

*Belarus Red Cross staff with people temporarily relocated to storage facilities in Belarus. Photo: Belarus Red Cross*

<p>Appeal №: <b>MGR65001</b></p>	<p>IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: <b>CHF 9.5 million</b> CHF 1 million already allocated in total as DREF loans to three National Societies</p>	
<p>Glide №: <a href="#">OT-2021-000167-POL</a> <a href="#">OT-2021-000076-LTU</a> <a href="#">OT-2021-000175-BLR</a></p>	<p>People affected: <b>estimated 20,000 people</b></p>	<p>People to be assisted: <b>12,000 People</b></p>
	<p>Appeal launched: <b>24/11/2021</b></p>	<p>Appeal ends: <b>30/11/2022</b></p>

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

In May 2021, migrants arriving in Belarus started crossing the border into Lithuania. By August, more than 4,000 people had crossed and were placed first in temporary camps and later in a few facilities, pending processing of asylum applications. As Lithuania reinforced its border and introduced a state of emergency for the border zone, the routes of the migrants largely shifted towards the Polish border, with an unknown number crossing, being apprehended by the border guards and placed in centres on the border and elsewhere. Poland also reinforced its border, mobilized soldiers to assist the border guards and, in early September, declared a state of emergency.

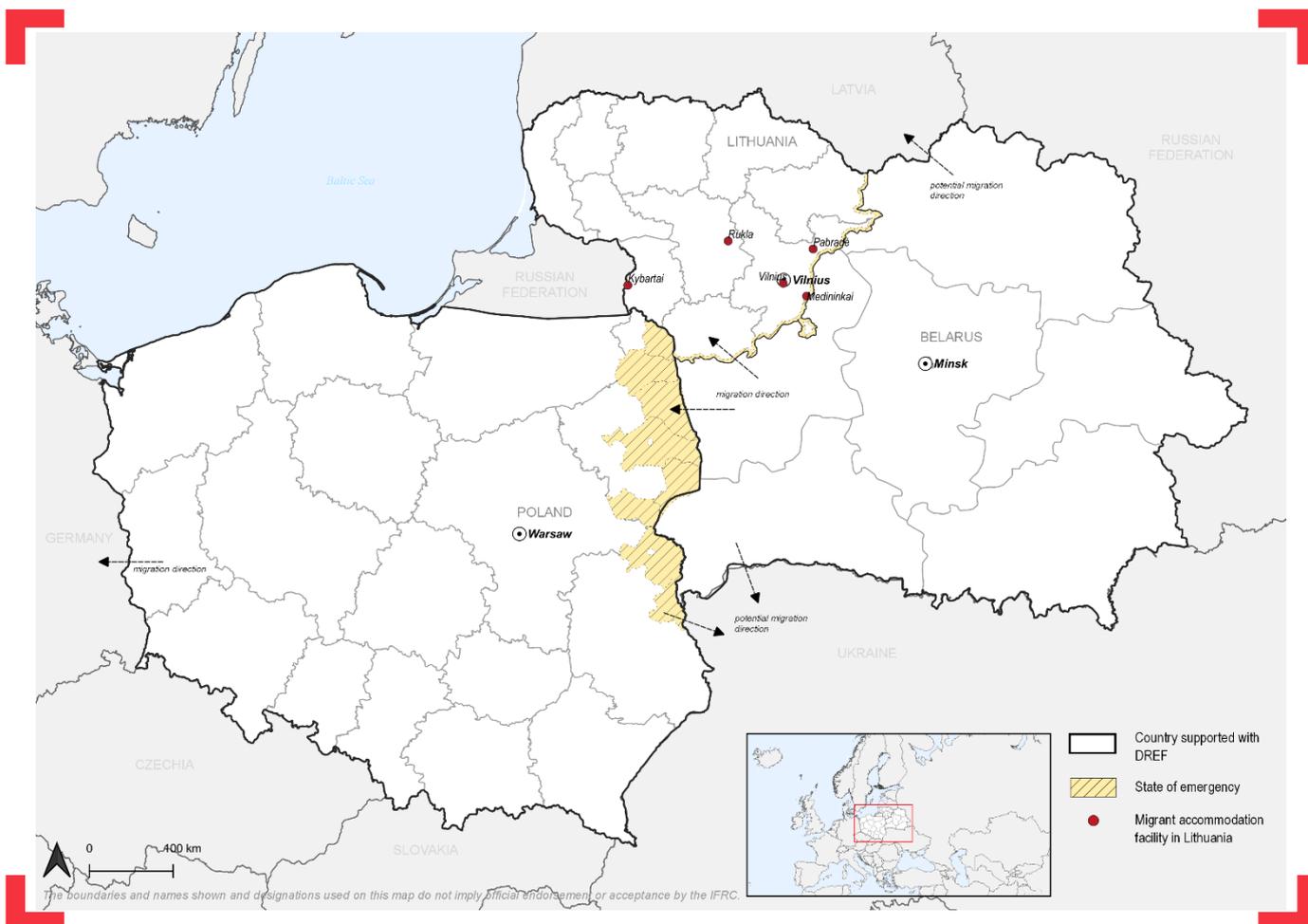
Despite reinforcements on the border, attempts by people to irregularly cross into the European Union have continued in the past couple of months, with the authorities in Lithuania and Poland reporting hundreds of attempts every day. Many people spend days and weeks in the terrain by the border. To date,

