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# REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE AND THE SECURITY OF POLES

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## Abstract

Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine resulted in a significant influx of refugees into Poland. Since 24 February 2022, a very large number of foreigners from third countries began to appear on the Polish eastern border, who, for humanitarian reasons, were not subjected to such detailed controls as before. The majority of these persons were citizens of Ukraine, who often received assistance and shelter on the territory of Poland. As a result, to a much greater extent than before the events of 2022, they began to reside permanently among the local community and their presence is quite noticeable. In the public perception, such a situation has an impact on the level of security in Poland, on increased common crime. With the above in mind, an analysis of statistical data was carried out, comparing the number of Ukrainian nationals who migrated to Poland between 2020 and 2023 to the number of criminal acts identified annually by the Police. In addition, cyber threats over recent years, the systematic increase in reported security threats in correlation with the migration of Ukrainian citizens were also analysed. A consideration of the geopolitical situation that will take place after the end of military operations on Ukrainian territory and relating to the Polish uniformed services and special services in the context of emerging new threats.

## Keywords

crime, migration, security, armed conflict, Ukraine

## Introduction

The goal of this article is to present the actual security situation of Poles in connection with the armed conflict behind our eastern border and the related influx of a significant number of refugees from the territory of Ukraine. In addition, the situation that may follow the end of hostilities is also considered. It is not my intention to inculcate pessimism in the public and the following text is instead intended to serve the purpose of being properly prepared to deal with emerging new threats. Also, the following text is intended to present the current situation, which should force the relevant state services to prepare themselves to counter new threats that may arise as a result of the end of Russia's war with Ukraine. Polish society also needs to be sensitised to the new threats that may emerge.

Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine has brought significant changes, not only for Ukraine itself and its people, but also for the whole, civilised world. Nothing will ever be the same again. Unfortunately, we will have to resign ourselves to this state of affairs.

These events have resulted in increased migration of Ukrainian citizens to Western countries, including Poland. We are dealing with its consequences on a daily basis. We could risk saying that there is not a citizen in Poland who has not met a Ukrainian citizen either directly or indirectly. Their impressions vary, from sympathy, desire for personal assistance to dislike and, in some extreme cases, hostility.

## Methodological and methodical assumptions

The aim of the analysis presented in this article was to determine the relationship between the influx of large numbers of migrants from Ukraine and the security of Poles. Therefore the research problem was defined by the question: has the increased number of Ukrainian citizens contributed to the increase of common crime in Poland?

In order to address the main problem, it was firstly indicated what security is in general outlook and public security, directly related to the matter under study.

The research process made use of theoretical and empirical methods through analysis, inference, data analysis and the author's observations, resulting from many years of service in the Border Guard.

## Let's start by defining key terms

Recognising security as the basis for the functioning of modern states and societies, the primary task therefore becomes its provision. Safety determines the comfort of life, has an impact on the development of cities, on the formation of social ties among the inhabitants. It can be said that security is a pro-development factor for cities, and thus a pro-development factor for states in the modern world. Security concerns life,

health, property, the realisation of subjective rights and all forms of collective life in the state organisation in which people live. Security also concerns all public, private, social institutions, etc.<sup>1</sup> As well as security is a basic human need, it is an objective state of threats that can be represented by data, indicators, numbers, and a subjective state, which is the feeling of security.

Public security defined as the state of being free from threats to the functioning of a state organisation and the pursuit of its interests, enabling its normal free development. Maintaining security is one of the oldest public tasks and is inextricably linked to the functioning of states. The term 'public security' broadly encompasses the security of citizens in general and of each individual. Public security refers to all manifestations of the absence of threats, i.e. dangers originating both from people and from natural forces (disasters, calamities).<sup>2</sup>

Inherent in the concept of 'public safety' is the concept of 'public order', which denotes the actually existing system of social relations regulated by legal and other socially accepted norms that guarantee the undisturbed and conflict-free functioning of the individual in society. Public order encompasses all social relations regulated by legal norms, which are primarily formed in public places. Consequently, an important element of public order is the behaviour of people in accordance with the norms that ensure order. Order is guaranteed by the state by legal norms on the basis of normative systems in force in a given community, e.g. on the basis of moral, religious, moral norms and rules of social coexistence. The aim of this protection is to ensure the harmonised, rhythmic coexistence of people in society, and thereby ensure human and public safety.<sup>3</sup>

