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## Polish Police in the Security and Public Order Management System in the Perspective of the war in Ukraine in 2022

### Polská policie v systému řízení bezpečnosti a veřejného pořádku v perspektivě války na Ukrajině v roce 2022

#### Abstract

The war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, had serious consequences for the security environment locally, regionally and internationally. The mass flow of refugees from Ukraine to the territory of the European Union and planned disinformation campaigns against countries providing assistance to Ukraine have created new challenges and tasks for the law enforcement services. The aim of the article is to analyze the threats posed to Poland by the war in Ukraine and the related refugee crisis, as well as how the Polish police deal with these threats.

**Keywords:** police, war, crisis management, security, public order.

#### Abstrakt

Válka, kterou 24. února 2022 zahájila Ruská federace proti Ukrajině, měla vážné důsledky pro bezpečnostní prostředí v lokální, regionální i mezinárodní dimenzi. Masový pohyb uprchlíků z Ukrajiny na území Evropské unie i plánované dezinformační kampaně namířené proti zemím poskytujícím pomoc Ukrajině způsobily, že pořádkové služby čelily novým výzvám a úkolům. Cílem článku je analyzovat hrozby, které pro Polsko představuje válka na Ukrajině a související uprchlická krize, a také to, jak se polské policii daří těmto hrozbám čelit.

**Klíčová slova:** policie, válka, krizové řízení, bezpečnost, veřejný pořádek.

#### Introduction

Public safety and public order are the most important values for any society regardless of historical era or geographical location in the world. With the development of civilization, the number of risks and hazards, resulting from both human activity and violent natural phenomena, is constantly increasing.

According to the literature destructive human activity determines the contemporary emergence of **technical** risks, which include fires, chemical contamination, construction and transportation disasters; **ethnic** risks, such as unemployment, migration, hunger and poverty; **social** risks, which include violence,

civilization diseases and risky waste management; **public order and social order** risks implying various forms of common and organized crime, terrorism, and political and military conflicts; **ecological** risks, among which the most important are atmospheric pollution, biological degradation of water, degradation of ecosystems, and breakdown of the natural balance.<sup>1</sup>

Modern threats to security and public order caused by human activity in the political and military spheres require specific actions to be taken in accordance with the country's legal order and implemented using adequate tools to achieve a specific goal. This is one of the most important tasks of any state, which is carried out by many institutions and services of the state administration.

For many Western European countries, security threats arising from the massive influx of migrants and refugees with irregular status in 2015, as well as the Russian Federation's military aggression on Ukrainian territory on February 24, 2024, are of particular importance in the last years of the 21st century. From the perspective of Poland, as a country whose eastern border with Belarus is part of the common policy of protection and management of the external borders of the European Union and the Schengen area, the massive action of exerting migratory pressure on the Polish and EU border with Belarus by the special services of the Russian Federation and Belarus in 2021 became a serious security challenge. From January to the end of November 2021, the Border Guard recorded about 40,000 attempts to illegally cross the Polish-Belarusian border. During this time, together with the Police, it detained more than 400 people for aiding and abetting the illegal crossing of the state border. Despite the sealing of the Polish border, large groups of illegal migrants were reaching Germany via Poland. German police recorded 11,213 migrants who illegally entered Germany from Belarus through Poland in 2021.<sup>2</sup> The consequence of repeated attempts to forcibly cross the border was the introduction of a state of emergency<sup>3</sup> in the border area, as well as the deployment of reinforced law enforcement forces to the area. In 2021 about 4,000 Border Guard officers, about 14,000 soldiers and about 2,000 police officers were deployed to protect the EU and Polish border with Belarus.

The kinetic aggression of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, which occurred on February 24, 2022 was an unprecedented event from the point of view of security and public order on the local and global level. This situation caused particularly important consequences for Poland, as hostilities were conducted directly across the southeastern border of the European Union and Poland, which triggered an unprecedented migration and refugee movement into this part of Europe. In the first week of the war, more than a million refugees from Ukraine, mainly women with children and the elderly, left the borders of their country, seeking aid and shelter first

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<sup>1</sup> FICOŃ, Krzysztof. Inżynieria zarządzania kryzysowego. Podejście systemowe. Warszawa 2007. 83-115. ISBN: 978-83-89968-82-1.

<sup>2</sup> WAWRZUSISZYN, Andrzej. Kryzys migracyjny na granicy polsko-białoruskiej i jego wpływ na bezpieczeństwo Polski. *Nowa Polityka Wschodnia*. 2022, nr 2 (33). ISSN 2084-3291. DOI: 10.15804/npw20223303.

<sup>3</sup> Na podstawie Konstytucji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1997 roku, w sytuacjach szczególnych zagrożeń, jeżeli zwykłe środki konstytucyjne są niewystarczające, może zostać wprowadzony odpowiedni stan nadzwyczajny: *stan wojenny*, *stan wyjątkowy* lub *stan klęski żywiołowej*. Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polski z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 roku. Dz. U. z 1997 r. Nr 78, poz. 483, art. 228 p. 1.

in Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova. A significant number of those fleeing, using road border crossings, arrived in Poland, whose southern provinces - Lublin and Podkarpacie - became reception points and aid hubs for the onward journey.

