



# Ukraine – Complex Emergency

MARCH 21, 2024

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

**10,675**

UN-Confirmed  
Civilian Deaths  
Resulting From  
the Conflict

*OHCHR – February 2024*

**6**

**MILLION**

Refugees From  
Ukraine Recorded  
Across Europe

*UNHCR – March 2024*

**3.4**

**MILLION**

People Internally  
Displaced Across  
Ukraine

*IOM – February 2024*

**14.6**

**MILLION**

People in Need of  
Humanitarian  
Assistance in Ukraine

*UN – January 2024*

**11**

**MILLION**

People Reached With  
Humanitarian  
Assistance in Ukraine  
in 2023

*UN – December 2023*

- GoR aerial attacks continue to target public infrastructure across Ukraine, resulting in civilian deaths, including children and first responders, and driving humanitarian needs, relief actors and international media report.
- Households across Ukraine face reduced access to basic services and high heating costs caused by winter weather and GoR attacks targeting power infrastructure, FEWS NET reports.
- Humanitarian actors, including USG partners, delivered critical multi-sector assistance to conflict-affected communities across the country and along the front line in early 2024, according to the UN.



<sup>1</sup> FY 2024 funding for the Ukraine Complex Emergency will be included in future products when committed/obligated. For information on the U.S. Government (USG)'s funding toward the response in FY 2023, refer to Ukraine Complex Emergency Fact Sheet #22 released on September 30, 2023, available on the USAID website at <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work>.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### GoR Attacks Target Public Infrastructure, Driving Humanitarian Needs and Increasing Risks to Aid Workers and Civilians

Government of Russia (GoR) attacks across Ukraine continue to damage and destroy public infrastructure, drive humanitarian needs, and negatively affect aid worker and civilian safety, according to relief actors and international media. In particular, the GoR continued to target Odesa *Oblast's* Odesa city due to its strategic location on the Black Sea during March, leaving many civilians without electricity, heat, safe drinking water, and shelter. Two GoR single-use unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) attacks struck a residential area in Odesa city on March 15, resulting in 21 deaths, injury to more than 70 individuals, and widespread damage to civilian infrastructure, including health facilities and residential homes, according to the UN and international media. The second UAV attack killed two first responders who arrived after the initial strike to treat injured civilians. The attacks also cut off at least 800 individuals from the gas supply and caused an estimated 500 people to temporarily lose electricity as of March 16, local media report. This incident represented the deadliest attack in the city since the GoR's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, according to the Government of Ukraine (GoU). In response, humanitarian actors—including USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) partners—distributed food and shelter repair materials, provided psychosocial support (PSS) services, and registered affected individuals in multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) programs.

Meanwhile, GoR UAVs struck high-rise residential buildings in Dnipropetrovsk *Oblast's* Kryvyi Rih city on March 12, resulting in the deaths of five people and injury to at least 40 others, including approximately ten children, according to the UN and international media. On the same day, GoR missile attacks in Donetsk *Oblast's* Myrnohrad city and Sumy *Oblast's* Sumy city destroyed residential buildings in both cities, resulting in the deaths of at least four people, injury to more than ten others, and damage to approximately 80 houses and multi-story buildings, the UN and international media report. In response to both attacks, humanitarian actors—including USAID/BHA partners—provided emergency assistance to the affected populations. Following GoR strikes on residential buildings in Kryvyi Rih and Odesa, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Denise Brown released statements condemning the attacks and underscoring the GoR's continued violations of international humanitarian law and disregard for the protection of civilians.

GoR attacks caused approximately 150 civilian deaths and injury to 350 people in February alone, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). GoR aerial bombardment and UAV attacks accounted for more than 70 percent of casualties, with the majority of verified casualties concentrated in frontline *oblasts*, including Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Kherson. Additionally, the UN recorded at least 20 humanitarian access incidents caused by GoR attacks between January and February that resulted in two aid worker deaths and injury to at least ten other aid workers. Of these casualties, two deaths and four injuries occurred during a single incident in Kherson. Since the GoR's February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, OHCHR recorded nearly 30,800 total civilian casualties, including 10,675 deaths and injury to more than 20,000 individuals as of February 29, 2024.