Among the specialised authorities established to ensure public security and order, it should be pointed out that the most important entities are those subordinated to the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration: Police, State Fire Service, Border Guard, State Protection Service. Specialised bodies subordinate to the Council of Ministers are: Internal Security Agency, Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, Intelligence Agency. Authorities subordinate to other central government administration authorities are: Military Counterintelligence Service, Military Intelligence Service, Military Police, Customs and Fiscal Service, Prison Service, Railway Protection Guard, Forest Guard, State Fishing Guard, State Hunting Guard, National Park Guard, Monuments Protection Service, Road Transport Inspection. Some of the tasks related to public safety and order have also been transferred to the private sector, represented by personal and property security companies and detective firms.<sup>4</sup>

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1 F. Skiba, *Police in Poland. Formation Activities in the Urban Agglomeration Area*, Szczzytno 2015, p. 8.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

## Let us try to answer the question of how the situation mentioned in the introduction affects the state of security of Poles and its feeling in society

There is a conviction circulating in Polish society that due to the increased migration of Ukrainian citizens, caused by the armed conflict on their territory, many more crimes are being committed. And what is related to this, there is a growing public aversion to foreign Ukrainians. Such a thesis is confirmed by publications of independent journalists and others, active in the media. They refer precisely to the increase in common crime, the increase in traffic incidents caused by drunk drivers of Ukrainian origin. Prof. Piotr Długosz and Dr Dominika Izdebska – Długosz in their study entitled ‘Polish society towards war refugees from Ukraine’, also refer to the issue of security. The sample was collected throughout the country, in all provinces. It consisted of 1145 respondents aged between 18 and 86. The research was conducted on the ARIADNA panel between 10 and 13 February 2023. When asked about the consequences of the arrival of a large group of war refugees in Poland, respondents said that the strongest impact of their stay would be an increase in the prices of goods and services, an increase in fees on the housing market and a deterioration in the functioning of the health service. Some respondents said that crime would increase (30% of respondents) and the functioning of education would deteriorate.<sup>5</sup>

The above indicates that within one year of the start of hostilities, almost one third of the Polish public claimed that the arrival of refugees would increase crime. More than a year and a half has passed since then and, in my opinion, the public mood has deteriorated considerably and, consequently, many times in the public opinion the migrants from across our eastern border are blamed for the detected, or even worse, undetected crimes.

Is it really so?

Let us analyse the data and try to determine the actual state of affairs. In order to fully illustrate the differentiation, I assumed the years 2020 to 2023 as the analytical period, i.e. the period when there was no information about the possibility of an armed conflict, the period when there was information about the possibility of the development of a full-scale military attack of Russia on Ukraine and the period of the ongoing conflict. For the analysis, I used statistical data made available by the Border Guard Headquarters and the Police Headquarters.

In 2020, 3 645 271 foreigners entered Poland from the territory of Ukraine via land border crossings, of which 3 489 945 were citizens of Ukraine. The above represented a significant decrease because by as much as 63% compared to 2019. A similar number of foreigners left our country going directly to Ukraine. The considerable difference is due to the SarsCov2 virus pandemic. Through all border crossings

5 P. Długosz, D. Izdebska – Długosz, *Polish society towards war refugees from Ukraine*, “Migration Studies – Review of Polish Diaspora” 2024, nr 2 (192)/2024, p. 21, <http://www.ejournals.eu/Studia-Migracyjnej/>, [access: 12.11.2024].

in the country, including air crossings, 3 769 682 Ukrainians entered Poland. The Border Guard, at the section of the border with Ukraine in 2020, apprehended 1576 third-country nationals for crossing the border illegally or attempting to do so. This was an increase of 48% on the previous year. Among those apprehended, 1315 were citizens of Ukraine. In addition, at all Polish borders, 2364 Ukrainian nationals were apprehended for crossing the border illegally or attempting to do so.<sup>6</sup>

In 2020, the Polish Police recorded 469 971 criminal offences, of which 307 452 perpetrators were detected, giving a detection rate of 64.9%. From the catalogue of the seven most socially troublesome offences, we can point to brawl and battery, damage to health, theft of other people's property, burglary, robbery, extortion and robbery and damage to property. In these cases, the police recorded 222 061 offences, of which they detected 43.9% of cases, or 99 003 offences.<sup>7</sup> Regarding the claims that Ukrainian citizens contribute to worsening road safety through frequent driving while intoxicated, statistics in this regard should be pointed out for the analysis conducted. Thus, in 2020, the Police found 52 907 offences of driving while intoxicated. It detected 52 861 incidents or 99.9% of cases.<sup>8</sup>

In 2021, 4 145 434 foreigners entered Poland through land border crossings with Ukraine. The increase to 2020 is 14%. 3 895 525 Ukrainians entered Poland, while 4 296 074 Ukrainians entered Poland through all land border crossings. At the border with Ukraine, 3697 third-country aliens were apprehended. The increase in these incidents compared to the previous year was estimated at 135%. Out of this figure, 3101 citizens of Ukraine were apprehended. On the other hand, 4265 persons from Ukraine were apprehended at all Polish borders in 2021.<sup>9</sup>

