

# Ukraine – Complex Emergency

MAY 16, 2024

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

**10,946**

UN-Confirmed  
Civilian Deaths  
Resulting From  
the Conflict

*OHCHR – May 2024*

**5.9**  
MILLION

Refugees From  
Ukraine Recorded  
Across Europe

*UNHCR – April 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*

**3.6**  
MILLION

People Reached With  
Humanitarian  
Assistance in Ukraine  
January–March

*UN – May 2024*

- A surge in GoR attacks on Kharkiv *Oblast*, or region, since early May resulted in the deaths of at least eight civilians, injured an estimated 35 others, prompted the emergency evacuation of approximately 9,000 people from frontline areas, and critically damaged civilian infrastructure. In response, relief actors, including USAID/BHA partners, are providing emergency assistance to displaced populations.
- Ongoing hostilities across Ukraine have resulted in more than 32,000 verified civilian casualties—including 10,946 deaths—since February 2022, according to an April OHCHR report. The UN agency also recorded 129 deaths and injuries to more than 570 people during April, with 96 percent of casualties attributed to the GoR's use of explosive weapons with wide area effects.
- Returnee populations in Ukraine face challenges in accessing livelihoods and basic services amid unstable security conditions, according to a February-to-March IOM assessment.



<sup>1</sup>FY 2024 funding for the Ukraine Complex Emergency will be included in future products when committed/obligated. For information on U.S. Government (USG) 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 Intensifies Attacks in Kharkiv, Resulting in Civilian Casualties and Displacement

Government of Russia (GoR) attacks on critical infrastructure across Kharkiv resulted in civilian casualties and prompted evacuations in frontline communities in early May. A new wave of attacks since May 10 struck approximately 30 population centers in the *oblast*, resulting in the deaths of at least eight civilians, injury to approximately 35 others, and damage to residential and educational buildings. An estimated 9,000 people—including 600 children—were evacuated between May 9 and 16 from the most heavily targeted areas, including Kharkiv’s Bohodukhiv, Chuhuiv, and Kharkiv *raions*, or districts, according to local authorities. In total, the UN estimates that more than 14,000 people fled from six of the 29 *hromadas*, or municipalities, located across Bohodukhiv, Chuhuiv, and Kharkiv *raions* between May 10 and 13, representing approximately one-quarter of the population estimated to reside in the *hromadas* prior to the May escalation. Chuhuiv’s Vovchansk town—located approximately three miles from the border with Russia—sustained heavy destruction in the recent attacks, prompting nearly 90 percent of the town’s population to evacuate as of May 13, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Kharkiv city remains the primary destination for individuals fleeing areas of intensified hostilities, according to the UN. Approximately 3,500 people had been processed through the Kharkiv city transit center from May 10 to 13.

Among those displaced, critical humanitarian needs include clothing, bedding, hygiene supplies, and other essential daily commodities, as well as cash assistance and psychosocial support, according to the UN. In response, humanitarian actors, including USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) partners, are providing emergency assistance to people fleeing intensified hostilities in Kharkiv city’s transit center. The UN World Food Program (WFP) and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in partnership with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), had registered more than 2,500 people for multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA) since May 10, of whom approximately 650 had received their first payment as of May 16. To respond to additional food needs, NGOs distributed more than 1,200 hot meals and approximately 1,600 ready-to-eat food packages—estimated to provide sufficient food for one individual for one week—at the Kharkiv city transit center. Additionally, relief actors provided shelter assistance to approximately 600 people, including more than 20 children, at 30 collective centers across Kharkiv city between May 10 and 16. Humanitarian organizations also distributed emergency relief commodities—including bedding, clothing, and mattresses—to an estimated 350 displaced individuals as of May 14.

### Total Civilian Casualties Rise to 32,000 Since the Start of Russia’s Full-Scale Invasion

The GoR’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine continues to result in civilian casualties, with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)’s Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine—which monitors and documents impacts on civilians from Russia’s war on Ukraine—recording 129 deaths and injury to more than 570 others in April alone. While the number of civilians killed remained similar in April compared to March, the number of injured civilians increased by nearly 37 percent, marking the second month in a row of increased injuries to civilians. Nearly 96 percent of casualties in April resulted from the GoR’s use of explosive weapons that affect a wide area upon impact, including airstrikes, missiles, rockets, and shelling from heavy artillery, while the remaining 4 percent of casualties were attributed to landmines and explosive remnants of war. In total, hostilities caused an estimated 32,100 verified civilian casualties—including 10,946 deaths and injury to more than 21,000 people—between February 22, 2022, and April 30, according to OHCHR. Moreover, the UN Children’s Fund

(UNICEF) estimates that as of May 13, at least 1,993 children in Ukraine had been killed or injured since late February 2022. Both OHCHR and UNICEF note that actual casualty figures are likely considerably higher. Security-related access challenges have delayed reporting from several frontline areas, including in Donetsk and Luhansk *oblasts*.

