The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- On the morning of 5 March, a temporary ceasefire was announced by the parties to open “windows of silence” and “humanitarian corridors” to facilitate the evacuation of civilians from the cities of Mariupol and Volnovakha in the south-east. However, early reports claim that shelling continues despite the ceasefire agreement, preventing the evacuation of people.

- The number of civilian causalities continues to mount. Between 4 a.m. on 24 February and midnight on 4 March, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reports at least 1,058 civilian casualties, including 351 killed, a figure that is likely much higher as civilian deaths and injuries continue to be verified.

- As fighting continues to intensify, including in the outskirts of Kyiv, which have become hotspots of unrelenting violence, with many small towns outside Ukraine’s capital coming under intense shelling in recent days, people may be displaced multiple times, significantly increasing protection risks and humanitarian needs.

- Millions of people have been displaced since 24 February, with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reporting over 1.3 million people who have fled to neighbouring countries; more than of them – nearly 650,000 people – arriving in Poland.

- Local and national authorities, local non-governmental and civil society organizations, UN agencies and humanitarian partners continue to scale-up response activities, including in border areas. In the worst-affected areas of Ukraine, partners continue to leverage the presence and capacities of local organizations to deliver life-saving assistance to those most in need and adapt their response strategies to fit the new operational reality.

- On 4 March, the recently appointed UN Crisis Coordinator, Mr. Amin Awad, arrived in Ukraine, where he will lead the coordination of all UN efforts in the country, including the humanitarian response on both sides of the “contact line”.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On the morning of 5 March, a temporary ceasefire was announced by the parties to open “windows of silence” and “humanitarian corridors” to facilitate the evacuation of civilians from the cities of Mariupol and Volnovakha in the south-east, where affected people remain trapped for several days without water, heat, electricity and mobile connection, while food reserves and basic supplies dwindle.

However, early reports claim that shelling in Mariupol and Volnovakha continues despite the ceasefire agreement, preventing the evacuation of people with critical unmet humanitarian needs and leaving them vulnerable to continued violence and even death. Train evacuation from Irpen, a satellite town close to the capital, was reportedly interrupted as the railway tracks were reportedly blown up. Instead, bus evacuation was arranged to evacuate people from the heavily-affected town.

Meanwhile, the outskirts of Kyiv have become hotspots of unrelenting violence, with many small towns outside Ukraine’s capital, including Borodyanka, Bucha, Hostomel, Makarov and Markhalivka, coming under intense shelling in recent days. In Borodyanka, a small town of around 13,000 people north-west of Kyiv, the Ukrainian State Emergency Service says that around 100 people may still be trapped under the rubble left after a missile hit a large apartment block, with ongoing shelling preventing search-and-rescue crews from reaching these people and potentially saving their lives.

The number of civilian causalities continues to mount. Between 4 a.m. on 24 February and midnight on 4 March, OHCHR reports at least 1,058 civilian casualties, including 351 killed, a figure that is likely much higher as civilian deaths and injuries continue to be verified. OHCHR reports 471 casualties in Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts (63 killed and 292 injured in Government-controlled areas and 23 killed and 93 injured in non-Government-controlled areas) and 587 civilian casualties in other regions of Ukraine.

Even before 24 February, people 60 years old and above represented one-third of the people in need in the Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts – one of the highest proportions of older persons in need among humanitarian crises across the world. In eastern Ukraine, HelpAge’s recently conducted multi-sectoral needs assessment found that more than 90 per cent of older persons need food assistance, nearly 80 per cent lack access to sufficient safe drinking water and 75 per cent report insufficient hygiene items, while 34 per cent report that they need urgent medication for chronic illnesses.
The main gas operator in Ukraine also informed that 16 gas distribution stations in five oblasts with high levels of insecurity were shut down, leaving hundreds of thousands of consumers without gas, which many households use for cooking and water heating. The stations were reportedly shut down due to the significant damage in the networks of regional operators, some of which will be impossible to repair until the fighting stops.

As fighting continues to intensify, people may continue to be displaced multiple times, significantly increasing protection risks and humanitarian needs, while creating challenges for well-targeted humanitarian assistance as it becomes more difficult to identify the location and needs of affected people on the move and reach them with the assistance they desperately need. In Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts, it is likely that many of the 854,000 people already internally displaced since 2014 have now been re-displaced, making them among the most vulnerable amid the current crisis.

Millions of people have been displaced since the escalation of conflict on 24 February, with UNHCR reporting more than 1.3 million people who have fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries, with more than of them – nearly 650,000 people – arriving in Poland. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) says that the more than 78,800 third-country nationals who have crossed into bordering countries have experienced discrimination based on their race, ethnicity and nationality, calling on states to investigate and act immediately to ensure that everyone fleeing the conflict is treated humanely and has access to protection. As the number of people displaced increases, the European Union has announced that it will offer temporary protection to those fleeing the ongoing conflict, including Ukrainian nationals and third-country nationals with legal residence in Ukraine.

