



EGALA



# **Egala Association Situation Report 2024:**

**Emergency Assistance at the Polish-Belarusian  
Border and Casework Support**

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## Introduction

Founded on December 10, 2021, the Egala Association has now been operating for three years, providing direct emergency assistance to people on the move at the Polish–Belarusian border in eastern Poland, specifically in the Podlaskie Voivodeship, while also offering casework support in the hospital in Hajnówka, the detention centre in Białystok, and the training apartment in Białystok. Over the past year, Egala has continued its humanitarian mission in an increasingly challenging operational environment, marked by policy changes, restricted access to certain areas, and heightened security measures affecting migration routes.

Despite many obstacles, Egala has remained a key actor in the Podlasie region, and has the largest number of humanitarian workers conducting interventions in the forest, offering information about Poland’s legal system and international protection, medical first aid, and psychosocial support to individuals. This report provides an overview of Egala’s activities, challenges, and key achievements throughout 2024, based on data from field interventions, casework, and advocacy efforts. The following sections detail the context, response activities, and key statistics, reflecting Egala’s continued commitment to upholding human rights and humanitarian principles.

### Comparison of assistance provided in 2023 and 2024:

	2023	2024
Number of interventions	852	798
Number of people assisted in the forest	2992	2094
Number of people assisted in the hospital	161	248
Number of men assisted in the detention centre	222	372

### Situation overview

#### Operational context

Since the change in government on 15 October 2023, the situation at the Polish border has not improved; in fact, it has deteriorated throughout 2024. Despite assurances of a revised approach to border management, the current administration has persistently hindered the provision of humanitarian aid. Several political decisions made in 2024 have raised significant concerns among human rights organizations operating in the border area. Despite numerous protests, conferences, and initiatives aimed at highlighting the situation and urging the government to change its stance, these collective efforts have been unsuccessful, as the government remains unresponsive to recommendations and grassroots appeals. Below, we outline the most significant events that have adversely affected refugees and the humanitarian sector working at the border:

#### ▶ **Death of the polish soldier**

Towards the end of May and into June, social tensions escalated, related to migration and the government's stance towards refugees and humanitarian organizations providing aid at the border worsened. The shift in sentiments was primarily influenced by a security incident that occurred on May 28th, near Dubicze Cerkiewne on the border, where a Polish soldier was fatally stabbed by a man on the other side of the fence during an attempt to breach the barrier. Following the attack, the soldier was taken to the hospital in Hajnówka, where he underwent surgery during which doctors fought for his life. Later, the soldier was transferred to the Military Medical Institute in Warsaw for further treatment but passed away on June 6. This incident led to several consequences, including increased hostility from medical staff in Hajnówka towards Egala's caseworkers and its patients, the rise of nationalist groups patrolling the border independently, threats directed at aid workers, including Egala staff, and heightened aggression online, particularly on social media platforms.

#### ▶ **The implementation of a "no-go zone"**

In response to the death of the soldier, the government decided to implement a 90-day zone restriction, prohibiting entry within the border area. This measure was justified as a response to increased "illegal migration" in recent months. On June 13th, the exclusion zone was implemented. The no-go zone significantly limited Egala's ability to conduct interventions in some of the most affected areas. Despite government promises, we never received permission to enter the zone despite multiple requests to the Border Guard. Reaching people in need became even harder outside the zone due to heavy border guard presence and militarization. The exclusion zone was heavily militarized, cutting off humanitarian access and leaving people stranded without water, food, medical care, or legal assistance. In September, the government extended the zone for an additional 90 days, and in December, it was prolonged for another 90 days. This not only further restricted humanitarian organizations from providing aid but also severely limited independent monitoring of human rights violations, leaving refugees more vulnerable to life-threatening conditions without oversight or accountability.

### ► Construction of the “East Shield” (Tarcza Wschód)

On May 18, 2024, Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced the launch of the National Defense and Deterrence Plan „East Shield”, aimed at securing Poland’s eastern border through fortifications and terrain modifications. The government has allocated 10 billion PLN for this project, intended to strengthen border security. Originally planned for the first quarter of 2025, construction was expedited and began in 2024, with completion expected by 2028.

This initiative raises serious environmental and humanitarian concerns. Extensive fortifications may disrupt migration routes and limit access to protection for those seeking refuge. It remains critical to monitor the implementation timeline and assess the impact of these measures to ensure they do not come at the cost of human rights and humanitarian principles.

### ► Border firearms use legislation

In July 2024, the Polish Parliament passed a law permitting the use of firearms at the border and exempting officers from liability for misuse, despite opposition from legal experts and human rights organizations.

The most controversial provision states that officers (soldiers, border guards, or police) will not be held criminally liable for violating the rules on the use of force. Egala and other NGOs criticized the law as a „license to kill,” warning that it undermines accountability and human rights protections. Efforts to amend the legislation in the Senate were unsuccessful, raising serious concerns about potential abuses and lack of oversight at the border.