The armed conflict within Ukraine has caused serious political and social consequences in the European Union and around the world. It has become a source of new security problems the public administration in Poland had to face. The purpose of the article is to analyze selected security threats in Poland as a consequence of the war in Ukraine 2022, as well as the model of police management adopted in this connection to carry out the statutory tasks of the police in maintaining public security and order in the conditions of the ongoing crisis.

The aim of the article is to present the origins and assumptions of police management of the Podkarpacie garrison in the face of the refugee crisis related to the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, with particular emphasis on the role of the Police in such activities. The research problem revolves around the question of the impact of the consequences of the war in Ukraine - the massive war migration that occurred after February 24, 2022 on the territory of Poland, as well as the humanitarian and military assistance provided to Ukraine - on the management of Police operations to ensure security and public order during this time. The source basis of this article are documents prepared by the Provincial Police Commander in Rzeszów and other state institutions of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship, as well as publications of universities, think tanks and public benefit organizations. A valuable supplement is also the information contained in interviews, press articles, audiovisual recordings, trials and memories of police officers of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship and the author's personal experiences.

A limitation, especially in research on the current activities of uniformed services, is access to the source database. This means that the critical use of official documents, press materials, official statements of the services and other fragmentary information may lead to erroneous conclusions and assessments. The risk associated with this can be partially reduced by using the legal-dogmatic analysis method and the systemic analysis method. The use of the legal and dogmatic analysis method allowed for the review and analysis of numerous legal acts, standards contained in legislation, implementing acts, as well as internal documents. However, it should be remembered that scientific research on the activities of the Police and secret services during an armed conflict or a serious crisis affecting state security has many limitations. They result from the classified (secret) nature of some of the activities they conduct, deliberate masking (hiding) of true intentions or deliberate disinformation. The greatest limitation, especially in research on the current activities of secret services, is access to the source database. This means that the use of only the legal and dogmatic method may lead to incorrect conclusions. The use of the systemic analysis method made it possible to examine the problem in a broader context than just from a legal perspective, as it allowed to show a broader perspective of the causes and effects accompanying the armed conflict in Ukraine and the refugee crisis, and the emergence of security threats and challenges in this area in Poland.

## Polish Police in the system of security and public order

In Poland's legal order in the system of security subjects a special role is assigned to the Police. The police is a uniformed and armed formation that serves the public and is designed to protect the safety of people and maintain public security and order.<sup>4</sup> Stanislaw Pieprzny notes in this regard that “among all government administration entities performing tasks in the administration of security and public order, the Police have been singled out, acting on the basis of the general norm of competence in ensuring security and public order (...) while all other entities are complementary (supplementary) to the tasks of the Police, taking into account their specialization as to specific areas in which violations of security and public order may occur.”<sup>5</sup> In terms of compliance with the law, the Police cooperate with other services, inspections and guards that are part of the public administration, which, in accordance with their competencies, protect the legal order in terms of, for example, border security (Border Guard), VIP protection (State Protection Service) or protection of the interests of the State Treasury and the customs territory of the European Union (Customs and Fiscal Service, which functions within the National Fiscal Administration).

As the main entity responsible for security and public order in Poland, the Police performs its basic tasks on the basis of the Police Act of April 6, 1990.<sup>6</sup> The basic tasks of the Police include: protecting the life and health of people and property from unlawful attacks that violate these goods; protecting public safety and order, including ensuring calm in public places and in means of public transportation and public communication, in road traffic and on waters intended for public use; initiating and organizing activities aimed at preventing the commission of crimes and offenses and criminogenic phenomena and cooperating in this regard with state and local government bodies and social organizations; conducting counter-terrorist activities; detecting crimes and offenses and prosecuting their perpetrators; protecting facilities that are the seats of members of the Council of Ministers, excluding facilities serving the Minister of National Defense and the Minister of Justice, as designated by the minister in charge of internal affairs; supervision of specialized armed security formations to the extent specified in separate regulations; control of compliance with order and administrative regulations related to public activities or in force in public places; cooperation with police forces of other countries and their international organizations, as well as with bodies and institutions of the European Union on the basis of international agreements and accords and separate regulations; processing of criminal information, including personal data; maintenance of data sets containing information collected by authorized bodies on fingerprints of persons, unidentified traces of fingerprints from crime scenes and the results of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis. The police also carry out tasks arising from other laws, from the provisions of European Union law and international agreements and accords on the principles and within the scope specified therein.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Art. 1. Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 roku o Policji. Dz. U. 1990, Nr 30, poz. 179.

<sup>5</sup> PIEPRZNY, Stanisław. *Ochrona bezpieczeństwa i porządku publicznego w prawie administracyjnym*. Rzeszów 2007, 9, ISBN 9788373383388.

<sup>6</sup> Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 roku o Policji. Dz. U. 1990, Nr 30, poz. 179.

