KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Project HOPE’s teams are providing humanitarian support in Ukraine as well as the three countries that have received the most Ukrainian refugees to date: Poland, Romania, and Moldova.
- Teams on the ground are procuring and distributing essential supplies to conflict-affected populations, including hygiene kits and other non-food items.
- In partnership with local partners, Project HOPE is facilitating direct medical assistance in Ukraine and at reception shelters of bordering counties.
- As the situation in Ukraine rapidly deteriorates, Project HOPE is preparing to scale up and expand programming. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and protection activities, in particular, are needed for separated children and other highly vulnerable groups.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine enters its fourth week, the offensive persisted in major population centers across the country, including Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Kyiv. Heavy fighting also continued in Donetsk and Luhanska oblasts on both sides of the “contact line” with Russia. Many analysts believe a bloody stalemate is emerging between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

On Sunday, aerial fire intensified in Mariupol. The city has lost access to electricity, food, gas, and water since Russian troops surrounded it in late February. Reports indicate Russian forces are present throughout the city and that the battle has “descended into house-to-house guerrilla warfare.”

Efforts to evacuate thousands of trapped civilians in Mariupol and other areas have been repeatedly thwarted by the Russian military’s breaking of cease-fire agreements. The city’s civilian infrastructure—including hospitals, residential areas, and a theater providing shelter to hundreds of people—have been devastated by bombardments.

Russian fighters have reportedly taken thousands of Mariupol residents into Russia against their will. Ukrainian officials say that these civilians may be used for forced labor.

At least 902 civilians have died and 1,459 have been injured since hostilities began on February 24. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which tracks casualties, cautioned that actual figures are likely much higher. The majority of deaths and injuries were caused by explosive weapons with wide impacts areas—such as artillery shells and rockets.

Significant destruction of major infrastructure—from roads and electricity lines to hospitals and schools—leave many civilians without access to essential goods and services. In Mariupol and other besieged cities, trapped residents face dehydration and starvation.
Human Rights Watch (HRW) has called upon authorities to ensure safe passage for civilians trapped by fighting in Ukraine, particularly Mariupol. The organization received multiple reports of human rights violations in the conflict, including forced evacuations, targeting of civilian infrastructure, and the use of internationally banned weaponry in densely populated areas.\textsuperscript{vi}

"The use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas heightens concerns of unlawful, indiscriminate, and disproportionate attacks," warned HRW. "These weapons have a large destructive radius, are inherently inaccurate, or deliver multiple munitions at the same time."

Meanwhile, U.S. officials say they have "credible information" that Russia is compiling lists of Ukrainians to be killed or set to camps and that troops will "likely use lethal measures to disperse peaceful protests."\textsuperscript{vii}

**HUMANITARIAN NEEDS**

More than 3.3 million Ukrainians—or about 1 in 13—have fled fighting in their home country since late February according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).\textsuperscript{viii} Poland has absorbed the most to date (more 2 million) followed by Romania (over 500,000), and Moldova (over 360,000).\textsuperscript{ix}

Host countries have made extensive efforts to support refugees. However, a protracted crisis and steady influx of newcomers threatens to overwhelm them. Some international relief agencies have estimated the number of refugees may reach 10 million if the conflict continues unabated.

The large number of unaccompanied children documented at reception sites across the Ukrainian border and trends of newly arrived refugees being taken in among local communities raises significant protection concerns. Moreover, the trauma, separation, and loss experienced by many Ukrainians speaks to urgent MHPSS needs.

For populations unable or unwilling to leave Ukraine, the situation is even more dire. An estimated 6.5 million Ukrainians have become internally displaced. The majority have sought refuge in the country’s west—once thought safe from the Russian assault but now increasingly involved in the crisis.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), estimates some 12 million Ukrainians are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.\textsuperscript{x} Needs include medical assistance for conflict-related injuries as fighting extends into densely populated areas. However, damage to hospitals and broken supply chains mean other medical necessities—including treatment for chronic conditions and non-conflict related emergencies—may go unmet in days and weeks to come.

Besieged communities are also reporting urgent food and non-food needs. On March 18, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced food supply chains in the country were collapsing, "with key infrastructure such as bridges and trains destroyed by bombs and many grocery stores and warehouses empty."\textsuperscript{xi}

**PROJECT HOPE RESPONSE**

Project HOPE continues to scale up response in Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Ukraine as the violence continues and the number of refugees increases. We’re working closely with local NGOs to implement programming while also supporting hospitals and government officials across each country. We’re also coordinating with the WHO Health and Logistics Clusters, Ministries of Health, and other authorities.

In the last few days, Project HOPE successfully moved shipments from Poland into Ukraine, and is anticipating a shipment from Moldova to be transported into Odessa.
this week. We’re working with government officials in Romania to import medicines, medical supplies, and other humanitarian goods into Ukraine, and exploring multiple supply routes to get these supplies to where they need to go.

We’ve provided grants to a number of small NGOs supporting refugees in Romania, and anticipate releasing more funds to NGOs in Poland this week, including for mental health and psychological first aid support.

Our team in Ukraine is exploring expansion of programming from medical resupply into psychosocial, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene support.

In Ukraine, Project HOPE’s activities include:

- Importation of two shipments into Lviv that were further dispersed through the country
- Provision of a grant to a Ukrainian non-governmental organization to purchase and transport pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to civilian hospitals.
- Assessment of hospitals and health facilities to determine needs and how best Project HOPE and partners can fulfill gaps.

In Moldova, Project HOPE’s activities include:

- Supporting SAMU's mobile medical team to serve refugees crossing the Ukraine/Moldova border as per the request of WHO and the Moldovan Ministry of Health.
- Procurement of essential medicines for delivery into Odessa this week
- Procurement and delivery of key non-food items (blankets, bedding, towels) to the Ministry of Social Protection to serve refugees.
- Mobilization of an Interagency Emergency Health Kit (IEHK) and insulin to the Ministry of Health to support refugees.

In Poland, Project HOPE’s activities include:

- Key support to Lviv Children's Hospital to manage additional patients from Ukraine
- Development of key relationships with public hospitals and local NGOs to continue supplying medicines and medical supplies into Ukraine and explore training opportunities for medical personnel.
- Assessing needs and contingency planning for health facilities in Poland as refugee numbers increase demand on the Polish health system.
- Establishing a sustainable logistics corridor into Ukraine.
- Supporting local NGOs to provide protection and mental health support to refugees.

In Romania, Project HOPE’s activities include:

- Supporting local NGOs to provide mental health support to refugees and hygiene/shelter needs.
- Working with government officials to import medicines, medical supplies, and other humanitarian items into Ukraine.

Project HOPE will continue to closely monitor the situation as it unfolds in order to respond to the most pressing health and humanitarian needs among affected populations.
Population movement remains fluid and, with delays and security challenges.


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