because they don't know them, other times because they don't manage.

## 5.2. Access of third-country national victims of trafficking to protection and assistance

*Law on the regime of foreigners no. 200/2010* (art. 42<sup>1</sup>) enforces the provisions of EU Directive 2004/81/EC, regarding the issue of residence permits for third-country nationals that are victims of HT or have been the subject of actions to facilitate irregular migration. According to this document, the RM grants the right to temporary residence, including in the case when the person have entered illegally the territory of the country. The temporary residence is granted to the victim of HT for 6 months, with the possibility of renewal for 6 more months if the victim cooperates with the competent authorities of RM in order to identify and punish the criminals.

Regarding the granting of the status of trafficking victim to foreigners, including displaced people from Ukraine, the head of BMA mentioned that the statistics of granting residence permits for victims of HT is zero. This status guarantees the free access to a wide range of services: safe accommodation, counseling and information, medical care, material aid, psychological, education, employment and vocational support. However, no displacer person from Ukraine, foreigner staying or transiting the territory of RM, made such a request. One of the reasons could be the lack of information provided to foreigners, including displaced people, still greater attention should be given to this subject by different institutions „*they should approach it more seriously not just checking a box in a form.*”

## 5.3. Activities to prevent and combat trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine

The national anti-trafficking response represents an increased interest to the

entire international community. Moldovan authorities in collaboration with UN agencies, international organizations and field-related CSOs have undertaken several measures to prevent trafficking and exploitation in displaced people, providing training and support in risk mitigation. Activities are diverse.

**CCHT employees are continuously checking the platform** created by the government [dopomoga.md](http://dopomoga.md), but also **other websites that advertise opportunities of accommodation, transportation and employment** to prevent cases of HT and labour exploitation.

**Information about the peculiarities of HT and exploitation for the purpose of prevention** is provided by various institutions and organizations „*we offer information about violence, trafficking etc.*” (III\_13), including information of labour exploitation in children „*we explain parents the aspects related to labour exploitation in children. We tell them what age the child is allowed to work in RM, about need for parental consent etc.*” (III\_18).

The information is given in groups and if necessary, individually, by CSO specialists trained in this field, SPC specialists, but also TPCR representatives „*we have organized information campaigns for displaced people with our own forces, about the protection against violence, harassment, exploitation and trafficking*” (III\_12). Still these information meetings are not held regularly within TPCR.

Seminars organized by specialists approach various aspects and the displaced people are given the opportunity to ask questions. The trainers of these seminars highlighted challenges they face in the information process: displayed women say they are acquainted with this phenomenon and are sure that such situations couldn't happen to them „*the stereotype according to which „nothing will happen” is still existing although people have education, profession*” (III\_17).

Various materials have been developed for the information of displaced people: leaflets, brochures that have been disseminated at the border checkpoints, to TPCR, SPC, communities, etc. The information supplies are available in Ukrainian and English

languages to be understood by displaced people and briefly describe the signs of HT, where they could seek help etc. Still, a few respondents emphasized that the materials developed should be concise in order to be more attractive „people were not really interested in that brochures and that made me sad” (III\_21).

Various representatives of CSO and international organizations have provided **information and support to displaced people to help them go safely abroad**. These information sessions are held in TPCR, SPC and communities hosting displaced people.

**Information about job vacancies, orientation and guidance on the employment of displaced people**. Such sessions are most often carried out by employees of the territorial units of NEA and are held in TPCR, SPC and communities.

Certain CSOs **have provided transportation across RM to prevent HT**.

IOM have financially supported 9 CSOs (3 from the left bank of Dniester River) that have mobile teams. A few CSOs were implementing **projects focused on the prevention of HT and exploitation and the creation of friendly spaces** etc. All 9 CSOs carry out outreach activities, make referral to services and provide direct assistance. The IOM mobile teams carry out the following activities targeted to prevent HT and exploitation in displaced people as well as among third-country nationals. Among the basic activities can be listed:

1. Information about HT and existent services.
2. Delivery of information and support to people interesting in going to other countries.
3. Referral of vulnerable cases to the existent services at the local level or to services provided by implementation partners. The Referral Pathway is applied in emergency situations.
4. Referral of unaccompanied children or children accompanied by third parties to guardianship authorities.