In 2021, 489 052 recorded criminal offences were committed. 315 807 were detected giving a rate of 64.1%. Of the catalogue of the seven crime categories indicated, 231 520 ascertained offences were committed in 2021, 45.1% or 105 941 were detected.<sup>10</sup> There were 58 085 recorded incidents of driving while intoxicated. 58 054 or 99.9% were detected.<sup>11</sup>

Through land border crossings with Ukraine, 9 436 203 foreigners from third countries entered Poland in 2022. An increase of 128% compared to 2021. 9 086 946 were citizens of Ukraine, while 9 592 444 appeared at all crossings. There was a significant decrease in incidents related to detention for crossing against the law or

6 <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>, Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2020\_r\_.pdf [access: 15.11.2024].

7 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-kryminalne/63470,Przestepstwa-kryminalne-ogolem.html>, Criminal offenses by administrative subdivisions of the country – crimes ascertained, crimes detected, % detection (1999 – 2023) [access: 15.11.2024].

8 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-drogowe/prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-s/122332,Prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-stanie-nietrzezowosci.html>, Driving under the influence of alcohol by administrative subdivisions of the country – crimes ascertained, crimes detected, % detection (1999-2023) [access: 15.11.2024].

9 <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>, Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2022\_r\_\_\_2\_korekty\_ZCU\_\_nielegalna\_praca\_\_przyjeci\_do\_RP.pdf, [access: 15.11.2024].

10 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-kryminalne/63470...> [dostęp: 15.11.2024].

11 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-drogowe/prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-s/122332...> [access:15.11.2024].

attempting to do so at the section of the border with Ukraine – 1017 cases, i.e. by 72%. There were 933 detainees at the border with Ukraine, while at all Polish borders only 1338 Ukrainian persons were detained.<sup>12</sup>

2022 brought crime to 490 934 recorded criminal offences. 63.22% or 313 424 incidents were detected. The year 2022 ended with 241 033 ascertained incidents from the catalogue of seven crime categories. 112 905 were detected or 46.03% of cases.<sup>13</sup> Driving under the influence of alcohol – 56 984 were found, 56 941 or 99.92% of cases were detected.<sup>14</sup>

9 055 219 foreigners from third countries entered Poland through land border crossings with Ukraine. There was a decrease of 4% to 2022. Among these persons, 8 761 153 were citizens of Ukraine, while 9 517 772 entered the country. 225 third-country foreigners were apprehended for crossing the border in violation of the law or attempting to do so at the border section with Ukraine, which is a decrease of 78% to the previous year, including 197 citizens of Ukraine. At all Polish borders, 684 persons of Ukrainian origin were detained.<sup>15</sup>

Police statistics show that in 2023, 466 241 criminal offences were committed ascertained. A total of 308 153 cases were detected, i.e. the effectiveness of police action was set at 65.44%. There were 229 077 cases of recorded fights and beatings, damage to health, theft of other people's property, burglary, robbery, extortion and theft of robbery and damage to property. 49.06% of cases were detected, i.e. 114 218 incidents.<sup>16</sup> 49 647 drink-driving offences were found, of which 49 625 people were prosecuted (99.95%).<sup>17</sup>

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12 <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>, Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2022\_r\_\_\_2\_korekty\_ZCU\_\_nielegalna\_praca\_\_przyjeci\_do\_RP.pdf [access: 15.11.2024].

13 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-kryminalne/63470,Przestepstwa-kryminalne-ogolem.html...> [access: 15.11.2024].

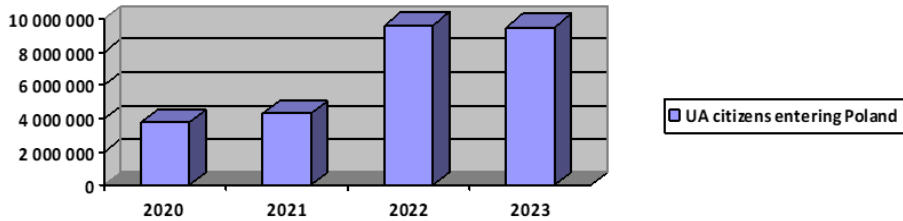
14 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-drogowe/prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-s/122332,Prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-stanie-nietrzezowosci.html...> [access: 15.11.2024].

15 <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>, Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2023\_r\_.pdf [access:15.11.2024].