### Conflict-Affected Households in Frontline Areas Face Challenges Meeting Basic Needs During Winter Season

Households in frontline areas continue to face challenges accessing food, livelihoods, and basic services such as electricity, health care, and safe drinking water due to ongoing conflict and harsh winter weather, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). Frontline settlements in Donetsk and Kharkiv are among the most vulnerable to food access disruptions due to insufficient

access to food supplies and markets, according to REACH. Households across Ukraine are also experiencing higher heating costs due to harsh weather conditions and GoR attacks increasingly targeting electrical infrastructure during the winter months between November and March, FEWS NET reports. One-quarter of key informants in frontline areas are reliant on humanitarian aid for solid fuel, such as firewood, according to a January assessment by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A majority of key informants also cited insulation as the primary winter need in the country, along with access to heat appliances and sources and distribution of solid fuels as other significant needs.

## Humanitarian Actors Deliver Critical Assistance to Vulnerable Populations in Frontline Areas and Across Ukraine

Humanitarian organizations, including USG partners, continue to provide emergency multi-sector assistance to conflict-affected populations, including those displaced from frontline areas, in early 2024, according to the UN. The Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster delivered more than 15,800 wood boards, 6,900 plastic tarpaulin sheets, and 5,600 emergency shelter kits to conflict-affected populations across Ukraine between December 29, 2023, and March 19, 2024.<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian actors also continue to scale-up support for GoU-led evacuations and assistance for evacuees in frontline communities in eastern and northern Ukraine during early 2024. International and local civil society organizations coordinated the evacuation of approximately 50 adults and children from three frontline *oblasts* between March 14 and 19.

Meanwhile, a UN-led interagency convoy reached approximately 400 residents remaining in Donetsk's Ocheretyne town with critical assistance on February 27, the UN reports. Humanitarian actors, including USAID/BHA partner IOM and USG partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), distributed hygiene kits to the frontline community, which largely relies on humanitarian aid to meet basic needs. Approximately 5,000 people lived in Ocheretyne—located near the newly GoR-occupied Avdiivka town as of February 17, 2024—prior to Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022; however, hostilities, including nearly daily attacks, along the front line have resulted in an estimated 92 percent of residents departing Ocheretyne through mandatory evacuations or self-relocations as of early March, international media report.

<sup>2</sup> The Shelter and Non-Food Items Cluster is the coordinating body for humanitarian shelter activities and relief commodities, comprising UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders.

### KEY FIGURES



**1.5 Million**

People in Ukraine reached with USAID/BHA-supported in-kind food assistance via WFP in February

### U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

#### FOOD SECURITY

To meet increasing food needs since the GoR invasion, USAID/BHA is supporting the UN World Food Program (WFP) and two international NGOs (INGOs) to provide food assistance in Ukraine. WFP continues to prioritize food distributions in eastern and southern Ukraine, where fighting and supply chain disruptions hinder vulnerable populations' access to food in frontline areas. WFP reached nearly 2.4 million people with food assistance, including approximately 1.5 million people with in-kind food supplies and 885,000 people with cash-based assistance, across Ukraine in February.



**7.6 Million**

People in Ukraine  
reached by humanitarian  
mobile health teams  
during 2023

## HEALTH

To support the health needs of conflict-affected populations, USG humanitarian partners are providing health care supplies, medicine, and other health assistance in Ukraine and neighboring countries. USAID/BHA is supporting the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN World Health Organization (WHO), and six INGO partners to respond to emergency health needs in Ukraine. In 2023 alone, Health Cluster member organizations' mobile health teams reached approximately 7.6 million people with assistance. Humanitarian organizations—including USAID/BHA partners—reached more than 2,200 people across Ukraine with primary health care services, including medicines and supplies, between late December 2023 and March 15, 2024.

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) is also supporting IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, and other international organizations to provide health care services to refugees in neighboring countries. This support includes delivering essential medical supplies and equipment, connecting refugees with mental health and PSS (MHPSS) services, providing logistics support to fill gaps, and providing support for persons with disabilities. State/PRM health support in multiple countries in the region serves to strengthen the capacity of local health systems to support increased numbers of refugees from Ukraine.