5. Delivery of information to the third-country nationals and Ukrainian displaced people about the rights they have on the territory of RM: right to 90 days of stay and general support: emergency housing, legal advice regarding their rights, information on how to register with the Embassy, to receive documents they need, how to apply for cash assistance, etc., but also support in their return to home countries.

For example:

- APC specialists, in the context of the crisis of displaced people from Ukraine, based on projects financed by UN agencies (IOM and UNICEF), have organized round tables in communities from 10 administrative-territorial units, to explain the risks of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine, but also to LPA representatives. They have also offered goods (food, hygiene products, blankets for winter, clothing and footwear, electric appliances, etc.) to prevent the risks of HT and exploitation.
- Specialists employed within the Maternal Center „Pro-Familia”, in addition to accommodation services offered to 57 displaced women with children, are also implementing activities for the rehabilitation of displaced people from Ukraine in 29 villages from Causeni district. Within the activities carried out in communities they offer information and referral to services available, psychological support, social assistance, legal advice at request, food and medical vouchers (500 lei), school supplies, hygiene products, money for transportation. Payment of expenses for transportation was planned as a method to prevent HT. Not less important is the fact that money is given for housing, according to the rental contract.
- The mobile team of the public association „Artemida” (Drochia) assisted more than 500 displaced people, through community activities, offering packages with hygiene products and medicine, remote consultation of the family doctor for displaced people. In addition to hygiene packages, the members of the mobile team (psychologist and lawyer)

offer psychological support, legal advice, orientation and guidance in finding employment „we organize group meetings and give them information, orientation and guidance about employment, kindergartens and schools and individual counseling if they require” (III\_15).

The International Center „La Strada” ensured the **management of the Anti-trafficking Hotline and the Trust Line for Women** twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, providing information to all people requiring their services. Moreover, the International Center „La Strada” in collaboration with OSCE, have organized various field activities for displaced people from Ukraine, as well as for specialists (community social workers), including people hosting displaced people:

- i. Joint activities of specialists, including the psychologist of the Trust Line for Women, informing displaced women about gender equality, types of violence, sexual consent.
- ii. Activities carried out by psychologists of the Anti-trafficking Hotline of the International Center „La Strada” explaining the signs of trafficking, exploitation, recruitment tactics and risks, accompanied by recreational activities to reduce stress and improve the mental well-being.
- iii. Information activities regarding HT offered by the psychologist and information about services available in RM for displaced people.

Another important aspect of prevention of HT and exploitation referred to the **training of specialists**: border police officers, TPCR managers, child protection specialists, community social workers, employees of airlines, as well as members of MT, TCCHT etc. Training was provided on various subjects: (i) legal framework amendments (Intersectoral Mechanism, Order nr.34 and Order no.36), (ii) peculiarities of trafficking and labour exploitation, (iii) characteristics of violence „the community was taught to report the issues they reveal and every neighbor was informed how to identify, to be aware and to report” (III\_20); (iv) steps in providing referral to

specialized services. SPC specialists agreed on the importance of the training and they were able to deal with the situations because they do not have trafficking victims, only potential victims of trafficking „we didn't have any situation requiring deeper engagement. There were a few cases that were solved due to information and participation of IOM” (III\_15). The training of specialists within services for displaced people is important, as it is not always possible to identify the victims of HT when crossing the state border. However, there is a high turnover among specialists and continuous training should be provided to give the opportunity to the newly employed people to benefit from training „newly hired staff has to be trained. They do not know the procedures and methods to identify the victims” (III\_20).

Instructions developed by various international organizations (UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF etc.) were provided during the training to draw the attention of specialists to signs revealing cases of trafficking and exploitation: physical and behavioral symptoms etc. „We had a few training sessions in May, for border police officers and local CSOs, attended by about 200 participants, that were carried out with an international expert, one of the world's best experts in this field, focusing on the identification of risks, both in adults and children” (III\_25).

CCHT employees pointed out that, since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, they have been visited by many international delegations, in particular, UN agencies, and have been trained, helped to develop the risk profiles. Still it is challenging for CCHT employees and border police officers to identify potential cases of trafficking related to the transportation of children from surrogate mothers from Ukraine „training is required in this regard”.