As humanitarian needs and protection risks worsen, local and national authorities, local non-governmental and civil society organizations, UN agencies and humanitarian partners continue to largely scale-up response activities in border areas with neighbouring countries receiving growing numbers of displaced people. In the worst-affected areas of Ukraine, partners continue to leverage the presence and capacities of local organizations to deliver life-saving assistance to those most in need and adapt their response strategies to fit the new operational reality, but the deteriorating security situation continues to limit humanitarian access. On 4 March, the recently appointed UN Crisis Coordinator, Mr. Amin Awad, arrived in Ukraine, where he will lead the coordination of UN efforts in the country, including the humanitarian response on both sides of the “contact line”.

NEEDS, RESPONSE & GAPS

NEEDS

- Food, water, shelter and basic household items are urgently needed, especially for those trapped in cities experiencing active hostilities whose access to markets have been cut off and supplies running short as supply chains grind to a halt. Oxygen needs remain critical in affected areas, especially for patients in hospitals. Trauma and surgical supplies, essential medicines as well as backup generators and fuel for health care facilities are needed.

- Health needs are greatest in eastern (Donetsk and Luhanska blasts) and southern Ukraine (Odeska oblast) Ukraine. Continuation of crucial life-saving health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and immunization campaigns that have been disrupted by ongoing hostilities, including for Polio and COVID-19 is critical. Psychosocial and mental health support for affected people is also a critical need.

- Scaled-up capacities at reception centres for displaced people is needed. Humanitarian needs at border areas with neighbouring countries include food assistance; access to transportation; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities; legal assistance; protection services and mental health support; and access to medicines, emergency health care and education.

- Repair works to restore access to water supply, electricity, telecommunications and other critical services in the hardest-hit areas. Fair treatment and protection for third-party nationals (Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, among others) fleeing the conflict. States must investigate reported discrimination and mistreatment and ensure that displaced people have access to protection services.

- Respect for the independence of humanitarian organizations and protection of humanitarian personnel and volunteers is needed. Systematic “windows of silence” and security guarantees in conflict-affected areas to facilitate the evacuation of civilians and relief workers and to reach people in need of humanitarian assistance.
Implementation and monitoring of humanitarian corridors that facilitate quick and safe passage of humanitarian cargo and convoys.

**RESPONSE**

**Response coordination**

- The Government of Ukraine has set up a Coordination Centre for Humanitarian and Social Affairs to coordinate the response of NGOs and international humanitarian organizations. The Cabinet of Ministers will facilitate relations with diplomatic missions, international organizations and donors to ensure the coordinated delivery of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

- The Logistics, Emergency Telecommunications, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) clusters have been activated in Ukraine, adding to the six clusters and three sub-clusters and working groups already activated in the country. For a list of the activated clusters, sub-clusters and working groups in Ukraine, click here.

- OCHA is mapping new capacities and partners in Ukraine to understand the operational presence of humanitarian partners, ensure a better-coordinated response and identify response gaps. Register your humanitarian organization to get connected with clusters and be part of the coordinated response (available in English, Ukrainian and Russian). The information collected will be included in Who does What, Where (3W) products.

- The Cash Working Group (CWG), co-led by OCHA and ACTED, has established four task teams to assess and plan the cash-based response. These teams will focus on targeting (led by World Food Programme, WFP), transfer mechanisms (led by Norwegian Refugee Council, NRC), deduplication and registration (led by UNHCR) and monitoring (led by ACTED).

**Assessments**

- Several UN agencies and humanitarian partners are conducting sector-based and multi-sectoral assessments, particularly in border areas, to identify needs and response gaps and better coordinate response planning.

- Health Cluster partners, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO), carried out an assessment of the public health situation in Ukraine. Similar analyses will be rolled out in neighbouring countries receiving displaced people over the coming weeks.

- HelpAge International carried out a rapid multi-sectoral needs assessment for older persons in Ukraine, conducting interviews with more than 1,500 people.

- REACH Initiative is rolling out a survey to identify the geographic coverage of humanitarian warehouses and the operational presence of humanitarian partners in Ukraine.

**Humanitarian assistance delivered**

- Local NGO Donbass Development Center (DDC), with financing support from the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF), delivered nearly 15 tons of potable water to affected communities in the city of Donetsk, Donetsk oblast (non-Government-controlled areas, NGCA), over the last 10 days.

- With support from Save the Children and UHF financing, DDC provided shelter materials and relief items for bomb shelters to six educational establishments damaged by ongoing hostilities in Donetsk oblast (NGCA). DDC also provided shelter materials and heaters to five hospitals that have suffered damage in Donetsk oblast (NGCA).