### ► New migration strategy and asylum suspension

On October 12, 2024, the Polish Prime Minister announced that Poland’s migration strategy (2025–2030) would temporarily suspend the right to asylum in certain areas. He also pledged to push for its recognition at the European level, sparking concerns among human rights organizations over its legality. On December 18, the government unexpectedly amended the 2003 Act on Granting Protection to Foreigners, allowing for the temporary suspension of asylum applications. The Migration Strategy, introduced without public consultations, drew protests from migration-focused organizations.

The proposed amendments are still set to be voted on in 2025. The passage of this legislative change does not automatically mean that the suspension of asylum rights will take immediate effect once the law is enacted. Instead, these amendments provide the legal basis for issuing a regulation that could enable the government to restrict access to protection. The Council of Ministers will have the authority to impose such a suspension if specific circumstances arise. For now, the system allows for the selective acceptance of asylum applications, creating uncertainty and further limiting access to protection.



### Escalation of violence

In 2024, conditions at the Polish-Belarusian border worsened, with pushbacks, violence, and inhumane treatment becoming more frequent. People on the move faced repeated pushbacks, exposing them to harsh weather, physical abuse, and trauma. Testimonies gathered during humanitarian interventions and direct requests for aid confirmed widespread abuse by Polish and Belarusian authorities, including beatings, intimidation, and dog attacks. Many asylum seekers had their phones confiscated or destroyed, leaving them isolated, unable to seek help, and struggling to navigate the terrain.

Since October 2021, humanitarian organizations have documented systematic rights violations, and these abuses persisted in 2024. We emphasize that every person deserves dignity, protection, and access to humanitarian aid, and ensuring migrants' and refugees' fundamental rights must remain a global priority.

#### ► Pushbacks

In our specific context, we refer to the definition provided in the We Are Monitoring report ([page 16](#)): "Pushback (also: expulsion, forced return) – the forced return of irregular migrants to the border line and/or compelling them to leave the territory of Poland without properly examining their individual circumstances, regardless of whether they received a decision to leave Poland or explicitly expressed their intention to seek international protection in Poland."

At the Polish–Belarusian border, pushbacks are conducted by Polish law enforcement, often with force and without assessing protection claims. Belarusian authorities also push migrants back into Poland, trapping them in a cycle of expulsions and abuse. Official reports euphemistically call this „returning to the border line,” downplaying the brutality. Those expelled are left stranded in the forest, exposed to freezing temperatures, hunger, lack of medical care, and violence from both Polish and Belarusian forces. Pushbacks occur even when individuals explicitly request asylum. With the planned suspension of asylum rights, the situation is likely to worsen.

### ▶ Shot at the border: a woman’s story

In June 2024, a 35-year-old Iranian woman was reportedly shot in the eye near the Polish–Belarusian border fence. Alone in the forest, she suffered violence, hunger, and exhaustion. While searching for food, a gunshot rang out without warning. She claimed the shot came from one of two uniformed officers on the Polish side. The officers, covering their faces, later called an ambulance, and she was taken to a hospital in Hajnówka before being transferred to a closed detention center.

She stated the shot came without warning and believed Polish authorities were responsible. However, the wound suggested the use of a private rather than an official firearm. This incident reflects escalating border violence, where Egala teams continue to assist people suffering beatings, threats, teargas attacks, and theft of personal belongings.

### ▶ Cases of deaths at the border

The Polish government’s no-go zone policy does not prevent people from attempting dangerous border crossings. With no safe, legal routes available, many take even greater risks to escape dire conditions and seek asylum in Europe. Forced into hiding, many deaths likely go unrecorded. Violent border enforcement makes migration even more perilous, exposing refugees to further harm. Since the crisis began at the Polish–Belarusian border, at least 87 people have died, though the true number remains unknown, with many still missing.

In November, another fatality was reported:

„The body of a dark-skinned man, most likely a migrant whose identity has not yet been established, was discovered on November 28 at around 12:30 PM by workers maintaining the border barrier on the Polish–Belarusian border,” said Wojciech Piktel, Spokesperson for the Suwałki District Prosecutor’s Office, in an interview with *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

The deceased man, estimated to be around 20–25 years old, had no identification documents with him—only a damaged phone was found in his possession.

# Programmatic activities report

## Direct humanitarian assistance

Migration patterns in 2024 on the Polish-Belarusian border changed over the year, with a significant decrease in crossings during the colder months. During the peak migration months (April-June), the number of people crossing the border increased significantly. In autumn, the primary migration route shifted to the northern section of the Polish-Belarusian border. This border continued to be a critical migration route, with people facing severe risks, including violence from Polish and Belarusian authorities, often in the form of pushbacks. Their situation worsened due to harsh conditions like hypothermia, dehydration, prolonged exposure to cold and wet environments, exhaustion, and trauma. Crossing the border entails navigating fences, leading to frequent accidents and injuries. Despite these challenges, the movement did not stop. Despite increased monitoring, stronger fencing, more Border Guard patrols, and the exclusion zone introduced in June, people continued to cross.

Egala operates a field base strategically located in one of the most active areas of the border, near the primeval part of the Białowieża Forest. Our field officers, coming from different parts of Poland, stay at the field base, while we also collaborate with local residents. This allows Egala to maintain a presence in various areas along the border, enabling our team to cover nearly the entire migration route. Additionally, we work with volunteers, including those from abroad, who support our humanitarian assistance efforts.

