

THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL FIREFIGHTING AND RESCUE SYSTEM IN THE PROCESS OF COMBATING THE MIGRANT CRISIS IN POLAND IN THE FACE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR IN 2022

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Abstract

On February 24, 2022, the world faced a very different reality. The armed aggression of the Russian Federation affected not only the Ukrainian state, but also had a huge impact on the politics of numerous countries, especially those bordering with Ukraine, including Poland. The scale of destruction and the form of aggression expressed by Russia astounded not only the Ukrainian part, but also other countries of the world. The consequences of the war have proven to be horrific. The time since the armed assault has become Poland's largest refugee crisis after the Second World War and also the largest one in Europe. The aforementioned refugee crisis also bears the hallmarks of a migration crisis (and so it was assumed in the considerations) due to the record number of refugees who arrived in Poland in the first days of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The challenge Poland faced was not only the scale of the influx of people, but also the short time in which the influx has occurred. The new situation required Poland to prepare a coherent action plan between public authorities, local governments, NGOs and citizens.

The aim of this paper is to present the most important activities undertaken by the National Firefighting and Rescue System (NFRS) to help war refugees from Ukraine in 2022. The scale of actions taken in the wake of the situation at that time was described on the example of the activity of the State Fire Service (SFS) and Volunteer Fire Brigades (VFB) participating in activities aimed at minimising the refugee crisis. In addition, thanks to the diagnostic survey carried out among the local community (residents of border towns), it was possible to diagnose the level of sense of security of those who, while providing help, experienced the effects of the military crisis in Ukraine.

Despite the fact that the presented conflict does not meet the formal prerequisites for armed conflict, as according to Article 1 of the Third Hague Convention of 1907, the initiation of armed action must be supported by a prior formal act of war declaration, the paper assumes that this armed conflict will be called a war (Schindler, Toman, 1988).

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The conducted research focused on an analysis of reports and statements on the type, scope and size of tasks imposed on the National Firefighting and Rescue System units and the role of the fire service in the process of combating the migrant crisis. Analyses were performed of activities carried out by the National Firefighting and Rescue System units in the first seven months of the conflict, i.e. from February 24, 2022 to October 11, 2022. It should be added that the activities implemented by the guards have not been completed and on various levels are being continued until now.

The paper makes use of the available literature and legal acts, and a special analysis was carried out based on statistical data obtained from the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service of Poland and the Border Guard Headquarters. An assessment of the role played by the NFRS in the process of combating the migration crisis in Poland, in the view of Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022, also made use of data obtained from a diagnostic survey of the target research group of 181 people who are active witnesses of the actions taken, often shoulder to shoulder with SFS and VFB. The above methods allowed a detailed presentation of the range of activities of the selected National Firefighting and Rescue System units in combating the migration threat and showed the wide spectrum of their involvement, effectiveness, efficiency and rapidity. The results showed new research areas that would be worth paying more attention to in future research processes.

Keywords: security, threat, crisis, migration, refugee, migration crisis, National Firefighting and Rescue System, crisis management

1. Introduction

In 2022, as a result of Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine, the world faced a particularly difficult challenge – the migration crisis. Based on data from the European Parliament, it was estimated that during the first six months of the conflict, one-third of Ukrainians were forced to leave their country, 90% of whom were women and children (European Parliament, 2022). The dynamically changing situation prompted many countries, including Poland, to make an unprecedented commitment of considerable forces and resources in the fight against the crisis, and also necessitated for constant updating and verification of ongoing activities. The functioning of the state in constantly changing conditions, impossible to fully concretize, required the involvement of a significant number of entities responsible for preventing, counteracting or minimizing the effects of threat to state security. One of them were the National Firefighting and Rescue System units, which carried out their tasks through, among others, the State Fire Service (SFS), company fire brigades and volunteer fire brigades.

The presented paper analyses the functioning and activities of the selected NFRS units, in particular, fire brigades in the process of minimizing the effects of migration crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine after February 24, 2022. It became crucial to obtain answers to the following questions: what was the role of the fire brigades in combating the crisis, did its actions contribute to minimizing the effects of migration crisis, were the undertaken actions sufficient, did the fire brigades' involvement affect the implementation of its statutory activities?

Analysing the available literature, statistical data and Internet publications illustrated the wide range of activities undertaken by the fire brigades, often

deviating from their statutory tasks. The sheer numbers of forces put at their disposal, i.e. number of firefighters, volunteer fire brigades, fire school cadets involved testify to the enormous task faced by the NFRS unit. The fight against the migration threat was conducted in many areas, starting with the transport organization of war refugees to reception points, their allocation, support in the delivery of food, medical supplies, beds, mattresses, medical and psychological assistance, up to the collection of firefighting equipment, coordination and transport organization of the same equipment to Ukraine.

The catalogue of activities presented was not and is not a closed catalogue, especially as the armed conflict continues to the present and may at any time trigger the need for further actions. According to own research, the role of National Firefighting and Rescue System units (as part of this research, the role of fire brigades) in combating the migration threat was very important, and its actions were positively evaluated by the public for their wide range, promptness, responsiveness and effectiveness.

2. Methods

An analysis of subject literature, reports, statements and legislation was executed to achieve the research objective. Statistical data obtained from the websites of the National Border Guard Headquarters, the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were crucial for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The research used the case study method, based on the example of the operation of selected National Firefighting and Rescue System units (i.e. SFS and VFB). Theoretical research methods of analysis, synthesis, inference, abstraction and comparison were applied. Theoretical methods were supplemented by selected elements of statistical analysis, which is included in the group of empirical methods. Among others, statistical data were used to calculate percentages and to conduct comparisons.

Another research method used in this paper was a diagnostic survey of a group of 181 people¹, with the use of a specially prepared survey questionnaire. The survey allowed assessing the sense of security of the Polish society in the wake of the refugee crisis caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war. In addition, it also provided an opportunity to gauge the activities of selected NFRS units (i.e. SFS and VFB) in combating the migrant threat. It should be added that the study was conducted on the basis of data from February 24, 2022 to October 11, 2022, which naturally narrows the study area for this period.