16 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-kryminalne/63470,Przestepstwa-kryminalne-ogolem.html...> [access: 15.11.2024].

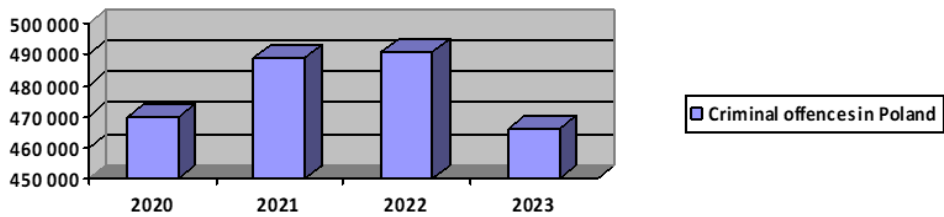
17 <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/przestepstwa-ogolem/przestepstwa-drogowe/prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-s/122332,Prowadzenie-pojazdu-w-stanie-nietrzezowosci.html...> [access: 15.11.2024].

**Chart no. 1 – Entry to the Republic of Poland of Ukrainian citizens at all Polish crossings.**



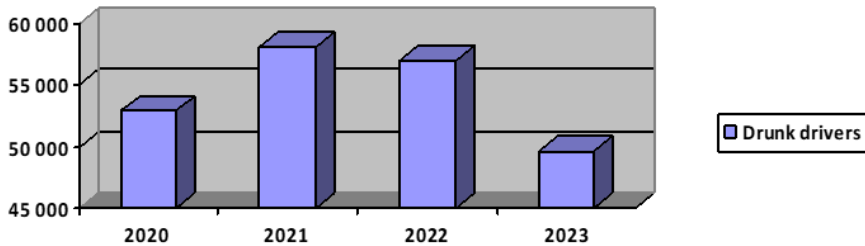
Source: <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg>

**Chart no. 2 – Established cases of criminal offences in Poland.**



Source: <https://statystyka.policja.pl>

**Chart no. 3 – Incidents of driving under the influence of alcohol detected.**



Source: <https://statystyka.policja.pl>

In conclusion, it should be noted that in 2020, the reduced number of Ukrainian nationals entering Poland was due to the pandemic and related border traffic restrictions. From 2021, there was a systematic increase to return to the average level of crossings of the border of the Republic of Poland by Ukrainian nationals in 2022 and 2023. Determining the average level, it is important to point to the pre-pandemic number – in 2019, 10 416 844 Ukrainian nationals entered Poland through all Polish border crossings. Analysing further the statistical data from recent years, it should be pointed out that every year Ukrainian nationals constitute the largest community to come to Poland. Despite the outbreak of war and subsequent migration flows, the size of the phenomenon has not changed significantly. Of course, it is important

to point out an important fact, namely that before the events of 24 February 2022 and before the pandemic period, both men, women and children crossed the Polish border and often went to other Western European countries, and Poland was a transit country for them. After the introduction of relevant legislation by the Ukrainian state, the border with Poland was mainly crossed by women and children, in most cases remaining in Poland, receiving assistance and shelter.

With regard to the crime figures, I would like to dispel the myth that the increased influx of Ukrainian citizens to Poland is directly correlated with an increase in crime in our country. Public perceptions may indeed point to such a trend, but this is not borne out by the statistics. Since 2020, criminal offences or incidents involving intoxicated drivers have remained at a similar, fairly constant level, even showing a decreasing trend.

An increased number of foreigners, here Ukrainians, on the territory of a country automatically generates an increased number of criminal incidents involving them. In this case we are dealing with nothing but statistics. Therefore, if we hypothetically assume that out of 1000 foreigners residing in Poland, 10 of them have committed a criminal act in the last year, then if this number increases 10-fold, generally speaking we are dealing with an increase in crime among the foreign community, but this is due solely to an increase in their number. The statistical coefficient of the total number of incidents does not change. Of course in the national statistics there is a noticeable increase in crimes involving foreigners. However, referring to the statistics from 2020 to 2023, one must conclude, that despite such a significant increase in the Ukrainian population in Poland, the percentage of criminal acts committed remains at the same level as in previous years. Does this indicate that Poles are committing fewer crimes? Have the organs of the state apparatus improved their effectiveness in such a significant way? The answers to these questions are quite simple – no and no. Simply, statistically a certain number of crimes of all kinds are committed in Poland. It does not matter who commits them. Therefore, I will repeat the thesis that the significant influx of Ukrainian citizens into Poland has not contributed to the increase in crime in Poland.