Emergency operations require well-stocked and permanently accessible warehouses. In 2024 Egala operated three warehouses in different locations along the border and a small warehouse for the hospital. As time is of the essence for the delivery of assistance, the health or life of people on the move and very often the risk of them being pushed back to Belarus may depend on the speed of the response.

Throughout 2024 Egala's field teams carried out targeted emergency interventions, ensuring that individuals found in the forest received:

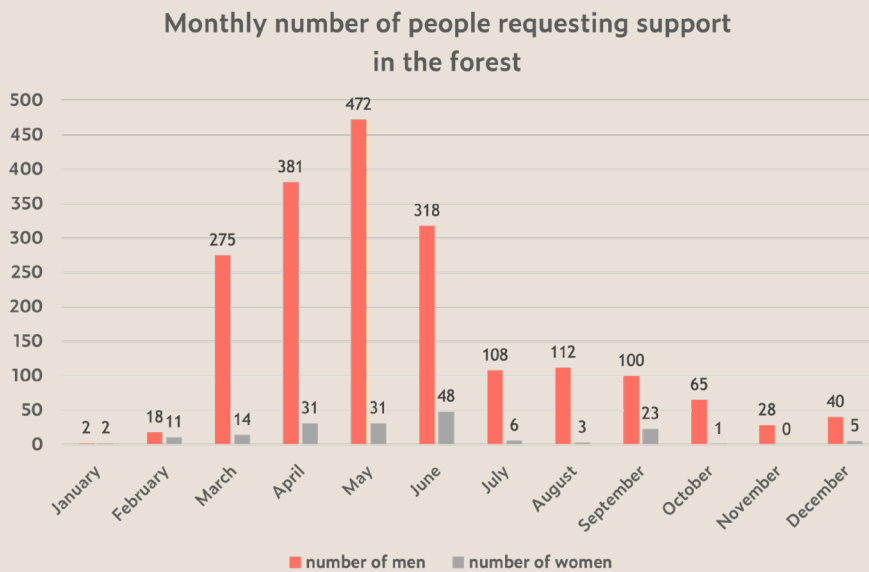
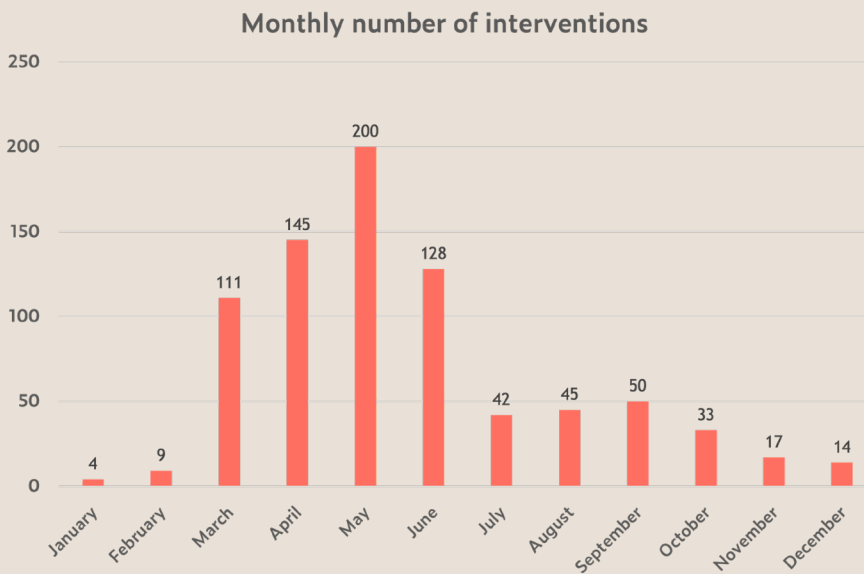
- ▶ medical first aid,
- ▶ psychosocial support,
- ▶ essential non-food items (NFIs),
- ▶ food and water,
- ▶ information on legal and social situation in Poland.

In cases of more serious medical conditions, they were provided with professional medical care by Doctors Without Borders (MSF). Beyond emergency aid, Egala prioritized legal and informational support, helping individuals understand their rights and available protection mechanisms by providing basic information about the legal situation in Poland. More people than in previous years choose to remain in Poland rather than continue their journey elsewhere. Unfortunately reports indicate that Polish authorities have unlawfully and sometimes violently carried out pushbacks, forcibly returning individuals attempting to enter Poland back into Belarus without assessing their protection needs.



## Egala's Humanitarian Aid in 2024:

- Egala carried out a total of 798 interventions
- Egala assisted 2094 people (175 women, 1919 men), including:
  - ▶ 2013 psychosocial first aid (164 women, 1849 men),
  - ▶ 1827 medical first aid (146 women, 1681 men),
  - ▶ 2024 NFI support (159 women, 1865 men),
  - ▶ 2062 food and water (174 women, 1888 men),
  - ▶ 2043 information on the legal and social situation in Poland (168 women, 1875 men).



Most of the individuals who received assistance in the forest were categorized under the 18-59 age group (1913 people). A smaller proportion fell within the 6-17 age range (133 individuals). The least represented groups included those over 60 years old (only one woman) and 7 children aged 0-5 years. In some cases, determining the exact age of individuals was challenging, with 40 occurrences where this information was unavailable.