¹ The number of respondents was determined by the specifics of situation that prevailed in the areas most affected by the migration crisis of war refugees from Ukraine. For various reasons, respondents did not want or did not have time to provide answers, which was respected by the person conducting the survey.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Multidimensional approach to security

Security is a basic need of humans, societies and nations. The English Dictionary defines security as a state of certainty, peace, safety, absence of danger, freedom from fear, and protection from danger (Trumble, 2002). In order to maintain the state security, it becomes necessary to stabilize its various components, such as social security, public security etc. Civil protection, understood as the protection of the people, the environment and property from all kinds of natural and man-made disasters, is also a key task (EUR-Lex).

An important aspect in ensuring state security is countering and responding to emerging threats. In the literature, a threat is defined as “a sudden or unforeseen event, caused by forces of nature or resulting from human activity, threatening the life of population, property or the environment, which, depending on its size and nature, directly causes a crisis or may lead to its occurrence” (Wiśniewski, 2018).

Ensuring a high level of internal security by countering threats, preventing the occurrence of crisis is a fundamental element of the state internal policy. Determination of the nature and distribution of threats affects the selection of preventive measures. Hence the multifaceted understanding of “threat” and the diverse typology taking into consideration subject, object, source, scope, time, frequency of occurrence and symptoms. A diagnosis of threats is crucial in minimizing the circumstances that lead to a crisis, which is defined as “a serious disruption of the community or society functioning, on any scale, caused by dangerous events, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and consequences” (UNDRR). According to A. Skarżyński, a crisis is “a set of circumstances in which there is a change and breakthrough in the existing state” (Gryz, Kitler, 2007). “A crisis consists of three elements: time pressure, possibility of a fundamental threat and surprise” (Gryz, Kitler, 2007). In order to refer to a crisis, there must be a threat that is sudden, real and unacceptable to the subject.

Inseparably related to the concept of “crisis” is the concept of “crisis situation,” which is defined as “a set of external and internal circumstances in which an entity finds itself, affecting its functioning in such a way that a replacement process begins and continues in it, resulting in an imbalance and loss of ability to control the course of events or an escalation of the threat and its interests” (Gryz, Kitler, 2007). “Emergency” means any natural or man-made disaster, accident, humanitarian catastrophe or political crisis, or any other serious situation occurring near, along or in the vicinity of external borders, which may have a significant impact on the control of external border (Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013).

In conclusion, it should be stated that a threat can lead to a crisis situation, which can then initiate a crisis at the climax.

3.2. Theoretical and practical aspects of the organization of state security in the National Firefighting and Rescue System

The regulation of issues concerning the unified conduct of state bodies in situations of particular crisis gave rise to the entry into force of the Act of August 22, 2007 on crisis management [9]. Article 2 of the cited law defines the concept of “crisis management,” recognizing that it is “the activity of public administration bodies that is an element of national security management, which consists in preventing crisis situations, preparing to take control over them through planned actions, responding in case of crisis situations, removing their effects and restoring resources and critical infrastructure” (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 2007 No. 89 item 590). The law defines the bodies competent to making decisions in the field of crisis management, determines their tasks and scope of action, as well as their financing. The solutions adopted in the above-mentioned law revolve around coordinating the activities of public bodies to counter crisis situations. The cited law refers exclusively to crisis management entities, which are public administration bodies at the central, provincial and local government levels. The executive actions mandated by the crisis management entities are very often carried out by executive entities, i.e. the National Firefighting and Rescue System units.

The functioning of the National Firefighting and Rescue System units is regulated by the Decree of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration on the detailed organization of the national rescue and firefighting system of September 17, 2021 (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 2021 item 1737). The National Firefighting and Rescue System is an integral part of the state internal security, covering the whole country, including all rescue entities. It is a set of projects including forecasting, prevention, recognition and fighting of fires, natural disasters, local threats, as well as the organization and management of rescue operations to save life, health, property and the environment (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 2021 item 1737).

The Act on Fire Protection imposes the tasks of the NFRS on the regional governor or district governor who coordinate its operation and control the performance of tasks, and in emergency situations of danger to health or life, control the system (Polish Journal of Laws from 1991 No. 81 item 351). According to the wording of Article 14 (4) of the Act on Fire Protection, the regional governor and district governor perform their tasks (from the NFRS area) with the help of crisis management teams (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 1991 No. 81 item 351). The basis of this system are the organizational units of the State Fire Service, supported by volunteer fire brigades, company fire brigades, municipal professional fire brigades, district (city) company fire brigades, field rescue services, the Union of Volunteer Fire brigades of the Republic of Poland.

The SFS, as one of the entities of the National Firefighting and Rescue System, is a professional, uniformed formation, outfitted with specialized equipment, designed to fight fires, natural disasters or other local threats, to conduct rescue

operations and to perform auxiliary specialized rescue activities during fires, natural disasters, supervision of compliance with fire regulations, cooperation with fire brigades, rescue services of other countries (Polish Official Journal/ Dz.U. from 1991 No. 88 item 400).

In the wake of ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine, the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service, acting concurrently as the Head of National Civil Defence, in the legal status in effect at the time, was obliged to undertake a number of activities in the field of civil protection and civil defence. All activities had to be carried out on the basis of acts of national and international law. According to the 2021 statute and regulations of the National Headquarters of the State Fire Service, all of its organizational units were required to carry out tasks within the jurisdiction of both the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service and the Head of National Civil Defence (Polish Official Journal/ KG PSP from 2021 No. 19).

