Over recent days we have witnessed scenes of violence unfolding across Ukraine. All of us have seen this with mounting horror.

Although attacks continue, and there remains much confusion on the ground in Ukraine, one thing is clear: millions more people now need humanitarian assistance and protection as a result of this military offensive.

We therefore come together today to launch a humanitarian appeal to meet the immediate humanitarian and protection needs of children, women and men affected by this tragic conflict, including those forced into displacement and movement indeed outside their country, as we will be hearing from Filippo Grandi.

The conflict is already, in these early days, having a devastating humanitarian cost.

As of yesterday, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported at least 536 civilian casualties, and these numbers change by the hour, including at least 136 dead. People who six days before had no idea that their lives would be so engulfed.

Aerial and ground attacks on towns and cities have damaged critical civilian infrastructure, including hundreds of homes, schools and health facilities.
Hundreds of thousands of people have been left with no electricity or water.

Bridges and roads have been damaged under military operations, cutting people off from crucial markets and critical supplies.

Food shortages are already being reported in eastern Ukraine and soon in other parts of the country.

As this conflict has intensified in Kyiv and other towns and cities, we know that more than 100,000 people have been internally displaced, moved and stayed within the borders of Ukraine. Although likely these figures underestimate hugely the amount of displacement.

As we will be hearing from Filippo, the number of those leaving Ukraine goes up by the hour. While the scale and scope of displacement is not yet clear, UNHCR estimate that up to 4 million people might, could, leave the country. We will hear more on that in a second.

The use of explosive weapons in urban areas carries a high risk of indiscriminate impact.

In this increasingly dangerous operating environment, over 100 UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and partners, national partners, in Ukraine have committed to stay and deliver, as the Secretary-General said, to meet rising needs.

National NGOs, civil-society organizations and religious groups are on the front lines now, today, providing hot meals, emergency kits and first aid, and trying to protect people from harm in communities that they know so well where the needs may lie.

National NGOs are also working with local authorities to carry out search-and-rescue and evacuation operations.
The International Committee of the Red Cross and its partners, the Ukrainian Red Cross, are delivering drinking water and essential items to people in need inside Ukraine, as well as to fleeing families.

The Secretary-General has already referred to UNHCR’s deliveries in these early days in Ukraine.

UNICEF, as he mentioned, is supporting mobile teams to provide care for traumatized children.

So, the work goes on, the work never stops, and the people working for humanitarian agencies did not leave.

Indeed, the UN and NGOs have surged, have increased their staff, and they are working around the clock to bring more in, working in Ukraine under Amin’s leadership, as we will hear in a minute.

While deteriorating security has forced some of us to temporarily suspend operations, those will be scaled up as soon as access and security limitations permit. The security has been very much a high priority agenda for all of us, including for our Secretary-General.

We must not forget that the latest violence comes on the back of eight years of a conflict in eastern Ukraine, which had already left 3,000 people dead and nearly 3 million people needing humanitarian assistance and protection in that region.

The Secretary-General has released US$20 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support and inject funding into response efforts.

UN agencies and humanitarian partners have also launched appeals to meet growing needs in conflict-stricken areas. Yesterday, ICRC launched its appeal for Ukraine as well, and of course we call on donors to generously fund ICRC’s life-saving work. Their support in Ukraine, as in so many other places around the world, is irreplaceable,
and this is a fact that the people sitting here, and the Secretary-General, know first-hand.

Neighbouring Governments, donors, the private sector and individuals are also stepping up their assistance.

In an extraordinary outpouring of support, the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, that we host as OCHA, has received more than 10,000 online donations from individuals across 90 countries, totalling over $1 million. And for OCHA, this is a signal event. This funding goes directly to local and national relief organizations. Thank you for those who made those calls.

Today, we are launching a humanitarian appeal of $1.7 billion for the Ukraine crisis. As the Secretary-General said, this appeal has two components: one humanitarian appeal for needs inside the country, that I had the privilege to coordinate, and a Regional Refugee Response Plan for support in the surrounding countries, led by High Commissioner Filippo Grandi.

The humanitarian appeal we are launching today for needs inside Ukraine, which will be led by Amin, calls for $1.1 billion for more than 6 million people in need with life-saving aid and protection over the next three months.

We estimate that of those 6 million people, over 1 million will be probably displaced, uncertain at the moment, but that emphasizes that people who do not move also will be in need of assistance as their lives change so radically under the bombing, the fighting that goes through their cities and villages.

The most pressing humanitarian needs are for emergency medical services and supplies, clean water, and shelter and protection for the displaced.
To put this appeal into practice, we will need safe and unimpeded access by all humanitarian actors to all areas affected by the conflict.

And you will not be surprised that we are actively negotiating with all the parties to this conflict to ensure we can reach people in need, and to ensure that this is in line with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, operational independence and impartiality, and enshrined in international humanitarian law.

And we have been reminding the Security Council of the United Nations yesterday, Filippo and I, of the need for all parties to respect international humanitarian law and take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects from harm.

In conclusion, Mr. Secretary-General, this conflict has shaken us all to the core. It is unprecedented in its scale, in its possible consequences and the urgency of its needs.

By supporting this Flash Appeal with these two elements, we can demonstrate our solidarity to the people of Ukraine in their darkest hour of need.

Thank you also to those many generous Governments and individuals who have already expressed their support, and I call on others to join them.

Thank you.