

Ukraine



Conflict between armed groups and government forces in eastern Ukraine is rarely in the headlines, but it has affected some 5.2 million people since fighting began in April 2014.

UNOCHA reports that 3.5 million continue to endure protracted violence and need humanitarian assistance to survive, trapped in a conflict with no end in sight. A further 1.45 million have been forced to flee their homes inside the country, making it the world's ninth-largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Clashes along the Line of Contact in eastern Ukraine have had far-reaching humanitarian consequences to residents, including loss of life and livelihoods,

displacement and disrupted access to basic needs. Residents in conflict-affected areas have experienced electricity and water cuts as well as heating outages. Insecurity, cold winters and a difficult economic situation further compound people's suffering: more than 3 million Ukrainians, primarily in areas not controlled by the government, have exhausted their resources and rely upon humanitarian assistance to meet their most basic needs.

The government has registered 1.3 million IDPs, about half of whom have successfully integrated into local communities. Between the spring of 2014, when the conflict began, and May 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UHCHR) estimated that civilian deaths totaled more than 3,300, with another 9,000 injured.

International Medical Corps Ukraine works to increase access to quality child protection and psychosocial support services for those living in conflict-affected communities through mobile protection teams, and in partnership with local organizations and the Ukraine Ministry of Health. Our team provides critical training on infection prevention and control (IPC) to healthcare workers and community residents about health and hygiene. Our staff has installed handwashing stations in the public areas of health facilities, and provides care centers with disinfectants and other cleaning supplies.



STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING COMMUNITY-BASED MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN UKRAINE

International Medical Corps carried out a pilot mental health needs assessment in three of Ukraine's 24 administrative regions, known as oblasts, to generate policy and operational guidance that would strengthen the integration of mental health into primary healthcare and other community-based services. The assessment, which focused on the most common mental disorders, including anxiety, depression, distress and alcohol abuse, engaged various key stakeholders at the global, national and regional levels. As a result, we distributed a comprehensive assessment outlining key policy recommendations for strengthening and expanding community-based mental health care in Ukraine.

MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

International Medical Corps works directly in communities and with local partner organizations to provide appropriate mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) programming to those in need. We use mobile teams to reach villages along the Line of Contact and work through partners in non-government-controlled areas. Psychologists, case workers and community-based facilitators have established support groups for adults and older people, to reduce social isolation and increase contact within the community through psychoeducation and recreational activities. Psychoeducational topics are needs-based, and addressed through participatory activities aimed at improving wellbeing. Since 2017, we have supported thousands of people—more than 2,000 on one project alone—with psychosocial support, targeting hard-to-reach areas of eastern Ukraine.

We work to strengthen the availability of MHPSS services in Ukraine according to international principles, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines on MHPSS in emergency settings. We provide MHPSS-related training and capacity-building activities for government employees, civil society and NGOs—both local and international—on international guidelines and evidence-based practices. We continue to lead MHPSS coordination, including the mapping of services, in order to strengthen referral pathways.



PROTECTION: CHILD PROTECTION, PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

Child protection

To support children and adolescents residing in areas of conflict, International Medical Corps and its partners create safe spaces that promote wellbeing and social and emotional development through recreational learning activities, group-based psychosocial support (PSS), child-protection curriculum development and awareness-raising.

Psychosocial support

We promote essential life skills, including self-awareness, group and community interaction, peer and family relationships, and leadership. We engage adolescents in designing, planning and implementing youth-led community-service projects, to improve the social fabric of their community. Parents and caregivers participate in group-based psycho-educational activities to build skills related to self-esteem, communication, how to express parental love, how to respond to children in distress and positive coping. Through the PSS program, adults aged 55 and above participate in group sessions that examine the relationship between physical and mental health, what stress and distress are, how to manage stress, and how to help family and community members cope with distress. Our team provides activities for men that focus on how to engage in life fully, how to cope with difficult feelings and how to respond in a positive way. We also offer individual interventions, including short-term psychological consultations with psychologists, emotional support and PSS

consultations through our caseworkers. Our team provides basic mental-health case management and child-protection case management services. We offer training on psychological first aid (PFA) for adults and children as well as professional emotional burnout workshops to community members.

Health

As part of a program called “Supporting Hygiene Education and Slowing the Spread of COVID-19 in Healthcare Centers of Eastern Ukraine,” International Medical Corps works with local healthcare facilities (including ambulatory clinics, first aid points, family medicine practices and one long-term care home) to equip each with handwashing stations, provide IPC training and promote hygiene for the communities accessing those facilities. International Medical Corps is also working with health facility cleaners to improve their understanding of how to mitigate the spread of disease.





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A pre-eminent first responder for more than 35 years, International Medical Corps provides emergency relief to those struck by disaster, no matter where they are, no matter what the conditions, working with them to recover, rebuild and, through training, gain the skills and tools required to achieve self-reliance.

February 2021

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