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Poland and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in the Field of Prevention of Disasters, Natural Disasters and Other Extraordinary Events and Removal of Their Consequences, signed in Warsaw on July 19, 2002, should be cited here (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 2004 No. 166 item 1737). The agreement provides the legal basis for Polish-Ukrainian cooperation in the field of rescue and civil protection, defines the principles of mutual provision of rescue and humanitarian assistance. Article 3 (3) of the cited agreement states that the parties will inform each other of other competent authorities empowered to request assistance and to accept requests for assistance. The Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration of the Republic of Poland has indicated that for the duration of activities undertaken to assist war refugees from Ukraine, the competent decision-making and executive body will be, respectively: at the national level: Chief Commander of the State Fire Service, and at regional levels: provincial commanders and governors from Lublin and Rzeszow.

A further significant entity of the National Firefighting and Rescue System is constituted by the volunteer fire brigade, which are the most numerous non-governmental uniformed social organizations in Poland, furnished with specialized equipment, which are involved in rescue operations. Their main responsibilities include carrying out tasks under Article 3 of the Act on Volunteer Fire Brigades, such as *inter alia* fighting natural disasters, fires and other local hazards (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 2021 item 2490). Their activities are executed in cooperation with the State Fire Service and local government bodies.

Considering the content of the Act on Crisis Management and the Act on the Detailed Organization of the National Firefighting and Rescue System, it should be noted that “those entities only perform executive tasks for the competent crisis management entities (public administration bodies)” (Gromek, 2017). Crisis management and the National Firefighting and Rescue System are two co-functioning subsystems, and their common goal is to act for the security of the citizens and the state.

3.3. Organizational efficiency of the state in the context of migration threat

3.3.1. Migration crisis in Poland in the wake of Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022

Russia's unprecedented and unprovoked military attack on Ukraine, launched on February 24, 2022, has become a threat not only to the sovereignty of the Ukrainian state. It also threatened the security of the neighbouring countries, including Poland. The armed conflict forced European states to take up immediate action on a diplomatic level and to develop specific strategies for action at various levels.

In relation to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the European Union adopted 8 packages of sanctions (data as of October 18, 2022), which included, among others: individual sanctions on influential individuals in Russia, closure of EU airspace to Russian aircraft, a ban on transactions with the Russian Central Bank, exclusion of Russian banks from the SWIFT system, suspension of the Russian state media in the EU, a ban on exports of luxury goods to Russia was introduced, banned imports from Russia to the EU of iron, steel, oil, coal, cement, wood, seafood, alcohol, gold, closed EU ports to all Russian ships, banned Russian and Belarusian road carriers from entering the EU, banned exports of jet fuel to Russia. The catalogue of sanctions imposed is not closed and undergoes changes as the international situation develops.

Due to the global reach of economic interdependence, the effects of the ongoing war are being felt in many countries. The Russian invasion of Ukraine intensifies the economic crisis and has caused disruption in global markets. Since the beginning of this conflict, a sharp increase in commodity prices has been observed, especially energy, gas, fuel, metals, wheat fertilizer, which "fuels" the wave of inflation and intensifies the economic, energy and food crisis.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has also caused migration and humanitarian risks.

The term "migration" is derived from the Latin phrase *migratio* (displacement, which means a mass movement of people, associated with a relatively permanent change of residence, in order to seek better living conditions (PWN). Inevitably linked to the term migration are the terms immigration (from Latin move in) and emigration (from Latin move out).

The long-lasting and wide-ranging migration process has contributed to its multifaceted nature and its division according to various criteria (Fehler, Cebul, Podgórzńska, 2017):

- distance criterion: external (interstate) migration, internal (domestic) migration, border migration;
- criterion of their duration: long-term migration (at least 12 months), short-term migration (from 3 to 12 months), for permanent residence (change of residence and registration for permanent residence in the country of arrival), for temporary residence (migration lasting more than 3 months);
- criterion of cause: economic migration, often referred to as labour migration (population movements due to the desire to improve material well-

being), non-economic migration (political, family, religious, educational, ecological);

- criterion of compliance with the law: legal (in compliance with applicable laws), illegal (unlawful border crossing), irregular stay (applying for asylum, residence permit);
- criterion of freedom of decision-making: voluntary (seeking to improve living conditions and standards of living), coercive (arising from politically motivated persecution and life and health-threatening situations).

According to the Geneva Convention, a refugee is “a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, has been forced to leave country of origin and who, owing to such fear, is unable or unwilling to avail of the protection of his country” (UNHCR, 1951). Refugees flee persecution arising from, among others, wars, revolutions or ethnic cleansing.

The international situation related to Russia’s attack on Ukraine and the consequences of this attack keeps changing in a highly dynamic way. A large part of the war refugees who left Ukraine in the first days of war, overwhelmingly did so out of fear, fear of losing their lives, the unpredictability of the situation’s development, a sense of threat to health, life and livelihood.

The main direction of migration followed countries bordering with Ukraine, with the one with Poland accounting for the largest proportion. As of October 11, 2022, a total of 7,678,757 refugees from Ukraine were recorded throughout Europe, with 6,941,563 refugees from Ukraine cleared at Polish border crossings, according to the Border Guard (2022). According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of October 11, 2022, there were 4,350,995 refugees from Ukraine registered for temporary protection in Europe (2022). The registration level in some countries is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Registered refugees from Ukraine for temporary protection

Date	State	Persons from Ukraine registered for protection	Percentage of the total number registered for protection
October 11, 2022	Poland	1 436 558	33.01%
October 11, 2022	Czech Republic	442 259	10.16%
October 11, 2022	Bulgaria	138 406	3.18%
October 11, 2022	Slovakia	96 889	2.23%
October 11, 2022	Romania	72 285	1.66%
October 11, 2022	Hungary	30 000	0.70%
October 11, 2022	Other European countries	2 134 598	49.06%

Source: own study based on (UNHCR, 2022)

The statistics presented, and above all the 33% proportion of migrants to Poland as compared to other countries, illustrate the magnitude of the migration challenge Poland has faced.