<sup>7</sup> Art. 1. Ustawa z dnia 6 kwietnia 1990 roku o Policji. Dz. U. 1990, Nr 30, poz. 179.

The Police are also an essential element in the crisis management system.<sup>8</sup> Within the framework of the crisis management system, the Police carry out their tasks in the following phases: **prevention**, which involves eliminating or reducing the likelihood of a threat; **preparation**, in which various variants of the action plan are prepared and the necessary forces and resources are estimated; **response** - in this phase, tasks are carried out, aimed at restoring security and public order, as well as providing assistance to the injured and reducing losses; **reconstruction**, the action is directed at carrying out tasks aimed at restoring the state before the threat.

## Migration crisis on the border with Ukraine after February 20, 2022

The aggression of the troops of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022 initiated a massive influx of several million war refugees from Ukraine to Poland. The Subcarpathian and Lublin Voivodeships, due to their location near the border with Ukraine, became reception provinces, where the refugees first sought aid and shelter and then stayed elsewhere in Poland or treated Poland as a transit country on their onward journey. Refugees who appeared after February 24, 2022 in Poland, other European Union countries and Moldova were immediately covered by the provisions of the **Temporary Protection Directive**,<sup>9</sup> under which war refugees from Ukraine gained a status similar to that of European Union citizens in terms of movement.

At the same time, in order to regulate the principles of legalization of the stay of refugees from Ukraine in Poland, as well as to determine the division of competencies in the provision of assistance between institutions of state and local administration, the **Law on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of Ukraine**<sup>10</sup> was adopted.

Border Guard data shows that from February 24 to December 31, 2022, more than 7.3 million refugees from Ukraine crossed the external border of the European Union and Poland with Ukraine, of which about 4.1 million people entered Poland through border crossings in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, and 3.2 million people crossed the border in the Lublin Voivodeship. At the same time, almost 5.5 million people left Poland for Ukraine, including 3.2 million through the Subcarpathian Voivodeship and 2.3 million through the Lublin Voivodeship.<sup>11</sup>

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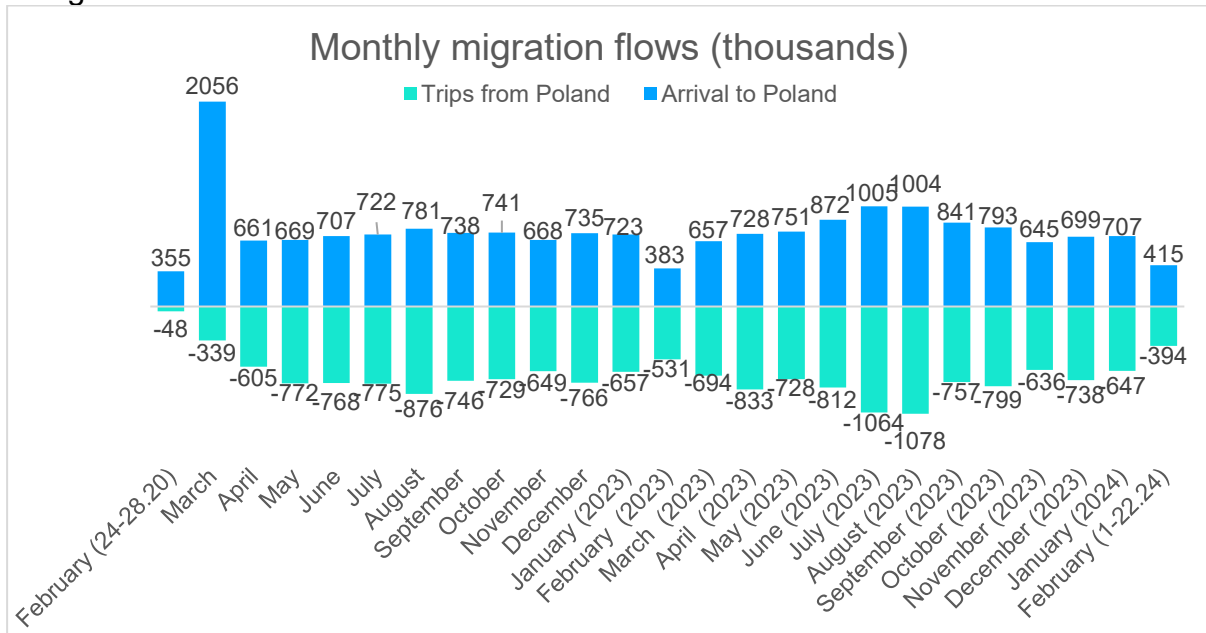
<sup>8</sup> Ustawa z 26 kwietnia 2007 r. o zarządzaniu kryzysowym. Tekst jedn. Dz. U. 2023, poz. 122.

<sup>9</sup> Dyrektywa Rady 2001/55/WE z dnia 20 lipca 2001 r. w sprawie minimalnych standardów przyznawania tymczasowej ochrony na wypadek masowego napływu wysiedleńców oraz środków wspierających równowagę wysiłków między Państwami Członkowskimi związanych z przyjęciem takich osób wraz z jego następstwami, Dziennik Urzędowy L 212, 07/082001 P.0012-0023.