The collaboration between institutions in the prevention of HT and exploitation was appreciated to be good, sometimes „perfect”. The field data reveal a *good* collaboration between TPCR and SPC with the police officers „they perform periodic monitoring visits”, Family Medicine Centers that provide support in healthcare issues, CSO implementing various activities but also with educational

institutions, SATS, territorial divisions of NEA, religious denominations and international organizations (Table 8). Meantime, the institutions hosting displayed people did not

have any collaboration with representatives of CCHT/Prosecutor's office, court or forensic centers.

**Table 8.** Collaboration of TPCR and SPC with other institutions in preventing HT and exploitation

Institutions	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Police, including BP	10	-	-	-
SATS	6	1	1	2
Healthcare institutions	10	-	-	-
Territorial divisions of NEA	6	1	1	2
Educational institutions	9	1	-	-
Prosecutor's office/CCHT	-	-	-	10
Court	-	-	-	10
PSA	1	2	1	6
Forensic centers	-	-	-	10
Multidisciplinary teams	1	1	1	7
CSO	10	-	-	-
International organizations	5	-	-	-
Religious denominations	6	-	-	-
Moldovan citizens, including Diaspora	4	2	2	2

The intersectoral collaboration is established in presumed cases of trafficking „we (CSO) have dealt with the psychological aspect related to the child, while the Police Inspectorate carried out the investigation in a very short time with the participation of employees of Child Protection Commission, BMA and CCHT” (III\_22).

CCHT representatives collaborate with Ukrainian authorities to exchange and verify information in presumed cases of HT that have been referred. This collaboration is affected by the war from Ukraine „they offer support as much as possible, taking into account the state of war” (III\_4), but also by the fact that Ukraine doesn't have an e-population register, being depended on the local databases and records.

The national measures implemented to combat trafficking are continuously supervised by the development partners, as well as international and regional authorities. This fact contributed to the implementation of measures to prevent and combat trafficking as well as to the capacity building of specialists engaged in: police, prosecution, social assistance, etc. „The employees of CCHT, BP have the necessary expertise to identify such situations” (III\_4). Still, the challenge lies in the fact that the 35 employees of the CCHT do not have the possibility to be mobile „they stay in the office”.

Amongst the strengths in preventing trafficking and exploitation we highlight:



- Immediate intervention of relevant authorities, international organizations collaborating with the authorities, and CSO in preventing trafficking and exploitation „*a proactive strategy*”. The mobile teams created, visit the communities providing them information and counseling.
- SPC specialists that have certain expertise in the prevention and assistance of victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation, have also benefited from additional training provided by IOM, UNICEF, APC, International Center „La Strada” etc. „*if they need a job, I refer them to the employment agency that help them find legal employment. Regarding the seasonal work, because now is the harvest time, I warn them that sometimes they won't be paid on time or not paid at all*” (III\_18).
- Training of the frontline specialists regarding the peculiarities of HT, but also those who are engaged in providing support to people in TPCR, communities etc. „*the employees carry out training on the vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation and refer people, who want to find a job, to services of territorial employment units*” (III\_10).
- Participation of several displaced women in information activities for displaced people.

The weaknesses still requiring effort refer to:

- Training people of RM regarding the signs of trafficking and exploitation „*Moldovan citizens should be able to make the difference between a work on a daily basis, illegal employment and labour exploitation*” (III\_8). This fact was also emphasized by representatives of UN agencies „*the people need more information about what is fair and what is not about employment*” (III\_24).
- Better information of displaced people of Roma ethnicity from Ukraine, avoiding discrimination on various reasons: lack of documents, low level of education, not speaking Russian language, deeper explanation, including the need to repeat the information. The appointment of a cultural mediator for people of Roma

ethnicity represents the solution for this issue.

- Multidisciplinary teams from communities hosting displaced people require more training and concrete information how to cope with the situations they face „*they don't have enough clear information: what to do when their help is required by a displaced woman without documents*” (III\_21).
- Low engagement of mayors in activities to prevent HT and exploitation in displaced people.

A few participants at the assessment pointed that in RM there is a proactive identification only in the cases of HT still not in the case of victims of GBV „*we are able to identify victims and presumed victims of HT, but the victims of GBV are excluded*” (III\_24). Therefore, services available to this category of victims are required.