## Increased migration and cyber threats

Cyber security should be identified as an important element of state security that directly affects citizens. We spend a large part of our lives in cyberspace, we spend time communicating with each other through various types of instant messaging, social media, channels and chat rooms, exchanging information, following advertisements for products, companies, services, searching for practically everything has moved to the Internet, e-banking, online shopping, but also more sensitive elements of our identity such as electronic identity cards, electronic health records, e-prescriptions or sick leave, which contain sensitive personal data.<sup>18</sup> Most threats have moved into

18 A. Polowin, *Cyber threats on the Internet – a case study*, "Cybersecurity and Law" 2024, nr 2 (12), p. 118.



cyberspace. This is because an increasing part of human existence is also moving into this environment. Criminals live among us and also enjoy the benefits of the Internet. As payments and purchases have moved into cyberspace and criminals have adapted their activities to the current realities, so fraud, extortion, theft, intimidation and many others have also begun to operate online.<sup>19</sup>

With the above in mind, it is necessary to answer the question whether increased migration has an impact on network security. Therefore, in order to illustrate this phenomenon, I will use data made available by the CERT Polska team. The CERT Polska team operates within the structures of NASK – State Research Institute, which conducts scientific activity, the national registry of .pl domains and provides advanced ICT services and providing advanced ICT services. CERT Polska is the first incident response team created in incident response team in Poland. Thanks to its thriving activity since 1996 in the environment of response teams, it has become a recognisable and experienced entity in the field of computer security. Since its inception, the core of the team's activities has been the handling of security incidents and cooperation with similar units around the world, both in both operational and research and implementation activities.<sup>20</sup>

In 2021, CERT Polska recorded 115 884 reports of cyber security threats from across the country. Of these reports, there were 29 442 new cyber security incidents. 36 incidents defined as serious were recorded – 30 were related to banking, 2 to healthcare, 3 to energy, 1 to transport.<sup>21</sup>

CERT Polska received 320 210 reports of cyber security threats in 2022. There were 39 621 new incidents. serious incidents – 30, they concerned: banking and financial market infrastructure – 21, healthcare – 3, transport – 1 and energy – 5.<sup>22</sup>

The year 2023 was characterised by 364 848 security threat reports. 79 978 incidents related to new incidents, while there were 40 serious incidents, mainly involving banking and financial markets infrastructure with 31 and health care with 9.<sup>23</sup>

Between 01 January 2024 and 14 November 2024, CERT Polska received 529 716 reports of security threats. 93 893 were new incidents. There were 50 serious incidents, of which 40 were related to banking and financial market infrastructure, 9 were related to healthcare, while 1 submission was related to transport.<sup>24</sup>

The above data indicate that since 2022, i.e. increased migration of people from Ukraine, the number of reports of security threats has been steadily increasing. Of course, the upward trend cannot be unambiguously linked to increased migration,

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19 Ibid.

20 <https://cert.pl/o-nas/> [access: 19.11.2024],

21 <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/1992,statystyki-zespolu-cert-polska/resource/35639/table>, Statistics of handled incidents by CERT Polska team – 01.01.2021-30.12.2021 [access: 19.11.2024].

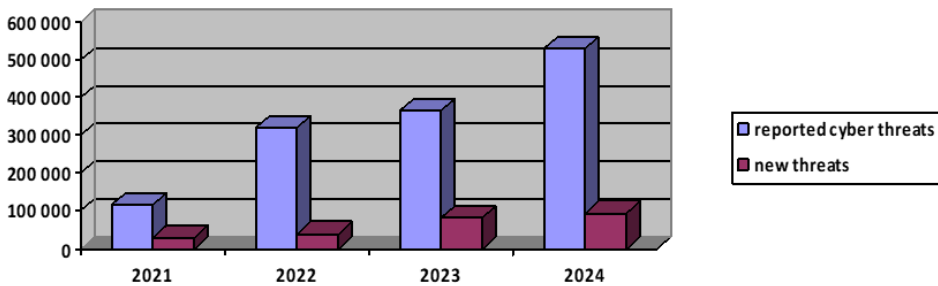
22 <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/1992,statystyki-zespolu-cert-polska/resource/44403/table>, Statistics of handled incidents by CERT Polska team – 01.01.2022-29.12.2022 [access: 19.11.2024].

23 <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/1992,statystyki-zespolu-cert-polska/resource/53602/table>, Statistics of handled incidents by CERT Polska team – 01.01.2023-28.12.2023 [access: 19.11.2024].