<sup>10</sup> Act of March 12, 2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with an armed conflict on the territory of this country, Journal of Laws Laws of 2022, item 583 as amended Based on the above Act, a citizen of Ukraine may stay in Poland legally for a period of 18 months from February 24, 2022, they may obtain a PESEL UKR number. The Act also sets out rules regarding, among others, performing legal work, admitting children from Ukraine to Polish educational institutions, using medical assistance, and the organization and scope of support provided to refugees by state administration bodies.

<sup>11</sup> The data concerns cases of crossing the state border. It should be assumed that the same people may have crossed the border several or a dozen times.

Data on migration flows from Ukraine to Poland and from Poland to Ukraine are shown in Figure 1.



Source: own study based on data from the Border Guard (Twitter (X) Border Guard, n.d. a), after: Firlit-Fesnak, G.; Jaroszewska, E.; Łotocki, Ł.; Łukaszewska-Bezulska, J.; Ołdak, M.; Zawadzki, P.; Żołędowski, C., Żukowski, T. (ed.). (2022). Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Society and politics towards the crisis refugee situation in the first month of the war, Working Report – Working Paper of the Department of Social Policy University of Warsaw, p. 6.

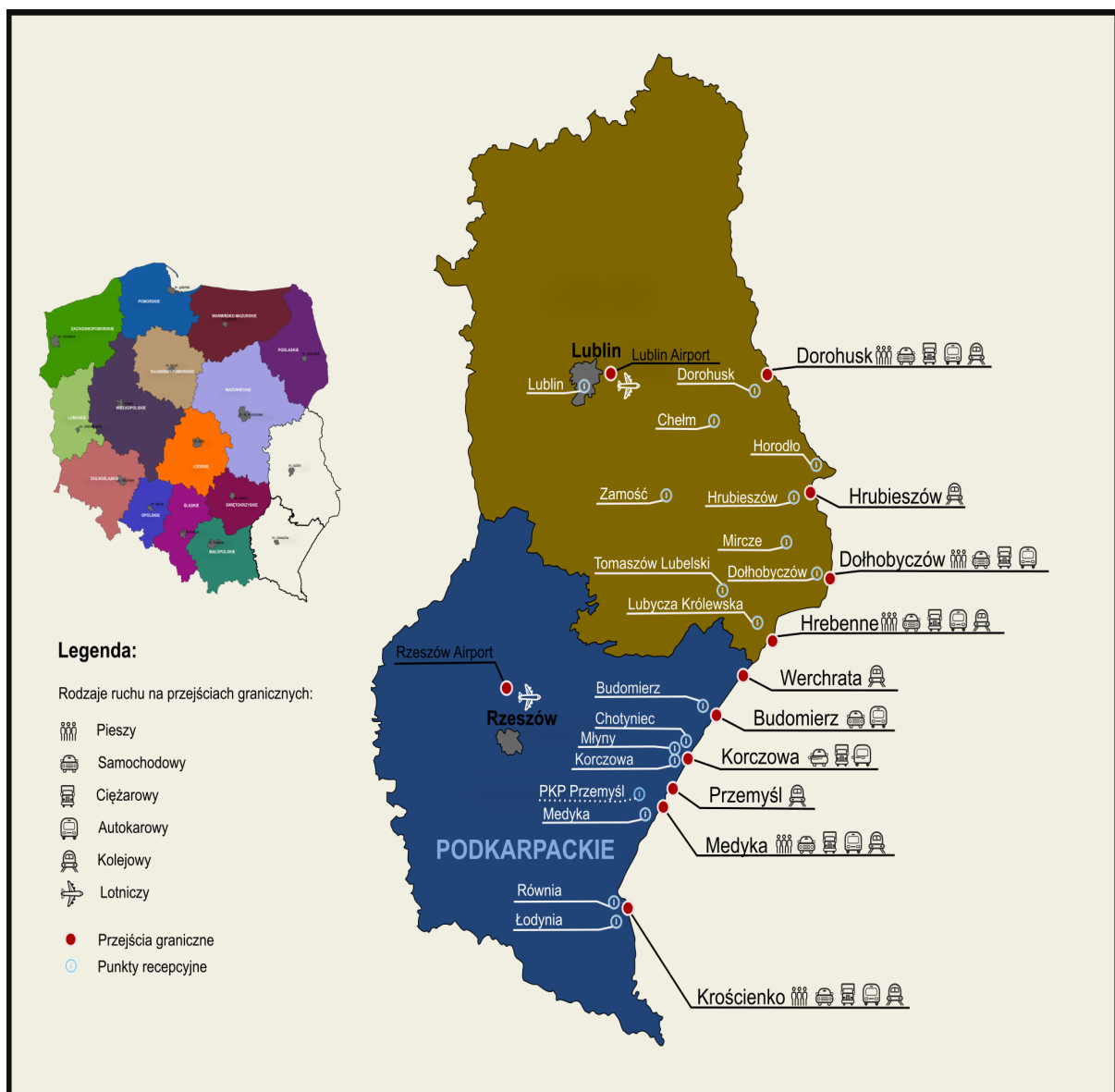
Refugees reached Poland by various means of transport (cars, buses, cruise and special trains), as well as on foot. During the first period of the war in Ukraine, the number of Ukrainian citizens entering Poland clearly prevailed, while since mid-April in the Subcarpathian and Lublin Voivodeships there has been a reversal of the migration trend, i.e. more Ukrainian citizens returned to their country than left it, and also crossed the border multiple times. Among refugees from Ukraine arriving in Poland after February 24, 2022, women accounted for 67 % of the total number of refugees. In terms of age criterion, women aged 18-65 dominated, accounting for 46.8 % of refugees. On the other hand, minors account for 40.8 % with a similar distribution for men and women. The least numerous group is men over 65.