The first refugees began to leave the Ukrainian territory a few hours after the outbreak of the war. During the study period from February 24, 2022 to October 11, 2022, traffic at Polish border crossings with Ukraine increased significantly and reached its peak. On March 6, 2022, 142,298 people per day were recorded, with about 23,917 people crossing the Polish border per day in 2021 (Border Guard, 2022). The Border Guard reacted quickly to the increased traffic at border crossings and strengthened staffing at most eastern border crossings, by rail, foot and road (Border Guard, 2022a). A total of 5,750,610 war refugees crossed the Polish border during the six months of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Due to the significant influx of migrants over a very short period of time, problems of allocation arose as early as the first week of March 2022. The volume of population movement was on a scale not seen in Poland since the Second World War, hence the first problems with reception points, transport, food and logistics.

The crisis situations most often occurred at railroad stations, where the number of people was so large that their stay constituted a kind of “siege” and the inability to “normally” operate the facilities. The inefficiency of the information system, the lack of control and registry of those offering a place to live for refugees and the lack of coordination of relief efforts became exacerbated. A deficit of psychological assistance, a deficit or surplus of “essential” products and items provided for refugees by various donors could be observed.

Given that Poland was already facing a migration crisis in the first weeks of the war, state bodies were obliged to take immediate, coordinated and legally normalized measures to respond and combat the newly created threat.

As early as March 12, 2022, the Parliament of the Republic of Poland adopted the Act on Assistance to Citizens of Ukraine in Connection with the Armed Conflict on the Territory of that State, and on the same day the law came into force. Under this law, Ukrainian citizens were given the right to: legalization of their stay by being assigned a Personal Identification Number (PESEL) and automatic permission for temporary residence in Poland for up to 18 months; the right to take up employment without a permit; family benefits, a one-time cash benefit of PLN 300, the right to use care and educational facilities, entitlement to medical care, psychological assistance, shelter and food, cleaning and personal hygiene products, medicines, free public transport (Polish Journal of Laws/Dz.U. from 2022 item 583).

Government and local government organizations have been involved in the fight against the migration crisis, but the huge role of citizens cannot be overlooked. The spontaneity, openness and friendliness of the Polish society gave rise to a global brand of our self-organization in the wake of such a crisis. Thousands of Polish people took up immediate supportive action. According to estimations, 67% of the population in major cities got involved in helping Ukrainian citizens, and the total amount of support provided to Ukrainian citizens is more than PLN 10 billion.

According to the respondents, in their local communities, activities related to helping Ukrainian citizens were mainly carried out by the fire brigades, local authorities and the local community. The above is shown in Figure 1.

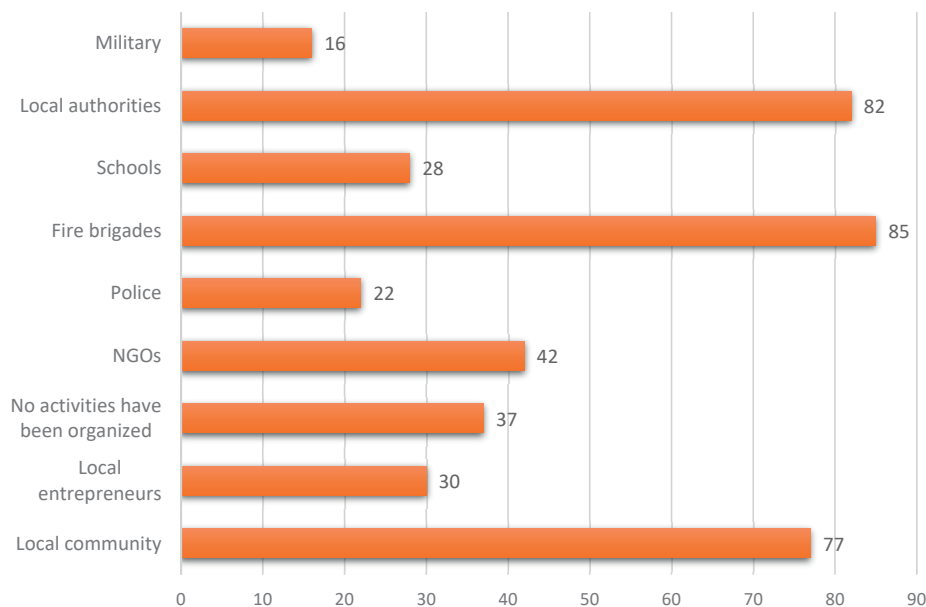


Figure 1. Entities providing assistance to Ukrainian citizens

The first day on which more Ukrainian citizens returned to their country than left it was April 15, 2022: a total of 22,474 people left Ukraine, and 23,163 Ukrainian citizens returned to Ukraine (Border Guard, 2022). On an average per day, 30,181 people crossed the Ukrainian-Polish border, and 22,472 crossed the Polish-Ukrainian border (Border Guard, 2022). As of October 11, 2022, the difference in the number of refugees from Ukraine who came and left Poland was 1,780,811 people. The above means that as of October 11, 2022, 4.46% of people living in Poland are refugees from Ukraine.

A quantitative analysis of the number of Ukrainian migrants arriving in Poland has become the subject of research by many institutions. In Poland, the statistical data of the Border Guard constituted the basic database necessary for taking actions within the crisis management system. They were and are of great importance in preventing crisis situations, preparing to take control of them through planned actions, responding and eliminating their consequences. The database always has an impact on economic processes, methods of organizing work, education, health services, and it is an important source of information for citizens, changing their habits and customs.

3.3.2. The Crisis Response System of the Republic of Poland in the process of combating the migration crisis on the example of actions of selected National Firefighting and Rescue System units

From the first hours of conflict beyond Poland's eastern border, the National Firefighting and Rescue System units have taken action to assist other services and institutions in combating the refugee crisis. Firefighters of the SFS and volunteer fire brigades were involved in providing assistance to refugees from Ukraine, through participation in humanitarian activities intended to protect the health and lives of refugees. The range of activities undertaken was very extensive and often differed from the standard statutory tasks. The broad spectrum of activities of the NFRS units is shown in Figure 2.