### Countries of origin

Most of the people we support come from regions affected by life-threatening conditions, lack of security, and prolonged armed conflicts, where access to clean water, food, and medical supplies has been severely limited for years. If asylum applications are no longer accepted, migrants and refugees risk being returned to countries where they face real and imminent danger. Additionally, new regulations may lead to further abuses by Polish authorities, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian crisis at the border. In 2024, the majority of people on the move attempting to cross the Polish-Belarusian border came from the following countries (listed in order of the largest groups): Syria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Yemen, Afghanistan, Sudan, Iran, Cameroon, Iraq, Egypt, India, Algeria, Guinea, Morocco, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal.

### Field testimonies:

Six Eritreans and one Ethiopian spent over nine days in the forest near the border. Their bodies bore multiple bite marks from dogs. One of the men also had wounds on his head and neck. After our medic treated their injuries, we provided them with food, water, and warm clothing.

The men told us they had been pushed back to Belarus multiple times. Polish authorities destroyed their phones, severely limiting their ability to call for help or communicate with the outside world. The entire group immediately expressed their desire to apply for international protection in Poland.

Another group of four men aged 20-30 had suffered similar ordeals. One of them had been stranded in the forest for three months and had been pushed back 17 times. Their hands were injured from razor wire. Belarusian border guards, laughing, shaved their heads. One of them had his hair forcibly shaved into the shape of male genitalia.





A 25-year-old young man from Iran was freezing and visibly terrified. When we reached him to provide support, he screamed in fear and started running. He had no idea who was approaching him. His previous experiences with people at the Polish-Belarusian border had not been good.

We barely managed to stop him. He was extremely hungry, suffering from trench foot, and experiencing severe back pain. He told us he had been in the forest for over 20 days and had been pushed back multiple times. He had been detained in various locations—sometimes near the fence, other times many kilometers away from the border.

The young man also shared that while in Belarus, the authorities never allowed him to rest, forcing him to keep moving toward Poland.

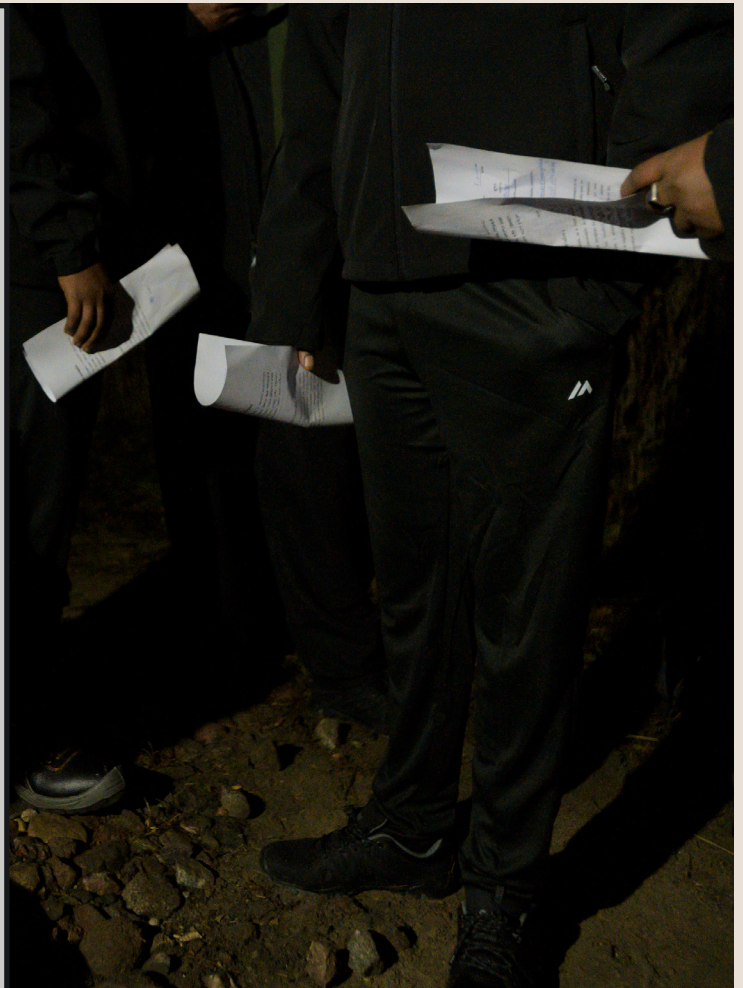
In Iran, his life is at risk. He just wants to be safe.

We received a request for support from six people from Eritrea. The men had been stranded in the forest for over a month, enduring multiple pushbacks. When we reached them, they were soaked to the bone. We provided them with dry clothes, water, and hot soup.

Two of them told us that they had already been taken to a Border Guard facility, where they declared their intention to apply for international protection. However, the authorities attempted to coerce them into signing a statement waiving their right to stay in Poland. The men refused to sign, yet they were still forcibly removed.

From firsthand accounts, we know that such incidents happen regularly.

All six men once again expressed their desire to apply for international protection.