#### 5.4. Mechanisms/tools developed and in the process of development to streamline anti-trafficking activities

The UN agencies and international organizations play an important role in preventing and combating cases of trafficking in displaced people. For example, **UNHCR** prepared and provided to partner organizations **Guidelines on the identification and referral of presumed cases of trafficking**. These comprise the following compartments:

- Identification of presumed cases of HT by: (i) providing information, (ii) collecting information; (iii) establishing the person's profile; (iv) identifying victims of HT (by relevant authorities); (v) indicators of potential situations of HT (behavioral and physical);
- Actions to be taken;
- Referral providing detailed information about the organizations and their contact phone numbers (CCHT, Anti-trafficking Hotline of International Center „La Strada”,

local guardianship authorities, MIA, BMA, UNHCR);

- Security and safety of frontline staff (for frontline specialists, for trafficking victims).

The guidelines establish the following indicators for potential situations of trafficking:

- Behavioral indicators: the person's history changes and is fragmented, behavior changes when being asked about the final destination, children assume the role of adults, the victim replicates the behavior of the abuser, obvious contradiction between the person's statements, the victim denies or minimizes the seriousness of the issue, the person refuses to cooperate, the person may have an abusive, nervous behavior, feeling anxious all the time.
- Physical indicators: signs of physical abuse, is not dressed accordingly to the weather, the person is accompanied by another one that speaks for her/him and doesn't allow the social worker to talk to him/her, the person cannot move.

Certain tools to help specialists are still being developed. The regional office of **UNICEF** published a **Practical guide on the identification of victims and people at risk of trafficking**<sup>53</sup> for frontline specialists „we have developed guidelines for frontline specialists who come into contact with displaced people, for them to be able to identify the risks” (III\_25). These consist of two compartments:

- Identification, screening and addressing of cases of trafficking, by explaining the notion of trafficking, providing benchmarks of national and international laws, stages of the identification process, general indicators of HT, particular indicators related to child trafficking, certain specific indicators and questions to be asked by frontline specialists, communication, referral and future measures;
- Child-friendly communication in court: basic principles of communication, communication challenges etc.

This guide is being translated because it is currently available only in English and it will also include the national legislation for specialists from RM.

Another initiative of UNICEF regional office lie in the implementation of **socio-legal research in 6 countries** hosting displaced people from Ukraine to understand the correlation between **national laws and international standards in particular related to the protection of unaccompanied children or children separated from their parents**. The research will also address the aspect of child trafficking.

CSO specialists are also involved in the development of certain tools. As it was already mentioned, the specialists of the International Center „La Strada”, in collaboration with law enforcement authorities, within May - July 2022, have developed the draft of the **Guidelines for the identification of victims and presumed victims of human trafficking in the context of mixed migration flows**.

This guide was endorsed by MIA order no.485 of 05.10.2022. It is a practical tool for the early identification of victims of HT among foreigners granting them access to support required by applying the National Referral Mechanism for victims of crime that is being developed in RM according to the Government Decision no.182/2022. The guidelines establish the procedure for identifying presumed victims and victims of HT, particular signs, the form and the way the documents are completed, the procedure of determining the status of the presumed victim and victim of HT as well as the interaction of specialists employed within competent authorities subordinated to MIA.

Moreover, the International Center „La Strada” is working on:

- **Practical guidelines for specialists**, based on case studies that describe various situations at risk of trafficking and exploitation. According to certain managers of institutions, such tools are necessary and would help specialists;
- **Flashcards** with phone numbers and records related to the prevention of HT, labour exploitation and sexual exploitation.

53 <https://www.unicef.org/eca/reports/practical-guide-identification-victims-and-persons-risk-trafficking-human-beings>

Practitioners mentioned that they require methodological resources regarding the identification of victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine. Some of them highlighted that the national risk assessment model of HT *„it is not productive”, „the B questionnaire has to be entirely revised”* (III\_17).

The respondents have also mentioned the need to develop Standard Operating Procedures, to comply with the new concept of assisting victims of crime *„a number of normative acts was promoted amending the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code with regard to the adjustment of all sex crimes in accordance with the Istanbul Convention”* (III\_25).