The external border of the European Union with Ukraine on Polish territory is 535 km long, which is 46% of the external border of the European Union on Polish territory. The Subcarpathian Voivodeship is the external border of the European Union with Ukraine at a length of 238 km, while in the Lublin Voivodeship the border with Ukraine is 297 km long. The refugees used border crossings located in Subcarpathian and Lublin Voivodeships. Within the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, there are 4 road border crossings: Budomierz-Hruszow, Korczowa-Krakowiec, Kroscienko-Smolnica, and Medyka-Szeginie. In addition, there is the railroad border crossing Przemyśl-Mosciska at the railroad station in Przemyśl. There are 4 road border crossings with Ukraine in the Lublin Voivodeship, i.e. Dolhobyczow-Uhrynów, Dorohusk-Jagodzin, Hrebenne-Rawa Ruska, and Zosin-Ustilug, and 2 railroad crossings Hrubieszow-Włodzimierz Wolynski and Dorohusk-Jagodzin.

After crossing the border, refugees from Ukraine were guaranteed free transportation from border crossings to reception points and to their final destinations in Poland or other countries. Reception points (respite and reception points), were organized near border crossings, and in these places refugees were provided with medical assistance, meals, clothing and hygiene items, as well as necessary information on staying in Poland, including temporary housing.

The reception points were set up by the Subcarpathian and Lublin governors on February 24, 2022. Eleven reception points were organized in Subcarpathia, and another 11 points were launched in Lublin Voivodeship. As the migration wave stabilized in subsequent months, some reception points were closed. In addition, information points were set up in many cities.

The border crossings on the border with Ukraine and the reception points established on February 24, 2022 are shown in Graphic 1.



Source: own study based on: Straż Graniczna, Map of Border Guard crossings and facilities, <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/mapa-przejsc-i-objektow/1,dok.html> (22.03.2024).

Government and local government bodies, uniformed services, NGOs and volunteers were among those involved in direct assistance to refugees after crossing the border. They provided assistance in terms of transportation to reception points and then final destinations, providing security, medical and social assistance, operating reception and information points, and distributing humanitarian aid. A significant influx of refugees in the first weeks of the war in Ukraine, and also the adopted model of assistance provided to them in Poland resulted creating reception and assistance points, as well as hubs and communication routes, where naturally, along with a significant number of refugees, volunteers, representatives of state administration, officers of uniformed formations and special services, soldiers, representatives of non-governmental organizations and those providing ad hoc support and help residents of various parts of Poland, as well as other countries. Situation this, combined with uncertainty as to the possible development of disinformation and even sabotage and terrorist activities on the part of the Russian Federation, meant that public order services in Poland had to be prepared for the unknown threats to human safety and possible attempts to disrupt order so far public.

### **The actions of the Polish Police in the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022**

According to the administrative division of the country, the Police are organized hierarchically. The Police are headed by the Chief of Police, who is the superior of all police officers in the country. The Chief of Police is superior to the 17 provincial police chiefs and the district (city) police chiefs, who in turn are subordinate to them, as well as the chiefs of police stations. In addition, within the structure of the Police Department in the maintenance of public security and order, there is the Central Bureau of Police Investigation, the Central Bureau for Combating Cybercrime, the Bureau of Internal Affairs of the Police, the Central Forensic Laboratory of the Police, and the Central Counterterrorist Subdivision of the Police.

Threats to security and public order that were recognized in Poland after February 24, 2022 were concentrated in the first phase of the war in Ukraine, on the territory of the voivodeships directly bordering Ukraine - Subcarpathian Voivodeship and Lublin Voivodeship, and the tasks of ensuring security and public order rested primarily on the police officers serving in the police units subordinate to the Regional Police Headquarters in Rzeszow and the Regional Police Headquarters in Lublin.