- IOM delivered emergency aid to 500 older persons and people living with disabilities in Ukraine. The U.S. Agency for International Development’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) delivered around 18,500 high thermal blankets to IOM in Lviv to help displaced people cope with harsh winter weather.

- UNICEF Romania’s first Blue Dot family and child support hub is now fully operational at the border city of Sighetu Marmatiei, where together with local authorities and civil society organizations, three tents have been set up to provide critical services to displaced people. Around 2,500 women and children have already received at least one service at the Blue Dot.
WHO delivered around 600 doses of tetanus toxoid to Lviv, with additional deliveries expected to arrive in the coming weeks.

**Humanitarian assistance planned & ongoing**

- IOM, in collaboration with French NGO SOS, is working on shipping tents and around 4,000 sleeping bags to the Moldova-Ukraine border and mobilizing the delivery of non-food items (NFIs). WHO is establishing emergency operations centres in eight oblasts to coordinate the emergency health response.

- The rescEU – a component of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism – will deploy medical equipment and supplies, including ventilators, infusion pumps, patient monitors, masks and gowns, ultrasound devices and oxygen concentrators, from its stockpiles based in Germany, Hungary and The Netherlands.

- On 5 March, Protection Cluster partners rolled out a Protection Service Mapping tool to map the different services currently provided by Ukrainian authorities and humanitarian partners. The tool will be the main source of data and information on the availability of services for referrals and coverage of gaps for the time being.

- With the support of USAID/BHA, UNICEF is working on procuring WASH supplies to address the needs of around 40,000 people in central, eastern and western Ukraine during the first weeks of the response to wide-scale displacement. Additionally, UNICEF will deliver child protection supplies to around 40,000 people in Ukraine.

- WFP, with support from USAID/BHA, is procuring food rations for around 125,000 for five days. IOM and UNHCR are working together to distribute essential medical supplies, support the establishment and rehabilitation of health facilities, and improve the capacity of health centres to respond to COVID-19 in Donetska and Luhanska.

- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is preparing emergency medical supply shipments to Ukraine and donating its remaining medical stocks in-country to health facilities facing critical shortages in areas that experience active hostilities. MSF is carrying out emergency health needs assessment at border areas in several neighbouring countries and setting up the emergency response across both sides of the border in some countries, such as Poland.

**GAPS & CHALLENGES:**

- Access to conflict-affected communities remains severely restricted, while the constantly deteriorating security situation prevents the possibility of evacuation in many locations, leading to the accumulation and exacerbation of unmet needs.

- The operational presence of humanitarian partners is currently restricted to certain parts of the country, with a limited number of partners in central and western Ukraine, as many organizations, thanks to the agreement by all parties to the ongoing hostilities, have been forced to relocate staff to safe havens where they can operate, adapt their programmes and plan for expanding presence and operations.

- Access to health services, essential medicines, and market goods continues to be limited by security concerns and movement restrictions related to the hostilities and the imposed martial law and curfews. Local authorities and partners require “windows of silence” to restore water, electricity and other basic services.

- Partners lack resources and funding to deliver the support that is needed. Scarcity of basic goods and limited access to essential services for affected people. Most food assistance is currently arriving from abroad, making an accelerated cross-border movement of humanitarian goods a response priority. There is also a lack of food storage warehouses in Kyiv and other cities to allow for the creation of food kits.

- Partially non-operational banking services, rising prices and restrictions on movement in affected areas limit the effectiveness of cash-based assistance. Lack of fuel and the ability for organizations to secure cash to purchase relief items continues to hinder the speed of response activities.
USEFUL LINKS

- The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund is one of the quickest, most effective ways to directly support the most urgent, lifesaving humanitarian relief in Ukraine. Donate here.
- OCHA’s partners’ capacity mapping tool (available in English, Ukrainian and Russian): https://bit.ly/3sL8krS
- Humanitarianresponse.info Ukraine: https://bit.ly/35xVh4r
- List of activated clusters, sub-clusters and working groups in Ukraine: https://bit.ly/3sL7wTS
- Logistics Cluster’s Service Request Form (SRF) for transportation and warehousing support: https://bit.ly/3tuibBL
- Share information on incoming cargo and its final destination to facilitate planning from the Logistics Cluster for downstream logistics services to support partners’ response with: alexandre.austin@wfp.org.

- Are you a certified psychologist, counsellor, psychotherapist or social worker, fluent in Ukrainian and/or Russian? Do you want to help conflict-affected people in Ukraine? IOM is looking to contract people like you who can work from home to provide psychological support through an established hotline. Learn more: https://bit.ly/3Cote3y

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1 Logistics partners have established a travel route from Rzeszow, Poland, to Lviv, Ukraine, and transportation solutions and storage spaces have been secured in Lviv, Rzeszow and Warsaw.