### Casework

Some people, if not subjected to unlawful pushbacks, are taken into custody by the Border Guard and placed either in hospitals, detention centres or open centres. Egala plays a crucial role in providing legal, medical, and psychosocial support to individuals placed in the detention centre in Białystok and the hospital in Hajnówka. The organization's caseworkers monitor conditions, assist detainees and patients in navigating legal procedures, and advocate for their rights. By facilitating access to legal aid and documenting human rights violations, Egala helps ensure that individuals receive the necessary legal support and fair treatment. Additionally, we work to bridge the gap in medical and psychological care by coordinating external assistance and raising awareness of systemic issues within these facilities. When we identify gaps in institutional healthcare, we take steps to ensure individuals receive appropriate medical or psychological support. We contact the medical points within the centres or send formal requests advocating for access to necessary specialists. If adequate care cannot be provided internally, we seek external solutions, arranging private medical appointments and securing funding when needed. For instance, MSF has covered the costs of critical medical tests and expensive medications. This approach applies to both closed and open centres, ensuring that individuals receive essential healthcare despite systemic limitations.

Beyond the detention centre and the hospital, Egala also supports individuals in open centres, unaccompanied minors in foster care facilities, and men in the training apartment in Białystok, providing tailored assistance to help them rebuild their lives and integrate into society.

In 2024, Egala provided the following support:

- ▶ **248 people** (including 97 women) in the hospital.
- ▶ **372 men** in the detention centre.
- ▶ **4 men** in the training apartment.
- ▶ **7 unaccompanied minors** in foster care facilities.
- ▶ **11 unaccompanied minors** in open centre (recognized as adults).
- ▶ **175 people** in open centres.
- ▶ Distributed **150 shopping vouchers** (electronic codes worth 100 PLN each for a supermarket).
- ▶ Distributed **500 tickets** (monthly, single-city, and intercity) only counting the second half of the year.

They organize outings to the city, which serve not only a social and integrative purpose but also help refugees familiarize themselves with the realities of the host country. These outings include explanations about how Polish institutions, clinics, and public transportation systems operate. We also provided direct assistance to vulnerable groups, primarily mothers with children, unemployed families, and individuals without financial resources. Support included essential shopping benefiting those in open centres or private accommodation. Caseworkers maintain close contact with MSF, an organization that consistently supports its activities. Additionally, caseworkers organized integration activities including social and culinary gatherings, workshops, city tours, ice-skating lessons, and participation in cultural events. They also provided comprehensive support to mothers and newborns, ensuring they received the necessary assistance.

### Hospital

The consequences of restrictive migration policies and the border fence are visible in the serious health conditions of people on the move. Many suffer from exhaustion, hypothermia, fractures from falls off the barrier, and poisoning from drinking contaminated water from swamps and puddles. Others experience miscarriages in the forest due to extreme physical exhaustion and inadequate medical care. Patients often face barriers in accessing essential services such as translation, legal assistance, and psychological support. They also lack basic necessities like clothing and hygiene items. Reports indicate cases of patients being pushed back to Belarus, sometimes despite serious medical conditions.

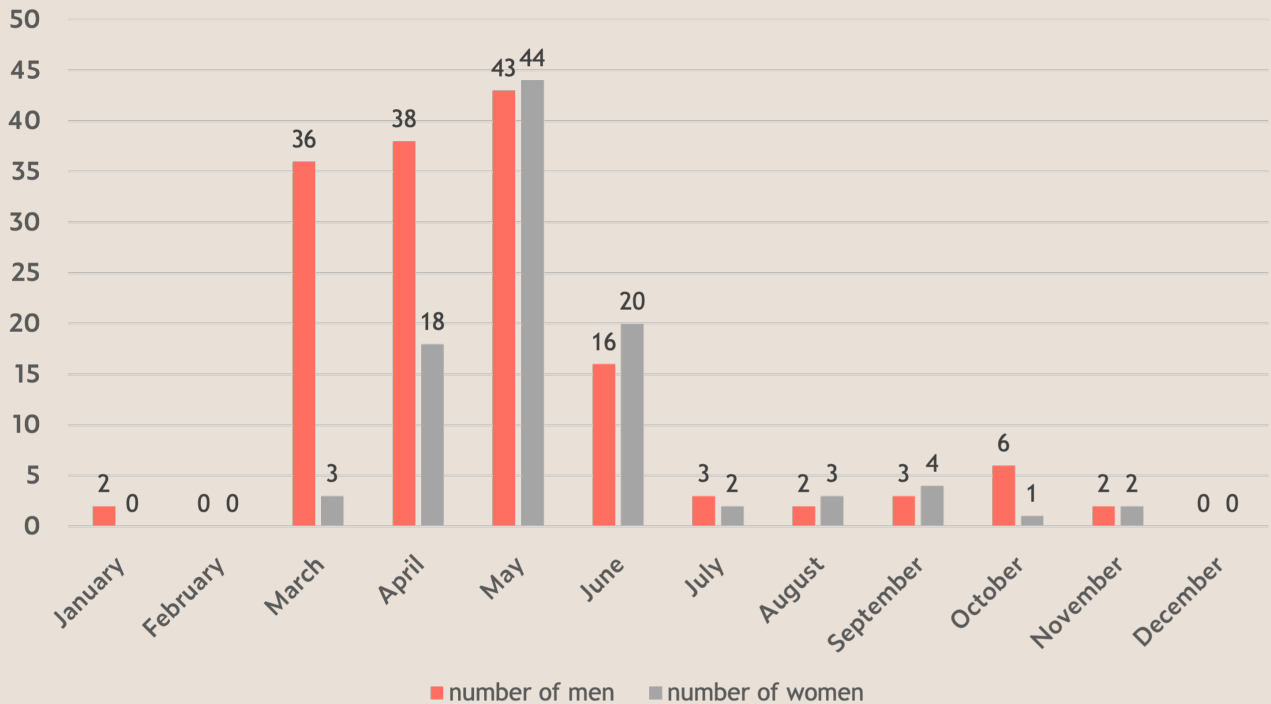
In 2024 Egala provided direct assistance to people in hospitals in the Podlaskie region, especially in Hajnówka. We serve as a legal representative for hospitalized individuals, informing patients about their legal status and their rights under Poland's international protection procedures. Egala also facilitates access to legal professionals and submits necessary documents—such as power of attorney forms, identity certificates, and evidence of persecution—to the relevant Border Guard authorities. Additionally, Egala provides material support, supplying patients with clothing, shoes, and hygiene kits packed in backpacks. We purchase food, including fruits, juices, and snacks, and arrange for the delivery of orthopedic equipment like crutches, braces, and slings for those recovering from injuries. Working with interpreters, our caseworkers ensure effective communication between patients and medical personnel, help individuals reconnect with their families, and coordinate post-hospitalization support, particularly for those transferred to migrant reception centres.