ten people are reported to have died, exhausted and exposed to low temperatures.

In early November, the situation escalated when a several thousand migrants approached the borders with Poland, but also Lithuania, from the Belarusian side. This led to a tense stand-off and some clashes between border guards and migrants. Most people who were at the border have now been moved to a nearby hall.

The majority of people affected in the context are from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, Sudan and other Middle East, African and Asian countries. Tens of nationalities were reported among those crossing into Lithuania in July and August. Across the context there are significant numbers of women and children – around 40% of those entering Lithuanian, for example – as well as unaccompanied minors and persons with disabilities.

The three National Red Cross Societies of Lithuania, Poland and Belarus have played a critical role as local actors in responding to



humanitarian needs throughout this context. Belarus Red Cross is the only organization with continuous access to the border zone in Belarus and has been distributing relief goods there since the stand-off started. Both Lithuanian Red Cross and Polish Red Cross have made assistance available for people in border areas they cannot access directly. The Polish Red Cross recently agreed with the authorities on restricted yet regular access to some centres in the border zone and both National Societies continue to advocate for full and regular access to all migrants, wherever they may be. Both the Lithuanian and the Polish Red Cross are also supporting people in centres outside of the closed border zones as well as people on the move. Given the unique role of these National Societies, it is vital to ensure operational resources, but also to continue to build their capacity and strengthened readiness to act in disaster and crises situations.

The migration context related to Belarus and neighbouring countries has been characterised by a lack of overview in terms of data. Considering official figures given by various authorities, it can be estimated to at least

20,000 people are caught up in the situation. This includes the Belarusian authorities' recent figure of 7,000 migrants in Belarus as well as 3,500 migrants in centres in Lithuania and an unknown number in centres in Poland. In addition to these figures, German authorities report over 6,000 people arriving from Poland during six weeks from the beginning of October to mid-November. This shows that an actual number of people who are still on the move is unknown with the situation likely to continue, despite reinforced borders.

This Emergency Appeal will prioritize support to the three National Red Cross Societies who are currently operational in the context. The Emergency Appeal may however also extend to other countries that could be impacted by the situation. The funding requirement is based on ongoing activities and also includes contingency to allow for a quick scale-up and targeting in any of the countries, should the situation so require. The Emergency Appeal also aims to significantly improve on the National Societies' capacities to respond in rapidly developing context, including future disasters and crises situations.

## TARGETING

The total number of people affected in this context is not fully determined, due to a lack of data, access and assessments. However, based on publicly available figures provided by the authorities, **the total number of people caught up in this context can be estimated to be at least 20,000. This Emergency Appeal aims to assist an initial 12,000 people**, reflecting that in all countries, the National Societies are uniquely positioned in their response as auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. While access remains a challenge, in many of the contexts the Red Cross has exclusive access and is currently the only actor who can deliver humanitarian assistance at scale.

The 12,000 people targeted fall into three categories of migrants: 1) people on the move related to this context, including people in urban centers in Belarus, 2) people at the borders between Belarus and neighboring countries and 3) people in centers in Lithuania, possibly also Poland, waiting for asylum processes to be concluded or waiting for returns to the countries of origin. Among all these three groups, a special focus will be on vulnerable individuals, including unaccompanied minors, single women with children.