## VI. OPPORTUNITIES TO STREAMLINE POLICIES AND ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACTIVITIES

The research reveals that a lot of activities have been carried out by authorities, UN agencies, international organizations, CSO related to the prevention of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people „*prevention of trafficking is done appropriately*”. However, these activities have to be fostered focusing on the improvement of the quality of services, including the effectiveness of activities. The opinion of research participants on challenges related to the anti-trafficking system in RM, including its efficiency, refer first of all to the improvement of the coordination of activities through a systemic approach and not only. Suggestions made by participants were divided into several areas.

### Legal

- Need to grant a protection status – *temporary protection* to displaced people from Ukraine. The determination of the status would entitle them to rights as well as obligations „*the law in Poland stipulates that people are granted residence permits for X period during which they complete their document to get a residence permit and find employment*” (III\_2); „*Some people returned from England. They prefer Moldova that here they do not have obligations*” (III\_10).
- Establishment of provisions for Moldovan citizens displaced from Ukraine, including nationals of other countries displaced from Ukraine „*we have our displaced citizens that have a poor health condition. They do not have the citizenship of Ukraine; they had only a residence permit. When they came here, they have nothing. They have no relatives. What shall we do with them?*” (III\_18).

### Coordination

- Development of a systemic approach regarding the assistance of displaced people as well as their situation. There is no displaced people management group/team within the ministries that would have an overview on the entire situation. There are only fragmentary views on this situation. According to certain participants, these groups should meet regularly and discuss challenges related to: health and medical care, social services, educational services, employment etc. „*to be acquainted with the situation, strengths and weaknesses, challenges*” (III\_6).
- Coordination by NSAA of training in the field of social assistance by using the training platform for specialists „*the training should be coordinated with the authorities to avoid repetition, improve quality and cover all specialists*” (III\_7).

### Methodological

- Development of tools to support professionals: Displaced people route, with the presentation of risks and methods to cope with them „*I would make the route indicating several points: transportation, customs, accommodation specifying also inherent risks and actions to be taken, where to seek help*” (III\_6). It is important to validate the tools in discussions with the victims and presumed victims of trafficking of exploitation.
- Simplification of protocols provided to specialists for the identification of victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation „*UNHCR offers an useful protocol but it is too large and certain aspects are not adjusted to the circumstances in RM*” (III\_6).
- Adjustment of national tools of the National Referral System to the circumstances related to the war in Ukraine as well as their application „*to be friendlier*”.

## Practical

- Exchange of experience for Moldovan specialists with other countries hosting displaced people, about the areas of activity, specific institutions to get acquainted with the organization of activities and discuss challenges, including those related to trafficking (information, exchange of experience and improving practices).
- Training provided to specialists via discussion sessions, according to the revealed needs, to be able to identify certain physical signs as the behavioral signs, roles people play in discussions. At the same time specialists need to be listened to, guided on concrete issues they face and to be offered reference persons to discuss with when having certain questions. The training of specialists should include not only aspects related to the prevention of HT and identification of potential situations but also communication with children „*how to reveal child's situation through discussion without traumatizing the child*”, as well as aspects related to non-discrimination.
- Prolongation of information activities and employment support, including the development of alternative employment – remote work, part-time job etc.
- Organization of personal development activities and empowerment of displaced women from Ukraine, for a larger number „*to have self-confidence and take the decision to do something*”.
- Employment of displaced women from Ukraine at the Anti-trafficking Hotline, Child Helpline „*they would be more open if there is someone speaking Ukrainian*” (III\_21).
- Digitalization of the registration process „*they applied, downloaded all documents, we received and examine the application*” (III\_5).
- Development of online safety informative materials for displaced children from Ukraine.
- Need for the supervision of specialists

working with displaced people „*there is a few moments I would like to discuss because they it is not clear to me. A person's reaction or I want to discuss an opinion with someone*” (III\_18). Including, the organization of training for the prevention of professional burnout.

- Organization of training for transportation service providers.