In June 2024, following the death of the Polish soldier, access to hospital patients became more restricted because some hospital staff were unwilling to support patients from the border. As a result, caseworkers were no longer informed about new patient admissions. Additionally, border guards went back to strict monitoring practices, staying right next to patients' beds and further restricting their rights. The situation was additionally complicated by staff shortages in critical units and delays in notifying caseworkers about new patient admissions. These barriers also hindered the delivery of legal counseling services. Despite these difficulties, Egala made efforts to track cases and ensure that the most vulnerable individuals received assistance whenever possible.

Caseworkers assisted in 2024 in the hospital:

- ▶ **248 individuals** (97 women, 151 men).
- ▶ Only in May assisted **87 patients** (highest monthly record).

### Monthly number of people under Egala's hospital caseworking



### Hospital testimony:

A man was admitted to a hospital in Podlasie due to difficulty walking, caused by a deep wound from razor wire. His body was covered in bruises and cuts, a result of the brutal beatings he suffered from Belarusian authorities. When he arrived at the hospital, he was wearing only a t-shirt and trousers. He had no shoes and no phone.

The man did not speak English, so our staff member, with the help of a translator, explained his situation and what might happen after his hospital stay. He was able to reconnect with his parents, who had not heard from him in days and feared for his safety.

We provided him with clean clothes, shoes, hygiene supplies, fruits, and water. The next day, he applied for international protection in Poland. A court ruling determined that he would be placed in a Guarded Center for Foreigners.

He had fled poverty and a lack of opportunities, seeking a chance for a better life.