Directing the activities of the Polish Police - especially the Police of the Subcarpathian and Lublin garrisons, consisted of:

- carrying out existing tasks to maintain public security and order (the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, support for the Border Guard and Police on the border with Belarus),
- meeting the new challenges resulting from the war in Ukraine, including assisting refugees, ensuring their personal safety while traveling and in their places of residence,
- ongoing assessment of the level of the influx of refugees from the territory of Ukraine and evaluation of its impact on internal security in Poland,
- recognizing and neutralizing threats related to the security of the Polish state and VIPs from all over the world who traveled from the airport in Jasionka to Przemysl



and further by train to Ukraine (threats of espionage, sabotage actions against critical infrastructure facilities, military facilities of NATO countries, terrorist events<sup>12</sup>).

The police management model adopted by the police leadership included: ensuring round-the-clock continuity of command at the level of the leadership and individual police units participating in the police operation; organizing the command post and communication systems in a way that allows the performance of tasks under threat conditions and ensures full cooperation with the relevant services and public administration bodies; introducing daily service briefings in a videoconference system for the heads of police units and organizational police units; implementation of a 24-hour system of reporting and flow of information on threats between the Staff of the Operations Commander and the staffs of sub-operations commanders; development and evaluation of a plan to ensure an adequate level of security in the country in connection with the possibility of mass migration in the event of armed conflict; collection of data on police forces and resources and directing them to assist other police units in securing border crossings with Ukraine, reception points, critical infrastructure, access and evacuation routes, and places where NATO troops are stationed.

The analysis of threats related to the situation after February 24, 2022 included: uncontrolled forcible movement of people attempting to cross the border of Ukraine with Poland, including outside the designated border crossings; the possibility of illegal border crossing by armed, unidentified armed formations, diversionary groups, terrorist groups or individuals; the activation of domestic and international organized crime; increase in cross-border crime, especially related to illegal smuggling of people and human trafficking, smuggling of firearms, explosives, narcotics; thefts, robberies, sexual crimes; crimes motivated by prejudice against Ukrainian citizens, third-country nationals fleeing Ukraine, as well as against Russian citizens residing in Poland (hate speech); the risk of carrying out a terrorist attack in Poland to cause destabilization in the country, which might consist, among other things, in setting explosives in places of large concentrations of people or in objects important to the security or defense of the country, as well as critical infrastructure; disruptions related to the proper functioning of the state, including disorganization of the normal operation of government and local government bodies, hospitals, courts, security and public order services, for example by disinformation campaigns, simultaneous transmission of e-mail information about the planting of explosive devices in these institutions using a transmission network that ensures full anonymity of the sender; obstruction of traffic in the area of border crossings and on the roads used by refugees.

Based on the risk analysis, in all of the aforementioned threat areas, police officers together with other services carried out tasks of the following nature: preventive; patrol-intervention; traffic safety; counter-terrorist security; reconnaissance and operational security; pyrotechnic security; they verified the identity of people offering "to help transport" refugees from reception points, and applied a pre-emptive response that made it possible to prevent the commission of crimes related to human

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<sup>12</sup> An important aid point was the creation of a military aid hub at the Rzeszow Jasionka airport and securing the hub and military aid transports from the Jasionka airport to the border with Ukraine in Korczowa).

trafficking; conducted monitoring of the World Wide Web on an ongoing basis, collected, analyzed and processed information from open and classified sources related to the mass influx of foreigners into Poland and emerging threats; secured humanitarian and military convoys and the transit of VIPs, representatives of various countries and international organizations.

A serious security problem in the first days of the refugee crisis were incidents and crimes of hate speech against refugees, related to the dissemination of fake news on social media about the threat of abduction and rape against women from Ukraine, as well as about risky behavior and crimes committed against Polish citizens by refugees who are citizens of countries other than Ukraine, or fraud committed against refugees, such as when renting apartments or dealing with official formalities. The uncontrolled, forceful flow of people trying to cross the border of the Republic of Poland, including those outside designated border crossings, was also considered a threat, possibility of illegally crossing the border by armed, unidentified armed formations, sabotage groups or terrorist or individual persons; activation of criminal circles, foreign and domestic, and the resulting increase in cross-border crime, in particular related to smuggling of firearms, explosives and substances generating chemical, biological and radiation threats, thefts, robberies, sexual crimes, as well as illegal people smuggling and trafficking people; the risk of carrying out a terrorist attack in the territory of the Republic of Poland in order to cause destabilization in the country, which may include, among others: on the surface of the materials explosives in places where large crowds are formed or in facilities important for the country's security or defense, as well as infrastructure critical; incidents related to the proper functioning of the state, including disorganization of the normal operation of government administration bodies and local government, hospitals, courts, security and public order services e.g. by simultaneously sending e-mail information about the placement of charges explosives in these institutions.

A particular threat emerged with the rise of social media hate campaigns against refugee "students" from South African countries, who supposedly left Ukraine and engaged in risky behavior against residents of the Subcarpathian region, which caused a backlash in football pseudo-fan circles and the arrival of groups of pseudo-fans of football clubs from all over Poland in the Przemysl and Yaroslavl districts, who organized "civic patrols" to "protect" the citizens from refugees. Information with such content appeared en masse on the Internet, causing additional social unrest and tension. To ensure public order, the police directed additional forces tasked with preventing violence against South African refugees from Ukraine.