## Information and awareness raising campaigns

- Information and awareness raising campaigns in media and online for the entire population of RM, including in Ukrainian language. People should be sensitized to reduce stigma and discrimination „*victims are still stigmatized and discriminated*” (III\_23), as well as to report cases of trafficking and exploitation.
- Online information activities. The displaced people use a lot communication channels as Facebook, Telegram, Viber, Signal „*we need also to approach their bloggers to disseminate certain information we have about prevention on the territory of RM*” (III\_18); „*we don't have to neglect online trafficking as in fact a lot of things happen online*” (III\_4).
- Promotion of developed ads and their translation into Ukrainian „*I really liked the „La Strada” advertisement as it makes me reflect on the situation that I could also seek help*” (III\_7).
- Information activities within the communities, including about work in agriculture, other risky areas, that could help to the identification of cases of trafficking and exploitation „*a lot of people are looking for easy jobs, but to be well-paid*” (III\_21).

## Cooperation

- Improvement of cooperation between different countries in the prevention and combating of HT „*we need to work more with authorities from Ukraine, Romania, etc., because trafficking is usually an organized network*” (III\_4).
- Need to establish a clear mechanism for granting the status of the victim of HT and exploitation to foreigners, including displaced people and the cooperation of Government institutions and CSO in this process.
- Increasing access to the labor market of displaced persons by ensuring cooperation between territorial employment structures and employers.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research data enables the following **conclusions regarding the current challenges of anti-trafficking system of RM:**

- Insufficient coordination of activities at the central level, as well as at the level of administrative-territorial units, including those for the prevention and combating of risks of trafficking and exploitation.
- Lack of a systemic approach, single register and monitoring of the situation. CSOs providing services in communities for displaced people do not always collaborate with SATS, leading sometimes to the duplication of activities and overburdening of displaced people in some TPCR and villages, or to lack of activities in others.
- Continuous transformation of the phenomenon of HT: increase in the use of information technologies during all stages of HT.
- Existence of certain unauthorized TPCR that did not notify the authorities and limit the access of CSO in their centers, including the implementation of certain information activities.
- Employee turnover and the need for continuous adjustment of information about contact people, as well as the shortage of human resources.
- Lack of child protection specialists at the community level. The lack of these specialists has caused an increase in the workload of community social workers and their overload, leading to professional burnout.
- Lack of data on the distribution of displaced people, including children, by administrative-territorial units and the discrepancy between information provided by central authorities and CSOs.
- Failure to grant the legal status, associated to the protection forms for foreigners stipulated by the law, affects the integration of displaced children in educational institutions (preschool and school) and the employment of adults etc.
- Displaced people's lack of awareness of the risks of trafficking and exploitation, including online.
- Difficulties in providing placement and services to third-country nationals from Ukraine in TPCR (Russians, Moldovans etc.).
- Lack of interoperability between information systems owned by various institutions (BP, BMA etc.).
- Moldovan people's lack of awareness of the key signs of trafficking and exploitation.
- Lack of coordination of training for different specialists.
- Occurrence of people of Roma ethnicity discrimination due to the lack of documents, low level of education, not speaking Russian language and the need for a deeper explanation, including repetition of information.
- Need for training of multidisciplinary teams providing services in communities hosting displaced people, but also of TCCHT, giving concrete information about situations they face.
- Need to provide ongoing training to specialists employed in various fields.
- Low engagement of mayors in activities targeting the prevention of HT and exploitation in displaced people.
- Lack of certain methodological resources to help specialists in identifying victims and presumed victims of trafficking and exploitation in displaced people from Ukraine.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Research data allow the submission of the following **recommendations for authorities, UN agencies, international organizations and CSO to streamline the anti-trafficking system in RM:**

### Legal

- Need to grant a legal status, clearly associated with the protection forms for foreigners stipulated by national laws, to displaced people from Ukraine. The status will entitle them to rights as well as obligations.

### Coordination

- Development of a systemic approach regarding the assistance of displaced people as well as their situation. Strengthening the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating HT to be acquainted with the overall situation, including related challenges in the next areas: health and medical care, social services, educational services, employment, etc.
- Coordination by NSAA of training related to social assistance, by using the training platform for specialists employed in this field.
- Periodic monitoring of the situation by consulting local and central authorities, international organizations and CSO, including with the participation of displaced people.
- Development of collaboration between SATS and CSO by appointing a SATS representative to mentor the activities of CSO providing services in the district.

### Methodological

- Development of certain tools to support professionals: Displaced people route, with the presentation of risks and methods to cope with them as well as their validation in discussions with the victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation, but also with local and international experts.