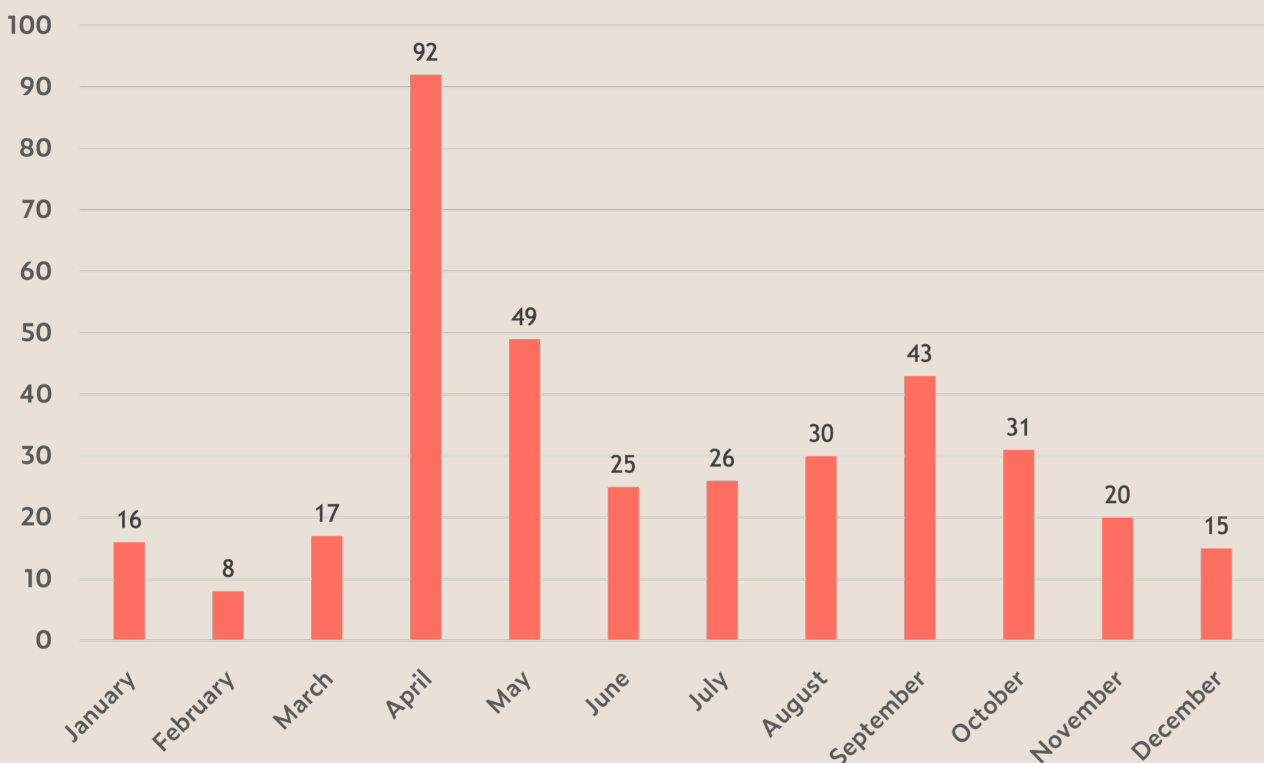
## Detention centre

Guarded centres for foreigners in Poland are divided into six facilities: Biała Podlaska, Białystok, Kętrzyn, Krosno Odrzańskie, Lesznowola and Przemyśl. These centres are categorized into men’s centres—for single adult men—and family centres (located only in Lesznowola), which accommodate families with children, single adult women, and unaccompanied minors without legal guardians in Poland. The sites are secured with high fences topped with barbed wire, further restricting movement and visibility. Single individuals are typically placed in shared rooms with strangers, significantly limiting their right to privacy and family life.

Egala supports detainees (adult men) in Białystok. By court order, the maximum detention period is six months, counted from the time of initial detention. Upon release, individuals must immediately relocate to an open reception center, often in another city. Many are released without financial resources or access to a working phone, making the transition even more difficult. Egala’s caseworkers remain available 24/7 to assist with transport and other urgent needs.

Providing support inside the detention centre remains challenging due to restricted access and strict security measures. Deliveries of aid packages were possible, but they had to be left at the guard station. Entering the facility required an official invitation from a detainee, followed by approval from the Border Guard. Visiting hours were limited to Monday through Friday until 4 PM, with a maximum visit duration of 1.5 hours. Legal representatives could enter, but only with prior notification to the Border Guard. Egala’s caseworkers monitor conditions, assist detainees in navigating legal procedures, and advocate for their rights. By facilitating access to legal aid, Egala helps ensure that individuals in detention receive the necessary legal support and fair treatment.

### Men in detention under Egala’s casework



### Training apartment



The Training Apartment in Białystok was established by Egala in autumn 2024 to address the challenges faced by refugees as they transition out of open centers and into independent living. The project adopts a holistic approach, offering a safe and welcoming space where residents can focus on integration and gaining self-sufficiency during the first few months of independent life in Poland. The apartment accommodates up to four male refugees at a time, with two individuals sharing a room. Residents can stay for a period of two to three months, free of charge, although they must cover their own food and personal expenses. In 2024, four men benefited from the training apartment program.

Egala supports residents by connecting them with a dedicated caseworker who helps create a personalized action plan. The assistance includes finding employment, preparing CVs, navigating bureaucratic processes, arranging medical appointments, and providing psychological support. The program also offers guidance on legalizing residency status in Poland and assistance in securing long-term accommodation after the training period ends. Additionally, residents are enrolled in intensive Polish language courses to improve their communication skills and sense of belonging. The apartment fosters a community environment, organizing regular group meetings where residents can share experiences, address challenges, and celebrate progress. Egala also ensures that residents have access to basic necessities such as clothing, hygiene kits, and other essential items.

The Training Apartment is more than a place to live—it is a stepping stone toward stability and independence. By equipping refugees with practical tools and emotional support, Egala empowers them to rebuild their lives and create a secure future in Poland.



### Advocacy

Despite facing growing hostility from Polish authorities and a negative public narrative portraying NGOs as encouraging irregular migration, Egala remained committed to defending human rights and amplifying the voices of people on the move. Through a combination of media engagement, institutional advocacy, and grassroots awareness campaigns, Egala actively contributed to challenging restrictive migration policies and advocating for systemic change.

Egala carried out numerous public and private advocacy initiatives, creating materials to raise awareness about the humanitarian crisis at the border. As part of our broader advocacy strategy, we published the [„How to talk \(with young people\) about migration“](#) guide (available only in Polish), designed to help educators, parents, and civil society engage in meaningful discussions about migration. This publication encourages critical thinking and open dialogue, equipping individuals with tools to counter misinformation and challenge stereotypes about migration. This guide was the result of an educational project conducted with young people.

Additionally, Egala expanded its online presence, publishing testimonies, reports, and real-time updates on social media and distributing a regular newsletter to stakeholders with detailed insights into the evolving humanitarian and policy landscape.