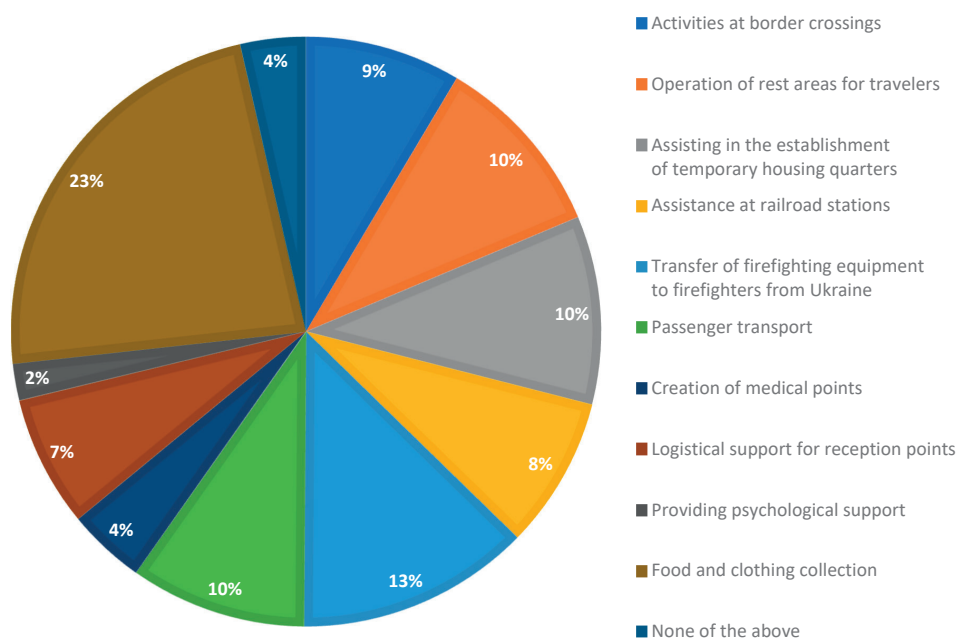


Figure 2. Activities of National Firefighting and Rescue System units implemented during the 2022 migration crisis

Already in the first weeks of war, the migrant threat forced the introduction of new regulations and decision-making with immediate enforceability. Due to the need of deploying a significant number of people to coordinate the influx of migrants from Ukraine, Article 65 of the Act of March 12, 2022 regulated the service time of officers of the Police, Border Guard, State Fire Service, Customs and Excise Service, State Protection Service and Internal Security Agency. The working time of officers from the above-mentioned services, performing their duty in the implementation of tasks directly related to the assistance to war refugees from Ukraine, could exceed 40 hours per week, with the right to uninterrupted rest.

It was recommended that all commands confirm the availability of personnel and people on duty. The Fire Service medical team remained on standby, as well as fire school cadets, where all passes were withheld. Preparations were being made for a migratory wave of considerable intensity.

The scale of threat is measured by the magnitude of resources used to control it. In the first month of Russian-Ukrainian conflict alone, enormous forces and resources were deployed on the part of the SFS in assisting Ukraine and carrying out humanitarian tasks: 37,891 firefighters, SFS employees and volunteer fire brigades, and 17,483 vehicles (Leja, 2022).

According to a spokesman for the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service, “activities up to mid-March were indeed numerous. There were as many as 500 to 600 people directly involved in operations at the border, and at the height of the day more than 1,200 firefighters were involved in operations” (INFOBUS, 2022). The magnitude of involvement of the forces and resources of the SFS and volunteer fire brigades is illustrated by the number of daily incidents to which subordinate units were dispatched – in the situation of migration crisis, fire protection units handled about 3,000 interventions per day, while the average number of incidents handled per day before the outbreak of Russian-Ukrainian war was about 1,200 actions (Sołowin, 2022).

The provided support included assistance in setting up and operating reception points, support and coordination of volunteers, especially at 12 train and bus stations. In addition, officers took part in transporting food, clothing and other medical goods to reception points and designated refugee accommodation points. Particular support was given to the elderly, the disabled and women with children. The assistance provided often involved ordinary things, such as carrying heavy luggage or caring for children. However, in a situation of deadly horror, stress and fatigue of people forced to flee hostilities, “ordinary” help brought a great relief and support.

Invaluable round-the-clock support was also provided by cadets and students from all SFS schools in the execution of SFS operations. They were assigned not only to tasks carried out in the Podkarpackie and Lublin provinces, but also to other provinces, where they supported activities performed, among others, at railroad and bus stations in the coordination of relief operations, especially after each arrival of a train with Ukrainian citizens, so that everyone in need received the necessary help and information. As of March 15, 2022, firefighters/cadets performed their activities at 26 railway stations, in all provinces, and were dispatched as follows:

- railway stations in Warsaw (Central, Eastern, Western): 48 cadets from the Main School of Fire Service (MSFS) in Warsaw, as well as 6 paramedics and the Command Component;
- railway station in Katowice: 15 cadets from the Central School of the State Fire Service (CS SFS) in Częstochowa;
- Cracow to the Main Railway Station: 20 cadets from the Aspirant School of the State Fire Service (AS SFS) in Cracow;

- Poznań to the Main Railway Station: 6 cadets from the Aspirant School of the State Fire Service (AS SFS) in Poznań [28].

The SFS school subdivisions, apart from operations performed at railway stations, have shown their great commitment to helping refugees in key provinces. 50 cadets of non-commissioned SFS in Bydgoszcz in Bydgoszcz, 40 cadets of AS SFS in Cracow, were deployed to provide help, while 40 cadets from CS SFS in Częstochowa and 40 cadets from AS SFS in Poznań were dispatched to the Lublin Province (Press Department KG PSP, 2022). They were involved in setting up of accommodations at reception points, assisted in the transport of people to these reception points, issued food products, and provided informational and psychological support.