24 <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/1992,statystyki-zespolu-cert-polska/resource/62332/table>, Statistics of handled incidents by CERT Polska team – 01.01.2024-14.11.2024 [access: 19.11.2024].

however, juxtaposing these data gives a certain picture. Society is developing technologically from year to year, services are also developing on the Internet, which are growing exponentially. Consequently, the increased number of users and services may generate an increased number of applications. However, the large number of permanent resident aliens, including a large number of unidentified persons entering the Republic of Poland during the initial phase of the conflict, may be the cause of an increasing number of incidents. Serious incidents, with a significant increase in reports, remain at a similar level. A significant increase was recorded in the category of new incidents. This aspect should be kept in mind when determining the types of threats and their sources.

**Chart no. 4 – reports of cyber security threats, and new threats.**



Source: <https://statystyka.policja.pl>

## A slightly different situation from the one outlined above may occur after the end of hostilities across our eastern border

Of course, we want the war to end as soon as possible, but such a state of affairs may lead to an influx of further migrants – this time Ukrainian citizens trained in combat, intelligence and diversionary activities. It is only fair to ask whether we, as Poles, should be afraid of them. Moreover, under the guise of Ukrainians, Russian agents, soldiers of Russian special forces and fighters from nations allied with Russia will also be entering Poland and Western countries. Their purpose of arrival seems all too obvious. On the other hand, there may be streams of weapons flowing across the Polish-Ukrainian border. This will not be due to bad work of the Border Guard or the Customs and Fiscal Service, but to the huge quantity. Only a percentage will be disclosed at the border, some inside the country, and the rest? Probably in the first place, the destination will be Western European countries, where, due to the large number of migrants from the Middle East and Africa, these markets will become a natural outlet, a very profitable business, and it is well known that where there is big money, no one will think about the consequences. Such a state of affairs could turn the entire western world upside down. In the second place, some of the weapons will remain on Polish territory. That is why we need to wonder whether we are in danger of a return

to the 1990s and armed, violent criminal groups. The difference is that now their members will be, for example, Ukrainians, who, to be honest, in terms of mentality and outlook, are mostly at the stage of development of Poles from the 1990s.

It should also be pointed out that war veterans who have experienced unimaginable trauma will come to Poland. Their mental state will be in terrible condition, they will be plagued by post-traumatic stress syndrome, often crippled. All will require medical treatment that Ukraine will not be able to provide for them. Therefore, the whole thing will be based on the already inefficient Polish health care system. Ukraine is already badly damaged, a large part of the population will not find decent living conditions. In addition, there will be a significant increase in both common and organised crime – organised crime has hitherto been widespread in Ukraine, but now its tentacles will reach into our territory and other countries of Western Europe. Children will be brought up in a post-war environment, education will be significantly limited. All this will have a very significant impact on security in our country. However, we must put ourselves in the shoes of the migrants, understand their feelings and fears.

Going back to the migration from the start of the conflict. At that time, for humanitarian reasons of course, there was an uncontrolled influx of people from across the eastern border. To date, we rather do not know who, in the refugee wave, entered our territory. What are their intentions and when they will start carrying out their plans. In addition to this, the situation on the Belarusian border, the flow of weapons across the border, which I mentioned, it must be said that extremism will increase significantly and terrorist threat also in Poland. To date, there has not been a terrorist attack in our country, and I am keeping my fingers crossed that it will remain so. However, the direction in which all this is heading does not indicate anything positive.

## Will our uniformed services as well as the special services be able to deal with these threats?

Analysing press sources, commentaries of all kinds as well as Internet portals purporting to provide statistics, we can point out that at the moment the level of unfilled vacancies in the police patrol service is almost 20%.

Published data by the Police Headquarters shows that the Police has 108 909 uniformed positions, of which 96 127 are filled, giving an unfilled vacancy rate of at 11.74%. In the prevention service, there are 66 202 FTEs in the commands, 58 596 of which are filled, giving an unfilled vacancy rate of 11.49%. In the criminal service, the police have a full capacity of 31 135 police officers. Employed in this division are 27 789 officers which indicates that the shortage in the criminal service is 10.75%. The most difficult staffing situation in the patrol service takes place in police prevention divisions and independent police prevention subdivisions. In these organizational units, 6860 police officers are on duty. The total number of all positions

is 8356, so the vacancy rate is as high as 17.9%. Looking at the Police as a whole, it should also be pointed out that the newly established Central Bureau for Combating Cybercrime has 1 300 all positions, of which 751 are filled, which means that the vacancy rate is 42.23%.<sup>25</sup>

Experienced officers have left the service, and those who remain will do so any day. Even if by some miracle we managed to fill the shortage of personnel, who will train these people – we are not talking about training centers but real work in the field. Looking at the changes in recruitment regulations in the Police, where at the moment it is quantity, not quality that counts. Just who, just how, just what. We know this approach from history and it has done not good. We will feel the effects of such an action in a few years. Although symptoms can already be seen on the roads of our cities.