**526,000**

People supported with  
WASH services through  
USG partner UNICEF  
during January

## WASH

Disaster-affected populations are often more susceptible to waterborne diseases due to reduced access to hygiene items, safe drinking water, and sanitation services. In response, USG partners are providing water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support to conflict-affected populations, including distributing hygiene kits; repairing damaged WASH infrastructure; and transporting safe drinking water to conflict-affected areas. Overall, USAID/BHA supports IOM, UNICEF, nine INGO partners, and one Ukrainian NGO partner to address WASH needs in Ukraine. State/PRM partners are also providing WASH assistance in Ukraine and to refugees in neighboring countries, including strengthening sanitation infrastructure in shelters. In January, USG partner UNICEF ensured continuous access to safe drinking water and sanitation services for approximately 526,000 people across Ukraine through repairs and rehabilitation of WASH networks and the supply of water treatment chemicals and equipment to water utilities.



**10**

USG implementing  
partners providing  
MPCA

## MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

The USG supports IOM, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, WFP, and six INGOs to provide MPCA. Cash assistance and vouchers allow displaced or other conflict-affected people to meet their immediate needs—such as clothing, food, fuel, shelter, or utilities—through local markets and help reach vulnerable communities more efficiently than providing in-kind commodities. With support from USAID/BHA and other donors, WFP disbursed more than \$20.8 million in cash assistance to nearly

885,000 conflict-affected individuals across Ukraine in February. State/PRM is also supporting IOM and UNHCR to provide MPCA to refugees in neighboring countries, as well as UNICEF to provide cash assistance to vulnerable households with children in transit from Ukraine to neighboring countries. UNHCR and its partners reached nearly 80,000 conflict-affected individuals, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees inside Ukraine, with MPCA between January and February.



**133,000**

People reached with protection assistance by State/PRM partner UNHCR between January and February

## PROTECTION

Armed conflict often exacerbates protection risks. Civilians must cope with threats such as domestic abuse, exclusion from life-saving humanitarian assistance, exploitative labor, family separation, and sexual violence. In response, USAID/BHA supports IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women—through USAID/BHA’s partnership with the UN Development Program—and WHO, as well as 11 INGOs and two Ukrainian NGOs to implement protection interventions for conflict-affected populations in Ukraine. USAID/BHA partners provide MHPSS services to children, persons with disabilities, and older people and operate mobile protection teams to reach remote communities with gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response activities, legal assistance, and MHPSS. UNICEF-supported MHPSS interventions reached more than 75,000 children and caregivers to help them cope with the psychological effects of conflict and displacement during January. UNICEF also reached approximately 12,600 children and 2,600 women with GBV response, prevention, and risk mitigation activities as of the same date.

In addition, State/PRM partners—including IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, and UNICEF—provide legal and protection assistance to vulnerable individuals in Ukraine and refugees in neighboring countries. Services include child protection, GBV prevention and response, and MHPSS support; the establishment of child-friendly and women- and girl-friendly spaces; and prevention of and response to trafficking in persons. State/PRM partner UNHCR and its partners reached nearly more than 133,000 people with protection assistance across Ukraine between January and February.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- The GoR commenced a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, after mobilizing hundreds of thousands of military forces and heavy weaponry near its border with Ukraine and subsequently launching widespread attacks. Immediately prior, the GoR ordered forces into non-GoU-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts* after recognizing the areas’ independence from Ukraine on February 21.
- The GoR invasion marked a major escalation of conflict in Ukraine, where fighting in the country’s eastern *oblasts* has caused large-scale population displacement and widespread infrastructure damage since March 2014. The heaviest fighting occurred in the easternmost *oblasts* bordering Russia, particularly Donetsk and Luhansk; however, the large influx of IDPs from these areas have also impacted

neighboring *oblasts*. The UN estimates that approximately 2.9 million conflict-affected people in eastern Ukraine had required humanitarian assistance as of early 2022, prior to the February 24 GoR invasion.

- On February 24, 2022, USAID announced the activation of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to lead the USG humanitarian response to the crisis in Ukraine, with initial staff in Rzeszów, Poland; Chişinău, Moldova; Budapest, Hungary; Bucharest, Romania; and Bratislava, Slovakia. To support the DART, USAID activated a Response Management Team in Washington, D.C. State/PRM staff in Brussels, Belgium; Chişinău, Moldova; Warsaw, Poland; Geneva, Switzerland; Kyiv, Ukraine; and Washington, D.C., also continue to support response activities. As of December 2023, USAID maintains staff in Krakow, Poland; Kyiv, Ukraine; and Washington, D.C.
- On October 14, 2023, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget A. Brink renewed the declaration of humanitarian need for Ukraine for FY 2024 due to widespread displacement and continued humanitarian needs of vulnerable populations in Ukraine resulting from Russia's full-scale invasion.

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## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)