On February 26, 2022, the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service, Brigadier General Andrzej Bartkowiak, appealed to firefighters of the State Fire Service and volunteer fire brigades for a nationwide collection of firefighting equipment for firefighters from Ukraine. The officers were fully committed to the operation and collected a significant amount of equipment and uniforms. A total of 206 fire vehicles, 2767 pallets of firefighting equipment were donated to Ukrainian firefighters, including: 26,000 sets of special clothing, 34,000 helmets, 30,000 fire hoses, 15,000 firefighting boots, 862 radios, 989 hydrogel bandages, 226 heat-resistant clothing, 3,333 pieces of altitude equipment (Press Department KG PSP, 2022a). The Chief Commander of the State Fire Service proudly emphasized that “Ukrainian firefighters asked us for 5 thousand helmets, and they got 31 thousand, and out of 60 thousand Ukrainian firefighters, half of them are fighting in helmets donated by Polish firefighters” (wGospodarce, 2022).

The donation of rescue and firefighting equipment by Polish firefighters has given rise to the need of regulating this issue. The Act of March 12, 2022 contained Article 66, which allowed “the heads of organizational units of the Police, Border Guard, State Fire Service and National Fiscal Administration, as well as organizations operating in these services, to transfer technically efficient equipment, vehicles and devices free of charge to organizational units of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine.”

On March 2, 2022, the State Fire Service made an international appeal to support firefighters from Ukraine and to provide them with rescue and firefighting equipment. Polish firefighters undertook to coordinate the collection and to organize transport. Two logistics points have been designated for the storage and distribution of donated equipment – one in the Lublin Province at City Headquarters of SFS Zamość, and the other in the Podkarpackie Province in Rzeszow (Rescue and Firefighting unit No. 3). According to data made available by the National Headquarters of SFS, as of June 10, 2022, a total of 45 international transports have been accepted, delivered by 96 trucks with semi-trailers [31]. Donations were transferred from, among others: Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Spain, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, Sweden, Canada and the United States. As part of international

support, 188 vehicles and 2,133 pallets of equipment were handed over to Ukraine (Press Department KG PSP, 2022a).

At warehouse facilities headquarters were set up to supervise the receipt and shipment of equipment to the fire protection units of Ukraine. In the distribution of equipment, the State Fire Service headquarters constantly cooperated with Ukrainian liaison officers (“Support for Ukrainian firefighters” of the National Headquarters of SFS). In addition, an international base of fire vehicles selected for transfer was established at the Provincial Headquarters of SFS Training Centre in Nisk (Subcarpathian Province). At the peak moment of collection, there were 126 fire vehicles on the base awaiting transfer. Due to the significant amount of equipment collected, transport was carried out by railway rolling stock, which was financed by the Government Strategic Reserve Agency (KW PSP Lublin, 2022).

A total of 8,981 firefighters of the State Fire Service and volunteer fire brigades and 4,098 vehicles participated in the collection of firefighting equipment to be provided to Ukrainian firefighters (as of March 28, 2022) (Leja, 2022).

Another key task, requiring the expenditure of considerable State Fire Service and volunteer fire brigade forces, was to organize the transport of Ukrainian migrants from border crossings to reception points, where Ukrainian citizens obtained shelter, a warm meal and medical assistance. Where necessary, firefighters undertook transport of refugees from reception points to places of residence in the country. The operation was handled by several hundred firefighters, in constant cooperation with the Border Guard. Buses as well as SFS and volunteer fire brigade buses from all over the country were dispatched to transport refugees. In the Lublin Province alone, 11 SFS buses, more than 60 SFS buses, 18 Police buses, 7 buses of state-owned companies were dispatched. In addition, box cars, operational, reconnaissance and rescue vehicles, fuel containers, sanitary and quartermaster containers were involved (KW PSP Lublin, 2022). Silesian firefighters, on a daily basis, were able to organize about 220 bus and minibus trips, which allowed the daily transport of about 1,300 refugees from Ukraine (Radio90, 2022). The State Fire Service, with its forces and resources since February 25, has transported more than 230,000 people (KW PSP Lublin, 2022).

Due to the ever-increasing demand for transporting people crossing the border, the Chief Commandant of the State Fire Service requested support from private carriers and civilian companies. Transport of people from the reception points using more than 110 buses of private transport companies was coordinated and financed by the SFS. Each day, more than 60 buses transferred refugees to reception points, resorts, hotels all over the country and to railroad stations in Warsaw, Wrocław, Cracow, Poznań, among others. In addition, in the Podkarpackie and Lublin provinces, the SFS set up buffer parking lots for the buses, where three officers each were on duty around the clock. Private carriers cooperating with SFS moved about 3,000 people every day (KW PSP Lublin, 2022).

Fire brigade units were dispatched to set up heated pneumatic tents, fire containers. Their deployment was usually near train stations (among others in

Katowice, Olkusz, Warsaw, Poznań, and Przemysł). The tents were used as ad hoc warming places for people waiting for transport, a place to serve hot meals and provide medical assistance. It is worth noting that only Lublin and Subcarpathian SFS officers set up a total of 80 heated pneumatic tents (30 by Lublin firefighters, 50 by Subcarpathian firefighters), and more than 250 SFS and volunteer fire brigade units were involved in daily operations (KW PSP Lublin, 2022).

Due to the significant influx of migrants and allocation problems, SFSs and volunteer fire brigade units have been actively involved in supporting the operation and maintenance of reception and accommodation sites. Throughout the country, accommodation for refugees has been prepared in volunteer fire brigade stations. As an example, the Świętokrzyskie fire stations, where more than 4,500 people found shelter (Węglarczyk, 2022), in Śląsk Cieszyński 209 places of accommodation were set up, in Garwolin district 18 places of residence were prepared in volunteer fire brigade stations (Biernacki, 2022). The families of Ukrainian firefighters from Rivne were provided with accommodation at the District Headquarters of the State Fire Service in Kraśnik. The people were deployed in staff apartments located at the command's facilities (a total of 18 people) (Michałek, 2022).