The same situation applies to the Border Guard although it is not as much described and analysed as the Police, due to a much smaller formation. Just over 14 000 officers are serving in the formation at the moment. The data obtained shows that as of March 31, 2024, there were 2116 vacancies.<sup>26</sup> Which roughly puts the vacancy rate at 15%. Detailed data on employment, as in the case of the Police, we will not obtain from open sources of information hence the approximate values. The crucial question about the size of this service arises in the context of the current geopolitical situation. The increased influx of migrants from the territory of Ukraine, the migratory situation on the border with Belarus, the push backs of migrants to Poland via Germany pose significant threats to Poland's security. Let's also not forget that through the territory of our country runs the so-called Balkan route, through which illegal migrants try to enter Western European countries on a daily basis hidden in truck trailers. Therefore, those in power should consider, and seriously consider, increasing the size of the Border Guard. Recent events have clearly shown that this service, in terms of personnel resources, is inefficient. The Polish Army, the Police or even the Forest Guard had to provide assistance to the Border Guard in securing a section of the state border with Belarus. Until the arrival of multitudes of migrants from Arab and African countries on Poland's eastern borders, the burden of protecting the state border was shared in solidarity between the Border Guard and the border services of Belarus or even Russia on the north. Let's also not forget that a significant portion of the indicated 14 000 officers are on duty at the internal border, inside the country, or at airports. Not to mention training centers, branch commands or the Headquarters.

Referring to the special services, I will not comment too much. There is relatively little information that can be analysed, and very well, this is how it is supposed to be. However, one fact deserves attention – these services are fully politicized in Poland and this does not bode well. A change in power entails a change in top management. A change of top management entails a change in middle management, and so on.

25 <https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/540,dane-kadrowe-policji> – status on 01.11.2024 r. [access:18.11.2024].

26 <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/praca/artykuly/9489655,brakuje-prawie-15-funkcjonariuszy-strazy-granicznej-ponad-2100-wolny.html> [access: 20.11.2024].

Consequently, what choice is left when there are subsequent changes in power or the mood of those in power change. Answer for yourselves.

In conclusion, in my opinion, the uniformed services and special services are not at all prepared for such events. Someone will say that they had nothing to learn from, such as the Polish Army, which gained combat capability only when participating in campaigns outside Poland. Yes I will agree, however, there was a rapid change in the thinking of commanders, equipment and tactics of the operations conducted there. The threats indicated above are foreseeable and changes in the services should already be taking place. We do not have time to learn from incidents. And at the moment the only problem of the uniformed services is a colloquial hole that should be plugged with all our might.

Giving a hint for future research that may be conducted in connection with the thesis about the uncontrolled flow of weapons, I will present below some statistics on firearms incidents on Polish territory.

Border Guards in the country as well as at border crossings revealed:

- in 2019: 143 firearms, 11 gas weapons, 1 grenade, 747 other weapons, 5125 combat ammunition, 203 gas ammunition, 200,988 other ammunition;<sup>27</sup>
- in 2020: 14 firearms, 30 gas weapons, 9 grenades, 248 other weapons, 4122 pieces of combat ammunition, 144 pieces of gas ammunition, 1491 pieces of other ammunition;<sup>28</sup>
- in 2021: 40 firearms, 7 gas weapons, 73 other weapons, 908 combat ammunition, 16 gas ammunition, 393 other ammunition;<sup>29</sup>
- in 2022: 40 firearms, 7 gas weapons, 2 grenades, 87 other weapons, 7432 pieces of combat ammunition, 63 pieces of gas ammunition, 751 pieces of other ammunition.<sup>30</sup>
- in 2023: 36 firearms, 8 gas weapons, 12 grenades, 70 other weapons, 3527 live ammunition, 52 gas ammunition, 8308 other ammunition;<sup>31</sup>
- until September 2024: 14 firearms, 7 gas guns, 4 grenades, 69 other weapons, 2628 combat ammunition, 17 gas ammunition, 17630 other ammunition.<sup>32</sup>

Police have recorded the identified crimes:

- in 2019: 659 using firearms, including 12 homicides, 232 using gas weapons, including 1 homicide, 245 related to explosives;
- in 2020: 635 using firearms, including 23 homicides, 274 using gas weapons, 396 related to explosives, including 2 homicides;

27 <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg/2206,Statystyki-SG.html>, Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2020\_r\_.pdf [access: 15.11.2024].

28 Ibid.

29 Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2022\_r\_\_\_2\_korekty\_ZCU\_\_nielegalna\_praca\_\_przyjeci\_do\_RP.pdf [access: 15.11.2024].