The needs are informed by ongoing access and activities in accommodation centres, and for people on the borders and on the move, the general immediate life-saving needs are clear, while longer-term needs will depend on how the context evolves. In Belarus, an inter-agency multi-sector assessment is being planned and will be conducted at the border pending access being granted by the authorities, to get a more detailed picture of needs and vulnerabilities. In Poland, the Polish Red Cross was recently

given restricted access to some centres in the border zone, which will allow for a better understanding of the needs there. In Lithuania, the Lithuanian Red Cross, while actively providing support in all migrant's centres, does not have access to the border and thereby for the time being does not have detailed understanding of the needs and possible interventions there.

## **PLANNED OPERATIONS**

Through this multi-country Emergency Appeal, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) aims to support the National Red Cross Societies of Belarus, Poland and Lithuania and other countries related to the context as needed in the response to the population movement in Belarus and neighboring countries. The ongoing and planned operations supported through this Emergency Appeal follow the three categories of affected people outlined above.

Parts of the funding required will ensure the National Red Cross Societies ability to react to shifts in the context, if needed, and to continue build their capacity and readiness to operate, in this particular context and in the future. Given the sensitivities in the situation, the operations will also ensure enhanced support to the National Red Cross Societies in communications, humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy.

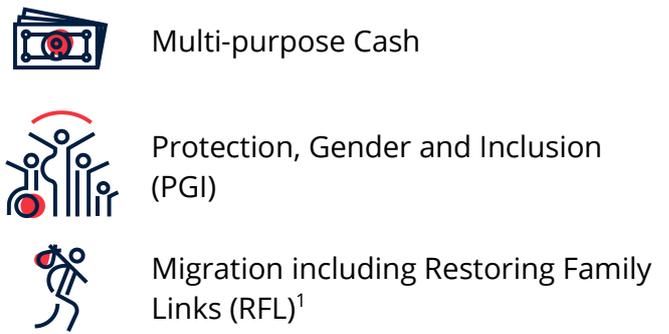
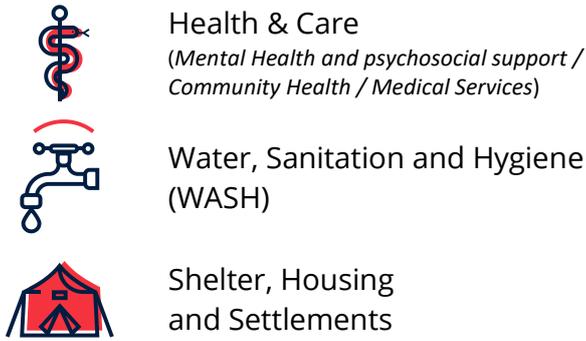
People on the move will be provided with integrated support, as broad as possible given their circumstances. In Belarus, migrants in urban centers will for example be provided with food parcels, hygiene kits, personal protection equipment, warm clothes and footwear, COVID-19-related information, psychosocial support and restoring family links services as well as support with accommodation costs or needed items for staying in state accommodation. Similar support is provided in Poland where the Polish Red Cross is running and supporting Humanitarian Service Points, distributing food, water, cloths to migrants.

People in Belarus - on the border with neighboring countries or housed indoors near the border - will receive broad relief support. This includes food and water, hygiene kits, warm clothes and footwear, raincoats, blankets, sleeping bags, nutrition for children, COVID-related information, personal protective equipment, psychosocial support and restoring family links services as well as first aid and medical referral support.

People in accommodation centers, predominantly currently in Lithuania, have for some time been provided a broad range of services, including distributions of relief items, psychosocial support, restoring family link service and legal support in the asylum processes. In Poland, Polish Red Cross has only recently been granted some access to centers in the border zone and will scale-up their assistance similar to operations in Lithuania, when possible.

Across the context, the upcoming winter season will be considered, to meet varied needs for different groups of people depending on their circumstances, accommodation and operational areas. Related to COVID-19, people across the context will be provided with targeted support and information, including translated information leaflets and personal protective equipment. Interpretation services are also being made available including in Farsi, Kurdish, Arabic, French to Russian.