## Nearly 4.5 Million Displaced Individuals Have Returned, Despite Persistent Insecurity and Continued Needs

Returnee populations in Ukraine continue to struggle to find livelihood opportunities and access basic services amid poor safety and security conditions in their areas of origin, according to an assessment conducted by IOM from February to March. IOM found that since the start of the conflict in February 2022, an estimated 4.5 million people had returned spontaneously to their place of habitual residence as of March 15, following approximately two weeks of displacement. Nearly 40 percent of the areas assessed witnessed a return of approximately 40 to 60 percent of the previously displaced population, with Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kyiv, and Mykolayiv *oblasts* experiencing the highest rates of return. The assessment, which collected data from nearly 860 locations across 23 of Ukraine's 24 *oblasts*, reported livelihoods as a key need, with individuals in up to 56 percent of locations experiencing unemployment. IOM rated the majority of assessed locations, nearly 40 percent, as having Medium-level severity—the middle classification on a three-tiered scale from Low to High—for livelihood needs, primarily due to slow recovery of the job market and industrial sector, thereby limiting employment opportunities. Additionally, 56 percent of returnees surveyed reported damage to schools in their areas of residence, and more than 40 percent of returnees confirmed living in areas with damage to health facilities and road infrastructure. While electrical and water disruptions affected approximately 10 percent of locations, the frequency of disruptions had decreased by approximately 50 percent across surveyed locations compared to the November-to-December period.

In addition, safety and security conditions remain a significant challenge for returnee populations, with more than 20 percent of assessed locations—in which nearly 60 percent of surveyed returnees resided—reporting that residents had been subject to long-range attacks, missile strikes, and shelling during the month prior to the assessment. Although IOM only classified approximately 7 percent of locations as having High-level safety and security severity, nearly two-thirds of these locations showed a return of up to 40 percent of their populations, despite unstable security conditions.

### KEY FIGURES



**1.7 Million**

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

### U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

#### FOOD SECURITY

To meet the food needs of vulnerable populations affected by the GoR's full-scale invasion, USAID/BHA supports WFP and two international NGOs (INGOs) to provide food assistance in the form of in-kind food baskets and MPCA that can be used to purchase food 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 1.7 million people with food assistance, including approximately 1.2 million people with in-kind food supplies and more than 500,000 people with cash-based assistance, across Ukraine in April.



**388**

Individual facilities supported by Health Cluster assistance in Ukraine as of March

## HEALTH

To support the health needs of conflict-affected populations, USG humanitarian partners provide medical 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 five INGO partners to respond to emergency health needs in Ukraine. The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) is also supporting one humanitarian organization providing health assistance in Ukraine. In the first three months of 2024, Health Cluster member organizations reached approximately 800,000 people with assistance.<sup>2</sup>

In neighboring countries, State/PRM supports IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, and other international organizations to provide health care services to refugees from Ukraine. This support includes delivering essential medical supplies and equipment, connecting refugees with mental health and psychosocial support (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.



**1.4 Million**

People supported with WASH supplies through USG partner UNICEF since 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. From January to March, USG partner UNICEF reached more than 775,000 people with maintenance, restoration, and repair of crucial WASH infrastructure across Ukraine.



**10**

USG implementing partners providing MPCA

## MULTIPURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

The USG supports IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and six INGOs to provide MPCA. Cash assistance allows 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 \$10 million in cash assistance to more than 500,000 conflict-affected individuals across Ukraine in April. In addition,

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

State/PRM is 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. From January to March, UNHCR reached more than 95,000 conflict-affected individuals, including IDPs and returnees inside Ukraine, with MPCA to help cover the cost of basic items, such as clothing, food, medicine, shelter, and utilities.



**188,000**

People inside Ukraine reached with protection assistance by State/PRM partner UNHCR in 2024

## 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 ten 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 237,000 children and caregivers to help them cope with the psychological effects of conflict and displacement during March.

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.

## 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 Kraków, 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://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)