SITUATION UPDATE

On February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a military operation in Ukraine, invading the neighboring nation in an attack that has been condemned by world leaders.\(^1\) Missile attacks and explosions have been reported throughout Ukraine, with military troops invading from three sides of the country.

In less than one week, the invasion has affected millions of people. At least 352 civilians have been killed, including 14 children, and 1,684 people have been wounded, including 116 children.\(^2\) Reports of heavy fighting and shelling continue throughout Ukraine, with a deadly attack on Kyiv on March 1. Despite hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing, many civilians remain trapped. The conflict has damaged and destroyed water, electricity and sanitation facilities, and has left critical infrastructure inaccessible. More than 400,000 people were left without electricity in Donetsk, and more than 40,000 without water in Horlivka. At the same time that there is an urgent demand for basic needs, humanitarian aid organizations are faced with significant challenges in delivering aid. UNHCR is working with internally displaced community leaders to assess these basic needs and identify safe distribution sites for internally displaced persons.

In six days, more than 660,000 refugees have fled Ukraine, a rate that may mark this event as Europe’s largest refugee crisis this century.\(^3\) With all neighboring countries keeping their borders open thus far, Ukrainians have fled to Poland, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia and onward to further European countries. According to officials, the number of refugees from this crisis could result in anywhere from 1 to 5 million people.\(^4\)

Since the invasion, more than 280,000 people have crossed the border from Ukraine into Poland.\(^5\) Even with eight border points, wait times for many have been reported up to 60 hours. In Romania, queues remain around 20 hours, with more

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\(^{1}\) https://www.cnn.com/2022/02/24/europe/ukraine-russia-attack-timeline-intl/index.html
\(^{4}\) https://www.npr.org/2022/02/16/1081165004/russia-ukraine-invasion-us-impact
than 100,000 people entering so far and 46,000 remaining inside Ukraine. More than 84,500 people have entered Hungary, 36,400 have entered Moldova and 30,000 have entered Slovakia. Moldova is considered to be the most vulnerable, and likely to require assistance in handing arrivals. It is also the most exposed to an eventual Russian incursion.

**International Medical Corps Response**

International Medical Corps is one of the few international humanitarian agencies working on both sides of the original “line of contact” in the conflict that began in 2014. The country mission team has stayed in Ukraine and has worked with partners to continue to provide mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS) throughout the Russian invasion. It also has supported the Ministry of Health throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, has supported a mobile medical response to the conflict and is prepared to launch emergency mobile medical teams, working with Ukrainian partner organizations. International Medical Corps is poised to harness its organizational expertise and contextual experience, and draw on established partnerships, to renew and expand services to meet the needs of the current emergency.

In Poland, International Medical Corps’ Emergency Response Team representative is assessing current needs at border crossings and reception centers, including the Hrebenne-Rawa Ruska border crossing and the reception center in Lubyczka Królewska. Local organizations supporting the crisis are prepared to fill gaps at the existing receiving centers and border activities, but will need financial support as well as help with other programmatic needs. International Medical Corps is participating in coordination mechanisms, including a forum led by Polish NGO Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH), to discuss opportunities for coordination and strategic partnerships. To support the engagement effort and prepare for additional response activities, International Medical Corps is deploying its advance team of experts to provide on-the-ground assessment and support for operations, logistics, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response.

In Romania, the Emergency Response Team is also assessing critical needs at border crossings and receiving centers. Though initial assessments indicate less demand, with shorter wait times for Ukrainians crossing into Romania and fewer people remaining in-country, that situation could rapidly change as Russian forces advance in Ukraine. The Romanian Ministry of Interior has cautioned that the initial “waves” have mostly been people with relative means and family in Romania or European countries who are able to be self-supporting for the initial weeks. However, as the conflict continues and intensifies, the Ministry anticipates receiving more at-risk people at the border.

Finally, due to significant border wait times in Poland, the Ukrainian government is advising citizens to cross into Romania, Hungary and Slovakia instead. Therefore, the number of Ukrainians crossing into Romania may increase in the coming days. International Medical Corps will be visiting additional sites in Romania this week to conduct further assessments, and will continue to monitor needs in Romania while engaging with local organizations as well as regional forums.