- Simplification of certain protocols provided to specialists for the identification of victims and presumed victims of HT and exploitation.
- Adjustment of national tools of the National Referral System to the circumstances related to the war in Ukraine, including their application „*to be friendlier*”.
- Introduction in the future training of social workers of certain modules related to Humanitarian Assistance in armed conflicts, Models of immediate response in emergency situations, Signs of HT and exploitation in refugees, etc.

### Practical

- Training of specialists should be done according to needs identified via discussion sessions and should tackle the following subjects: (i) signs of identifying suspected situations, (ii) communication with children and people accompanying them; (iii) aspects related to non-discrimination, (iv) changes in the phenomenon of trafficking and exploitation at the regional level.
- Dissemination and exchange of good practices in combating HT with specialists from other countries hosting displaced people, about the areas of activity, specific institutions, organization of activities and challenges, including those related to trafficking (information, exchange of experience and improving practices).
- Training of CCHT employees and of the BP regarding the identification of potential cases of trafficking related to the transportation of children from surrogate mothers from Ukraine.
- Prolongation of information activities and employment support, including the development of alternative employment – remote work, part-time job, etc.
- Organization of personal development activities and empowerment of displaced women from Ukraine.



- Employment of displaced women from Ukraine within specialized services, including the Anti-trafficking Hotline and Child Helpline.
- Digitalization of the registration process of displaced people and asylum seekers at BMA.
- Development of informative materials on online safety for displaced children from Ukraine.
- Need to supervise specialists working with displaced people to prevent their occupational burnout as well as to provide guidance required.
- Need to develop online anti-trafficking mechanisms.
- Training of transportation service providers.

### **Information and awareness raising campaigns**

- Information and awareness raising campaigns in media and online for the entire population of RM, including displaced people from Ukraine, available in Ukrainian, Russian, English and Romanian languages to ensure the access to information.
- Community sensitization to reduce stigma and discrimination in schools, communities as well as of reporting the cases of trafficking and exploitation.
- Organization of information activities in communities, including about work in agriculture, other risky areas that could help to the identification of cases of trafficking and labour exploitation.
- More measures related to the information and prevention of online risks of trafficking and exploitation by with the participation of influencers, bloggers from Ukraine.
- Promotion of developed ads and their translation into Ukrainian.

### **Cooperation**

- Improvement of cooperation between RM and other countries in the preventing and combating of HT.
- Establishment of a clear mechanism for granting foreigners the status of the victim of HT and exploitation, including displaced people, and the cooperation of Government institutions and CSOs in this regard. Increasing access to the labor market of displaced persons by ensuring cooperation between territorial employment structures and employers.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Information about specialists participating in in-depth individual interviews

No.	Code	Institution	Position
1.	III_1	TCCHT, Soroca	Member
2.	III_2	TCCHT, Glodeni	Member
3.	III_3	MLSP, Department for protection policies on child rights and families with children	Head
4.	III_4	CCHT	Head
5.	III_5	BMA	Director
6.	III_6	MLSP, Division of policy for ensuring equality between women and men	Head
7.	III_7	NSSA	Deputy Director
8.	III_8	SLI	Inspector
9.	III_9	TPCR, Glodeni	Manager
10.	III_10	TPCR, Ungheni	Manager
11.	III_11	TPCR, Cahul	Manager
12.	III_12	TPCR, Basarabeasca	Head of SATS
13.	III_13	TPCR Popeasca, Stefan Voda	Manager
14.	III_14	TSSA Cahul	Child protection specialist
15.	III_15	SPC, Maternal center „Ariadna”, Drochia	Manager
16.	III_16	SPC, Public Institution Maternal center „Pro-Familia”, Causeni	Manager
17.	III_17	SPC, APC	Specialist
18.	III_18	SPC, service of support and protection for male victims of HT	Manager
19.	III_19	SPC, Maternal center „Încredere”, Cahul	Manager
20.	III_20	TSSA Falesti	Head of community assistance

No.	Code	Institution	Position
21.	III_21	International Center „La Strada”	Manager, Anti-trafficking Hotline, Trustline for women
22.	III_22	CNPAC	Coordinator
23.	III_23	UN Refugee Agency, Moldova	Representative
24.	III_24	UN Migration Agency, Moldova	Representative
25.	III_25	UNICEF Moldova	Representative





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