The strategy focuses on the following sectors:



## Enabling approaches

The sectors outlined above will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:



Details of the operation will be finalized through the Operational Strategy to be released in the upcoming days. The Operational Strategy will also provide further details on the Federation-Wide approach which includes response activities of all contributing National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the Federation-wide funding requirement. The timeframe for the Appeal is not related to any assumption of shifts in the scenario or contexts as such. Rather, it is based around foreseen processes, for example around migrants applying for asylum and the outcome of these application processes. Across the context it is possible that the application and appeal processes and possible delayed returns will continue well into 2022. IFRC will closely and continuously monitor the situation and develop scenarios which will inform any revisions of this Emergency Appeal and the National Societies responding in the context.

## RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN COUNTRY



### [Belarus Red Cross]

Core areas of operation	
Number of staff:	<b>450</b>
Number of volunteers:	<b>16,000</b>

Belarus Red Cross was established in 1921 and is the largest humanitarian organization in Belarus, present in all 158 districts of the country. BRC works in humanitarian aid (including COVID-19 response), home-based care and active ageing, community mobilization, health promotion and disease prevention and the integration of refugees.

<sup>1</sup> With technical support being provided by the ICRC



## [Polish Red Cross]

### Core areas of operation



Number of staff: **5,724**

Number of volunteers: **43,000**

The Polish Red Cross was established in 1919 and is present country wide. PRC works in the dissemination of international humanitarian law, restoring family links and tracing services, voluntary blood donation, social care and assistance to vulnerable groups, health and environmental sustainability promotion, first aid training, education programs, and providing humanitarian assistance in crises and natural disasters domestically and abroad.



LIETUVOS  
RAUDONASIS KRYŽIUS

## [Lithuanian Red Cross]

### Core areas of operation



Number of staff: **104**

Number of volunteers: **1,700**

The Lithuanian Red Cross was established in 1919 and is present country wide. LRC is mainly active in providing nursing and psychosocial care to older people, advocacy, first aid trainings, assistance to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, providing humanitarian aid to vulnerable groups and in natural disasters, and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### IFRC membership coordination:

IFRC has an office in Minsk supporting the Belarus Red Cross. National Society's main partners include the Danish Red Cross and the Swiss Red Cross, that also have presence in the country and have rendered support to Belarus Red Cross bilaterally. Other partners include Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Turkish Red Crescent and Russian Red Cross and cooperation Belarus Red Cross is also cooperating with Lithuanian Red Cross, Latvian Red Cross, Polish Red Cross and Ukrainian Red Cross.

The Regional Office for Europe in Budapest is coordinating with the German Red Cross that is providing bilateral support to the Polish and Lithuanian Red Cross. Regular calls with the operating National Societies on both strategic and technical level are being arranged. Other members engaging in the context will be brought into existing and evolving coordination mechanisms in support of the operating National Societies.

### External engagement:

IFRC is coordinating closely with IOM, UNHCR and WHO on country and regional level since the start of the situation, particularly in Belarus, Poland and Lithuania. In Belarus, both IOM and UNHCR has been providing support to and through the Belarus Red Cross, both in terms of funding and in-kind, as has UNFPA targeting essential needs of women. In Lithuania and Poland, dialogue is likewise ongoing. For Lithuania, the Irish government has provided financial support to through the IFRC. This

Emergency Appeal will also help IFRC in supporting the National Societies to further enhance their auxiliary role and ensure strong partnership with key external organizations that also helps building the capacity of the National Societies. An inter-agency assessment is being prepared and will be conducted at the border pending the approval of access by the border committee.

### **Movement coordination:**

Movement coordination meetings have been running since August, initially related to the Lithuanian context and are now being expanded to include the overall situation. IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have been in close dialogue on several levels since the overall situation began. Follow the escalation of the situation at the border, a [joint statement between IFRC and ICRC was published on November 18](#). In Belarus, a Movement Coordination Agreement between the Belarus Red Cross Society, the ICRC and the IFRC regarding their respective roles and responsibilities is in place. So far Danish, Swiss, Bulgarian, Polish and Ukrainian Red Cross joined this Agreement. Both Tri-partite and Movement Coordination Meetings are held regularly.

## **Contact information**

**For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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#### **Reference ↘**

Click here for:

- [Link to IFRC Emergency landing page](#)