In accordance with the previously formulated concept, a police operation code-named "GRANICA" was carried out in the Podkarpackie Garrison of the Police Department. The Provincial Police Commander issued an appropriate administrative decision and an action plan was developed in which the tasks in individual poviats of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship were divided into police sub-operations: „Lubaczów”, „Jarosław”, „Przemysł”, „Ustrzyki Dolne”, „Rzeszów:”, „Przejazd” (pilotage) - this division resulted from the location of border crossings in Podkarpacie and defined threats. In a later phase, the scope of activities of the commander of the police operation was extended to include an additional subunit "Kontra" (contra), including counter-terrorist activities. The division of the police operation also took into account the creation by the Podkarpackie Voivode of reception points in the immediate vicinity

of border crossings, as well as the so-called buffer points. hubs for, among others, children from Ukrainian orphanages and military aid.

Preventive tasks of the Police included securing the routes of movement of groups of foreigners from border crossings, as well as conducting constant surveillance of a designated area to prevent behavior violating the legal order. Special preventive, operational and counter-terrorist supervision covered reception points for refugees in the counties bordering with Ukraine, in Przemyśl, Jarosław, Lubaczów and Bieszczady. Police officers provided assistance to refugees from Ukraine: they moved luggage, helped to organize transport, and provided other necessary information. Police officers from the crime prevention department also conducted local preventive activities under the slogan "Open and Responsible", addressed to people who came from Ukraine - children, youth and adults, as well as the communities in which these people operated. As part of the activities, officers familiarized refugees with Polish regulations, informed them about their rights and obligations, forms of obtaining assistance, and drew attention to the threats related to human trafficking crimes.

Traffic police officers were responsible for improving traffic in the area of reception points and access to border crossings. They ensured that vehicles carrying humanitarian aid reached the border as quickly and efficiently as possible, and that those picking up refugees and transporting them to new places of accommodation could safely reach border crossings and reception points. Additional tasks included escorts, convoys and VIP and military aid pilots.

Criminal Police officers served of border crossings, reception points and secured critical infrastructure facilities. Their duties included verification and control of persons collecting refugees from reception points, as well as proactive response aimed at preventing human trafficking, committing other crimes and preventing situations carrying other types of threats. Moreover, they carried out classified tasks in cooperation with the secret services. An important element of threat recognition was supervision of social media, where they reacted to hate speech, announcements of protests or incitement to racial hatred. They cooperated on an ongoing basis with the police forces of European Union countries, Europol and Interpol. They cooperated with the military special services and international organizations in securing the transport of military aid donations to Ukraine. Police officers participated in identifying threats of sabotage or espionage. The result of this action was the disclosure, together with the Internal Security Agency, of hidden cameras on important routes and railway junctions, which recorded traffic on the tracks and transmitted the images to the network. This mainly concerned sections of railway routes in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Among other things, near the airport in Jasionka near Rzeszów. In this case, officers of the Internal Security Agency detained six people (foreigners from beyond Poland's eastern border) who were supposed to be working on behalf of the Russian secret services.<sup>13</sup>

The officers of the counterterrorist subunits were prepared to conduct combat, mine and pyrotechnic activities, neutralize biological or chemical weapons and detain people considered particularly dangerous. The officers secured places particularly

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<sup>13</sup> ZIĘTAL, Norbert. RMF: Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego rozbiła groźną, rosyjską siatkę szpiegowską, działającą na Podkarpaciu, Nowiny24, <https://nowiny24.pl/rmf-agencja-bezpieczenstwa-wewnetrznego-rozbila-grozna-rosyjska-siatke-szpiegowska-dzialajaca-na-podkarpaciu/ar/c1-17374017> (24. 06. 2024).

exposed to acts of sabotage or terrorist attacks, they secured „sensitive places” at the Rzeszów-Jasionka airport, the border crossing in Medyka, and the railway station in Przemyśl. They secured VIP convoys and transports of military donations to Ukraine and other classified activities.

The involvement of the Police in ensuring security and public order during the first months of the war in Ukraine and the refugee crisis required the deployment of police officers from units of the Regional Police Headquarters in Rzeszow, the Regional Police Headquarters in Lublin and support forces from across the country. Until August 2022 more than 100,000 police officers were directed for these activities, with an average of about 900 police officers, and about 600 from May to August 2022, carrying out their tasks in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship each day. By September 30, 2023, 2,260 police officers secured 567 VIP rides, 2,300 police officers protected 1,020 humanitarian convoys (4,081 vehicles requiring special protection) and 1,898 special railroad transports. On March 25, 2023, in connection with the visit of the presidents of Poland and the USA, the Subcarpathian Police secured the area of the Rzeszow-Jasionka Airport, as well as the access roads to the airport. The involvement of the services ensured that the visit went peacefully and safely. Nearly 650 officers were directed to activities related to securing the aforementioned visit.

