**UNHCR is supporting the Centre for Legal Aid in Slovakia, most recently with technical assistance**

**Bratislava, 22 March 2023**

On 22 March 2023, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, handed over two all-terrain vehicles, 16 laptops, and 16 phones to the Centre for Legal Aid in Bratislava, Slovakia. Since 2022, following the war in Ukraine, the Centre has been actively providing legal aid to people forced to flee Ukraine to Slovakia, including those who applied for temporary protection.

The handover of the vehicles, laptops and phones follows on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two organizations in October 2022. The MoU agreed to strengthen partnership and collaboration with regard to ensuring access to qualified free legal aid of refugees, asylum-seekers, beneficiaries of temporary protection, stateless persons, and people at risk of statelessness. Certain individuals from these categories are often economically and socially disadvantaged, making them unable to efficiently and effectively access legal services that can help them understand, protect and defend their legal rights and interests.

“I am pleased that we can support the Centre for Legal Aid through these technical contributions and strengthen the capacity to provide free legal aid and protect the rights of vulnerable groups across Slovakia, including refugees and stateless people. We look forward to further collaborate with the Centre,” said Ms. Danijela Popovic-Efendic, Head of National Office, UNHCR Slovakia.

“We are grateful for such material aid. Both vehicles will serve our offices in Komárno and Humenné, which are assisting people in immigration detention centers in Medveďov and asylum-seekers and refugees from Ukraine in Humenné and around. The additional contribution will allow our offices around Slovakia to provide aid for persons with temporary protection from Ukraine flexibly. The Centre has been very active since the first days of the arrival of the people from Ukraine providing legal aid in various large capacity centres and in its own offices in addition to its competency in the area of legal aid to asylum seekers and people in immigration detention. We look forward to deepening mutual cooperation and to the Centre being able to draw on UNHCR's expertise,” said Ms. Zuzana Števulová, Director of the Centre for Legal Aid.

UNHCR is a global organization, with presence in Slovakia, dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people worldwide. In 2022, UNHCR opened its offices in Slovakia, in Bratislava and Košice, at the request of the Government of Slovakia for support in responding to the influx of Ukrainian refugees. UNHCR leads the coordination of the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for Slovakia to support refugees from Ukraine and to support the host country. The Centre for Legal Aid’s main

mission in Slovakia is to provide people in material hardship with access to legal aid and the ability to effectively exercise their rights.

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