In addition to setting up of accommodation for refugees from Ukraine, Polish firefighters, especially firefighters from volunteer fire brigade units and company fire brigade units, have actively participated in establishing collection points for food, drinking water, blankets, bedding, beds, mattresses, drinking water, hygiene products, first aid supplies and then moving them to reception points and places of stay. The volume of funds collected could be counted in hundreds of tons.

Polish firefighters not only provided material assistance to the Ukrainian officers, they also shared their professional knowledge and experience by providing training instruction in medical rescue and high altitude rescue (KG PSP, 2022). Officers with professional qualifications of paramedics were assigned to maintain readiness and logistical support for the establishment and operation of medical points, especially at stations and reception points, the health and lives of refugees were monitored around the clock. Firefighters-rescuers provided medical security for the central point where Personal Identification Number (PESEL) numbers were assigned at the PGE National Stadium. As of March 22, 2022, every day two SFS firefighters with professional qualifications of paramedics, along with specialized equipment, were delegated to operations. In addition, firefighters-medical rescuers were assigned to cover the medical train that transported people with oncological or haematological diseases and severely wounded Ukrainian soldiers from Ukraine. By June 1, 2022, a total of 35 SFS firefighters had participated in seven trips on that train (Sołowin, 2022).

The cited examples of activities prove that the State Fire Service and its subordinate units have been actively involved in identifying, responding and combating the migration crisis. Within the crisis management system, a number of actions have been taken as a result of its own statutory tasks and in support of other services and entities, including governors.

The evaluation of involvement, effectiveness and efficiency of the firefighters given by the surveyed target group has been shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of results/assessments of the involvement of firefighters, their operational efficiency and effectiveness

Questions	Answers
In your opinion, was the involvement of the fire service necessary?	Yes – 75% No – 6% I have no opinion – 19%
In your opinion, were the undertaken fire service actions organized in an efficient and timely manner?	Yes – 74% No – 4% I have no opinion – 22%
In your opinion, were the actions of fire service sufficient in the process of combating the migration crisis in Poland in the wake of Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022?	Yes – 44% Rather yes – 25% I don't know – 22% Rather not – 5% No – 4%
How do you assess the actions of the fire service in the process of minimizing the effects of migration in Poland in the wake of Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022?	Very good – 44% Good – 35% Moderate – 17% Bad – 3% Very bad – 1%

The obtained responses show that 75% of the respondents considered the actions of the fire service to be necessary, carried out efficiently and in a timely manner. Fire service activities were considered sufficient by 69% of respondents (yes – 44%, rather yes – 25%). To sum up the survey results, it is necessary to cite the evaluation of respondents regarding the implemented actions of the fire service in minimizing the effects of the migration crisis in Poland in 2022: 62% of surveyed respondents stated that operations of the fire service contributed to minimizing the effects of the migration crisis, only 5% had the opposite opinion.

Conclusions

On February 24, 2022, the world was dominated by information regarding Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine. The Russian invasion has become a threat to both Ukraine's internal and external security, e.g. to neighbouring countries, including Poland. The mass migration of the Ukrainian population to Poland has triggered socio-economic, political, economic, demographic and cultural consequences. Appropriate management and monitoring has become necessary to reduce the effects of the refugee crisis, bearing the features of a migration crisis,

due to the scale of refugees arriving, forced by the war situation to leave their own country in order to seek international protection.

The migration situation imposed the necessity of adopting new regulations and decision-making with immediate enforceability. It required the commitment of considerable forces and resources, and the involvement of many governmental and non-governmental organizations. The National Firefighting and Rescue System units played a significant role in the process of minimizing the migration threat. Their actions were mainly based on the implementation of tasks imposed by the Chief Commander of the State Fire Service, provincial governors and cooperation with other entities, such as the Border Guard, Social Welfare Centres, the Police, medical services. As shown by the analysis, the role of National Firefighting and Rescue System units in the process of combating the migration threat was substantial. A total of 46,872 employees of the State Fire Service and volunteer fire brigade firefighters using 21,581 vehicles were involved in providing assistance to refugees between February 24, 2022 and October 11, 2022, about 3,000 incidents were handled daily (Leja, 2022). Activities mainly consisted of: providing and coordination of refugee transport to reception points, coordination and transport financing of people from Ukraine carried out by private carriers; transport of food, beds, blankets, mattresses; setting up of pneumatic tents; collection and transport of firefighting equipment; maintenance of reception points and coordination of volunteers; preparation of residence sites; medical, and psychological support.

The above clearly shows that the situation has enforced adaptation to new procedures and the implementation of tasks that often differ from those originally imposed on the National Firefighting and Rescue System units. The long-term implementation of tasks related to the refugee crisis should not, and yet may have reduced the SFS's ability to respond to the migration emergency. The period from February to August 2022 was not a time free of fires, natural disasters, local threats, and yet situational conditions generated additional tasks for National Firefighting and Rescue System units. The migration crisis forced the need to deviate from program assumptions and implement additional tasks.

According to the analysis of own survey results, out of 181 respondents, 85 recognized that in their local environment, assistance to refugees from Ukraine was organized by the fire service, and this was the highest among the other selectable items. Almost 75% of its activities were evaluated positively, and the involvement was considered necessary and efficiently carried out. Approximately 62% of the respondents felt that the actions of the fire service have contributed to minimizing the effects of the 2022 migration crisis in Poland.

Knowing that migrations related to warfare are of a long-term nature and the Russian-Ukrainian war is not over yet, as well as that its course is not entirely predictable, it was worthwhile to analyse the actions taken by the National Firefighting and Rescue System units and draw conclusions that in the future can become the basis for implementing multifaceted system solutions. It would be advisable to consider the following in the future:

- increased involvement of volunteer fire brigade thanks to smooth cooperation with local authorities and communities;
- detailed actions of units at the national, provincial and district levels, and improved coordination and communication between units;
- adoption of a coordinated refugee allocation program.