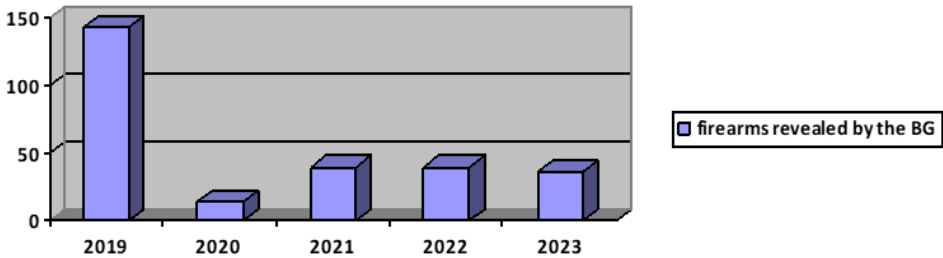
30 Ibid.

31 Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_2023\_r\_.pdf [access: 15.11.2024].

32 Informacja\_statystyczna\_za\_okres\_styczen-wrzesien\_2024\_r\_.pdf [access: 15.11.2024].

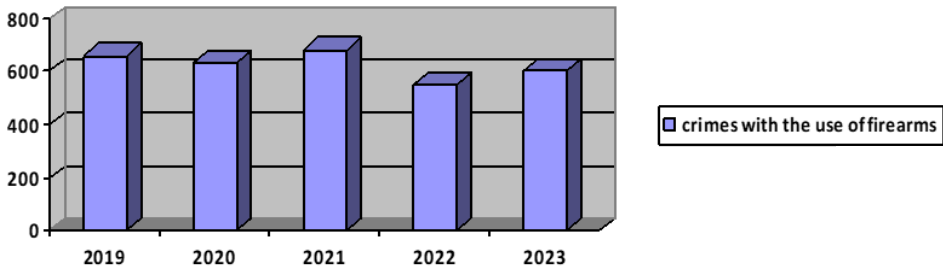
- in 2021: 682 using firearms, including 27 homicides, 270 using gas weapons, including 1 homicide, 881 related to explosives, including 3 homicides;
- in 2022: 548 using firearms, including 20 homicides, 215 using gas weapons, 923 related to explosives, including 4 homicides;
- in 2023: 603 using firearms, including 21 homicides, 169 using gas weapons, 272 related to explosives, including 1 homicide.<sup>33</sup>

**Chart No. 5 – Firearms seized by the Border Guard.**



Source: <https://www.strazgraniczna.pl/pl/granica/statystyki-sg>

**Chart No. 6 – Identified incidents of crimes with firearms.**



Source: <https://statystyka.policja.pl>

Looking at the scale of weapons disclosed by the Border Guard, it can be considered that the amount is small. However, it should be remembered that the data in question relates only to disclosed weapons. Poland is a party to the Schengen Agreement and therefore there are no internal border controls. Illegal firearms and their ammunition can even be transported unlimitedly. We do not know how the border services of other European countries that perform external border controls work. It is also impossible to determine their statistics on the disclosure of weapons. Importantly in the data presented, disclosures of hand grenades are indicated, and this is already an object used to fight the enemy's live force, i.e for strictly military use.

Referring to the cases of crimes with firearms, it can be pointed out that their number at the turn of the last years oscillates at a similar level. Are 600 cases per year

<sup>33</sup> <https://statystyka.policja.pl/st/wybrane-statystyki/bron/186393,Przestepstwa-przy-uzyciu-broni.html>, Weapon crimes (2002 – 2023) – stated crimes [access: 15.11.2024].

a lot? Some will say that such a number is fully acceptable in a country of 37 million people. According to the Police Headquarters, in 2023, 324 000 Poles had permits to own firearms for various purposes, and there were 843 300 registered weapons. How many of these 600 crimes were committed with the use of legal weapons is unknown, but I believe that this value is within the statistical error. Therefore, it can be concluded that most of the acts were committed with an illegally acquired unit of weapons.

## Summary

Having regard to the analyses presented above, it should be pointed out that the increased influx of Ukrainian nationals to Poland, caused by the armed conflict on their territory, does not translate into an increase in the level of crime in Poland, whether common or road traffic incidents involving intoxicated drivers. However, in this context, it should be pointed out that, since 24 February 2022, women and children were overwhelmingly entering Poland, seeking refuge, and this has a significant impact on the statistics presented. Entering men, or those who have already stayed on our territory, are not inclined to commit criminal acts due to the fear of returning to the territory of Ukraine and being conscripted into military structures. The only aspect where an increase in incidents is noted concerns cyber security. However, in my opinion, it cannot be clearly linked to Ukrainian citizens.

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