### Key advocacy efforts:

#### ▶ Social media

We regularly shared updates about Egala's activities on Instagram and Facebook, raising awareness about migration and refugees while informing the public about the situation at the Polish–Belarusian border. Through our posts, we reached 2,240 people on Instagram and 5,000 followers on Facebook, fostering discussions on migration-related issues and countering misinformation.

#### ▶ Newsletter

In July, Egala produced and distributed its first newsletter to stakeholders, documenting the project's achievements and sharing beneficiaries' stories. The newsletter served as a tool for raising awareness about the challenges faced by migrants and highlighting the impact of Egala's interventions. It is published approximately once a month.

#### ▶ Public awareness and media outreach

Egala launched advocacy campaign the [„To live is to dream“](#) in December, featuring a series of short films highlighting the personal stories of migrants. The campaign reached a broad audience through Egala's website, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, significantly raising awareness about the realities of forced migration. It also aimed to challenge the dominant media narrative by portraying migrants as individuals with hopes, dreams, and needs similar to our own, fostering empathy and understanding.

### ► Engagement in high-profile events

Egala actively participated in national and international advocacy events to highlight the challenges faced by migrants, including: The Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, where Egala presented the humanitarian situation at the border and The Movies That Matter Film Festival in Amsterdam, featuring a screening of Green Border, followed by a Q&A session about the border crisis. We gained significant media attention, with coverage in both national and international outlets, shedding light on key issues such as pushbacks, restrictive migration policies, and human rights violations at the border.

### ► Policy advocacy and institutional engagement

Throughout 2024, Egala worked to influence migration policies and legal frameworks, advocating for fair treatment of asylum seekers and greater access to protection mechanisms. In June, together with other non-governmental organizations, we published a statement addressed to the Minister of the Interior and Administration titled „Common position of the organizations on the establishment of a no-entry zone on the Polish-Belarusian border.” In September, Egala submitted a letter to the Minister, expressing its position on the project to extend the temporary ban on staying in a designated area of the border zone adjacent to the Belarusian border. In October 2024, we joined a coalition of NGOs in issuing a public appeal to Prime Minister Donald Tusk, urging a revision of Poland’s migration strategy and raising concerns over the planned suspension of asylum rights.



### Organisational development

In 2024, Egala continued to expand its operations, professionalize its structures, and strengthen its support systems, allowing for more effective and sustainable humanitarian action at the Polish–Belarusian border. Thanks to the ongoing support of donors, Egala was able to hire new team members, including a specialist dedicated to advocacy, further amplifying the organization’s voice in migration policy discussions. Unfortunately, by the end of the year, the funds that allowed for large-scale operations in 2024 were exhausted. While we strive to maintain the broadest possible scope of activities, we have had to adjust our operations to align with the limited resources available in 2025.

Recognizing the emotional toll of humanitarian work, Egala continued providing psychological support services for staff and volunteers, ensuring their well-being while operating in a highly demanding environment. Additionally, investments were made in training programs, staff supervision, and new operational strategies, reinforcing the organization’s ability to respond swiftly and effectively to evolving challenges at the border. Towards the end of the year, various procedures were implemented to ensure professional standards across all aspects of Egala’s operations.

As the largest NGO operating in the field, Egala remains committed to upholding high ethical and humanitarian standards while continuously adapting to meet the needs of both people on the move and those providing assistance.

### Partners



Egala’s humanitarian work at the Polish–Belarusian border would not be possible without the support of trusted partners and donors. Their financial assistance, operational collaboration, and shared expertise have strengthened Egala’s ability to provide emergency aid, legal assistance, and advocacy for people on the move.

In 2024, Egala was supported by:

Akademia Rozwoju Filantropii w Polsce, Alliance for Open Society International, Batory Foundation, Choose Love, Humanity Now, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Minority Rights Group Europe, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Oxfam, Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH), Presbyterian Church, Sklep bez Granic, Stichting Vluchteling, Terre des Hommes (TDH), and UNHCR.

Beyond supporting direct assistance efforts, these partners played a crucial role in amplifying advocacy initiatives. Their contributions enabled Egala to document human rights violations, engage in policy discussions, and influence migration narratives at national and international levels. Through their support, Egala expanded public awareness campaigns, strengthened legal interventions, and advocated for systemic change to uphold the rights and dignity of displaced individuals. Moreover, alongside major donors, we also received support from private individuals, which remains invaluable to our work. This individual support reflects the solidarity of many people who believe in our mission and strengthens our ability to continue humanitarian efforts. As part of our holiday campaign, we sent postcards with messages of gratitude to our private supporters, inviting them to remain engaged and continue their support in the future.

Let's stay in touch!

-  [biuro@egala.org.pl](mailto:biuro@egala.org.pl)
-  [www.egala.org.pl](http://www.egala.org.pl)
-  [stowarzyszenieegala](https://www.facebook.com/stowarzyszenieegala)
-  [stowarzyszenie\\_egala](https://www.instagram.com/stowarzyszenie_egala)

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The logo for EGALA features the word "EGALA" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Above the letters "A" and "L" are three stylized, red, upward-pointing arrowheads or chevrons, suggesting movement or growth.