Taking into account the globally developing refugee crisis, it should be recognized that it cannot always be fully combatted, but it is possible to minimise its scope and effects. It would be necessary to adapt all actions to the situation on an ongoing basis, strive to build a more flexible system of coordination, information flow and develop more alternative solutions, perhaps even innovative ones. The migration threat in 2022 was not predictable, and the tasks being carried out were new, untrained, and required and need a broader view of the problem.

Considering the above, it would be reasonable to introduce an additional training package as part of the process of improving NFRS entities with the participation of citizens, residents of local communities. Exercises could consist in the implementation of scenarios using the infrastructure and social capital of a specific local community. The described phenomenon of the scale of ad hoc activities carried out in the first days of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2022 clearly showed the need to build social and structural resilience in the context of threats. The scale of surprise on both sides of the process (both war refugees and local communities experiencing a wave of refugees) was enormous.

The empathy and sensitivity of Polish citizens were enormous, but the need for help was equally great. The scale of the crisis indicated the need to develop appropriate attitudes and safe habits in the context of perceiving and responding to a threat. In addition, the presented case study showed how important social ties, networking and knowledge of local potential and mission of local NGOs are in a situation of crisis response. The above provokes reflection and shows the essence of revenge and shaping the culture of security in many dimensions.

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ROLA KRAJOWEGO SYSTEMU RATOWNICZO-GAŚNICZEGO W PROCESIE ZWALCZANIA KRYZYSU MIGRACYJNEGO W POLSCE W OBLCZU WOJNY ROSYJSKO-UKRAIŃSKIEJ W 2022 R.

Abstrakt

24 lutego 2022 roku świat stanął w obliczu zupełnie innej rzeczywistości. Zbrojna agresja Federacji Rosyjskiej dotknęła nie tylko państwo ukraińskie, ale miała ogromny wpływ na politykę wielu państw, zwłaszcza graniczących z Ukrainą, w tym Polski. Skala zniszczeń i forma agresji wyrażona przez Rosję zaskoczyła nie tylko część ukraińską, ale także inne kraje świata. Konsekwencje wojny okazały się przerażające. Czas od zbrojnej napaści stał się dla Polski największym kryzysem uchodźczym po II wojnie światowej, a także największym w Europie. Wspomniany kryzys uchodźczy nosi również znamiona kryzysu migracyjnego (i tak też zakładano w rozważaniach) ze względu na rekordową liczbę uchodźców, którzy przybyli do Polski w pierwszych dniach wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej. Wyzwaniem, przed którym stanęła Polska, była nie tylko skala napływu ludzi, ale także krótki czas, w jakim napływ ten nastąpił. Nowa sytuacja wymagała od Polski przygotowania spójnego planu działania pomiędzy władzami publicznymi, samorządami, organizacjami pozarządowymi i obywatelami. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest przedstawienie najważniejszych działań podejmowanych przez krajowy system ratowniczo-gaśniczy (KSRG) na rzecz pomocy uchodźcom wojennym z Ukrainy w 2022 r. Skala działań podejmowanych wobec ówczesnej sytuacji została opisana na przykładzie aktywności Państwowej Straży Pożarnej (PSP) i Ochotniczych Straży Pożarnych (OSP) uczestniczących w działaniach minimalizujących kryzys uchodźczy. Dodatkowo, dzięki przeprowadzonemu wśród społeczności lokalnej (mieszkańców miejscowości przygranicznych) sondażowi diagnostycznemu, możliwe było zdiagnozowanie poziomu poczucia bezpieczeństwa osób, które udzielając pomocy, doświadczyły skutków kryzysu militarnego na Ukrainie.

Pomimo tego, że przedstawiony konflikt nie spełnia formalnych przesłanek konfliktu zbrojnego, gdyż zgodnie z art. 1 III konwencji haskiej z 1907 r. rozpoczęcie działań zbrojnych musi być poparte uprzednim formalnym aktem wypowiedzenia wojny, w pracy przyjęto, że ten konflikt zbrojny zostanie nazwany wojną (Schindler, Toman, 1988).

Przeprowadzone badania skupiły się na analizie raportów i zestawień dotyczących rodzaju, zakresu i wielkości zadań nałożonych na jednostki krajowego systemu ratowniczo-gaśniczego oraz roli straży pożarnej w procesie zwalczania kryzysu migracyjnego. Analizie poddano działania realizowane przez jednostki krajowego systemu ratowniczo-gaśniczego w pierwszych siedmiu miesiącach trwania konfliktu, tj. od 24 lutego 2022 r. do 11 października 2022 r. Należy dodać, że działania realizowane przez straż nie zostały zakończone i na różnych płaszczyznach trwają do chwili obecnej.

W pracy wykorzystano dostępną literaturę, akty prawne, a szczególną analizę przeprowadzono na danych statystycznych uzyskanych z Komendy Głównej Państwowej Straży Pożarnej oraz Komendy Głównej Straży Granicznej. W ocenie roli KSRG w procesie zwalczania kryzysu migracyjnego w Polsce, w obliczu wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej w 2022 roku, wykorzystano również dane uzyskane z sondażu diagnostycznego docelowej grupy badawczej liczącej 181 osób, będących aktywnymi świadkami podejmowanych działań, często ramię w ramię z PSP i OSP.

Powyższe metody pozwoliły na szczegółowe przedstawienie zakresu działań wybranych jednostek krajowego systemu ratowniczo-gaśniczego w zwalczaniu zagrożenia migracyjnego oraz pokazały szerokie spektrum ich zaangażowania, skuteczności, efektywności i szybkości działania. Wyniki wskazały nowe obszary badawcze, na które warto byłoby zwrócić większą uwagę w przyszłych procesach badawczych.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo, zagrożenie, kryzys, migracja, uchodźca, kryzys migracyjny, krajowy system ratowniczo-gaśniczy, zarządzanie kryzysowe