Despite the growing refugee crisis in Poland and Western Europe, which was the result of the war in Ukraine after February 24, 2024, and the occurrence of new, previously unknown threats on this scale (threat of sabotage, terrorism, espionage), the police carried out their basic duties of ensuring security and order public in Podkarpacie, i.e. patrol service, securing public meetings and sporting events, intervention service, arresting perpetrators of crimes, road traffic safety, as well as conducting preparatory proceedings in criminal cases.

According to observations of Police officers and data from the Border Guard, Ukrainian citizens who, after February 24, 2022, came to Poland through border crossings in Podkarpacie, stayed here for a longer period of time or, after obtaining basic humanitarian, social and legal assistance, traveled to other cities in Poland or other European Union countries. As the situation on the front in Ukraine stabilized, many citizens who lived in the Podkarpacie region traveled to Ukraine and back to Poland many times. The number of foreigners (including Ukrainian citizens) who repeatedly passed through Podkarpacie to Ukraine and back has also increased significantly.

The greater number of Ukrainian citizens who lived in the Podkarpacie region and took up work here, were covered by the social assistance system, or traveled through the Podkarpacie region many times was reflected in the police statistics of criminal offenses and road traffic. Statistics show that Ukrainian citizens committed crimes and were its victims.<sup>14</sup> This situation is particularly visible in the counties bordering with Ukraine, where in 2022 and 2023, a smaller number of all proceedings initiated and perpetrators and victims of crime were registered in the statistics. However, there was

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<sup>14</sup> The author obtained the police statistics data used in the article in response to requests for access to public information submitted to the Provincial Police Commander in Rzeszów in the manner and on the terms specified in the Act on Access to Public Information of September 6, 2001 (Journal of Laws of 2002)., item 902). No. No. WKS-IP-101/2023 and WKS-IP-117/2023.

an increase in the share of victims and perpetrators from Ukraine. In these counties, i.e. Przemyśl, Jarosław, Lubaczów and Bieszczady, the percentage of perpetrators - Ukrainian citizens in relation to all perpetrators - foreigners, was on average 89.4 %.

A similar situation occurs with victims of crime, the percentage of injured Ukrainian citizens in relation to all injured foreigners was on average 91.9%. In the period 2022/2023, there was a real increase in the participation of Ukrainian citizens in criminal acts. They act as both perpetrators of crimes and victims of crime. Therefore, it seems justified to conclude that the increase in the number of Ukrainian citizens who stayed in the province in transit or for a longer period of time. Podkarpackie, had a negative impact on the state of public safety and order, even though police statistics objectively showed a decrease in the number of crimes and, in this context, an improvement in public safety and order. The participation of foreigners in a crime, especially as a perpetrator, in a situation where there are no grounds to apply to the court to apply a preventive measure to them in the form of pre-trial detention, often translates into the length of proceedings and the need to search for them in order to determine their place of stay until legal actions or searches by the Police with arrest warrants. Similar problems arise at the stage of enforcement proceedings, when the court orders a convicted foreigner to be brought to prison in order to execute the imposed prison sentence or enforce financial claims.

## **Summary**

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022 caused a rapid influx of refugees into Poland and the European Union area. The problems associated with organizing the reception of refugees and ensuring their safety most affected the provinces bordering Ukraine, i.e. Subcarpathian and Lublin Voivodships. More than 7.3 million refugees from Ukraine crossed the Polish border at that time. The dynamics and scale of the refugee movement was the largest in the history of post-war Europe while the related problems and threats became the biggest challenge regionally, as well as nationally and globally.

One of the most important problems of the conceptual and planning activities was the calculation of the necessary police forces to properly secure reception points, places of danger and traffic routes. Supporting police forces from other police units around the country required providing them with proper social and accommodation facilities. Due to the lack of accommodations - high occupancy rates in hotels by other services and civilians, caused the logistics service to quarter police officers in dozens of places throughout the Subcarpathian Voivodship. Such a large police force in the border crossing areas also required an adequate amount of transportation to move to the area of operations while maintaining adequate intervention forces. The constantly changing operational situation in the border region required adequate management of forces and resources to ensure an appropriate response to the potential threat. One of the most important issues in managing a crisis and such a large number of police officers at one time and in one place, was the need to ensure the proper circulation of information and its reliable transmission, hence a dedicated reporting system and clearly defined rules for the circulation of information were created for the tasks to be carried out.

The challenges in the field of public safety and order that were faced by public administration, the Police and other services in Poland after February 24, 2022, require continuous improvement of organizational structures and the management system.

The war in Ukraine and the resulting refugee crisis, as well as hybrid activities involving repeated, planned disinformation campaigns aimed at causing destabilization and chaos in societies and the international environment, currently constitute a serious security threat - locally, regionally and globally. In the criminological literature, numerous scientific studies have been devoted to this phenomenon, describing the criminogenic impact of war on crime.<sup>15</sup> War and the negative phenomena accompanying it trigger exceptional social disorganization, deep anomie, and an increase in deviant behavior and crime. The effects of this war will remain a serious challenge for the security and public order system in the coming years.

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