



The Jewish Federations[®]
OF NORTH AMERICA
Israel Office

JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

April 4, 2022

After almost six weeks of fighting, the war continues in Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainians, including tens of thousands of Jews, have fled the country and millions of others are internally displaced. Jewish Federations and our partners continue to work together to ensure that urgent relief reaches the most needy.

(For background on the crisis, as well as for information on the Jewish community in Ukraine, see [here](#)).

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- Much of the world has been shocked by images from the town of Bucha, near the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, that showed the bodies of at least 20 civilians strewn across a street. Media also reported on a mass grave in the city. The Ukrainian Government has called on the International Criminal Court to investigate the killings. The Russian Ministry of Defense, in response, claims that the footage was fake.
- In response, French President Emmanuel Macron has called for an immediate and total blockage of Russian exports of coal and oil to the European Union.
- The city of Odessa, which has so far been relatively calm and even served as a haven for displaced Ukrainians, was hit by Russian strikes last night.
- The director of the Jewish community of Ivano-Frankivsk in Ukraine was stabbed by an assailant yelling anti-Semitic slurs at the end of last week. The attack happened during the distribution of meals to the needy. The director has since been released from hospital and the perpetrator was arrested, with criminal proceedings opened against him.
- According to the UN Human Rights office (OHCHR), at least 1,417 civilians have died in Ukraine (including 121 children) since the Russian invasion began. At least 2,038 civilians have been injured. The number of soldiers killed is unknown.

ISRAEL

In response to the images from Bucha, Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid said, "It is impossible to remain indifferent in the face of the horrific images from the city of Bucha near Kiev, from after the Russian army left. Intentionally harming a civilian population is a war crime and I strongly condemn it."

However, Finance Minister Avigdor Liberman said that while Israel "condemns all war crimes," there are "mutual accusations" about this situation that are flying between Russia and Ukraine, and that Israel's own interests come first. In response, Ukrainian Ambassador to Israel Yevgen Korniyuchuk said, "I invite Mr. Liberman to come to Ukraine. We will take him with a convoy to Bucha and to other places where he can see for himself the bodies of civilians and meet the women who were tied up and raped. Maybe then he will know what happened."

Meanwhile, the Israeli government has joined forces with Magen David Adom (Israel's national emergency medical response organization) and Federation partner JDC to launch a special program designed to take care of Ukrainian asylum seekers who are not eligible for Aliyah. The program, which is called Tzav HaSha'a (The Hour of Need), uses dozens of Russian and Ukrainian-speaking social workers to assist asylum seekers. A hotline was launched in order to provide detailed information on the program in both Russian and Ukrainian. The program provides free health insurance, comprehensive medical assistance, temporary accommodation, food assistance and material aid, and the placement of children in welfare centers and day care centers.

Israel's Minister of Health Nitzan Horowitz will become the first Israeli minister to enter Ukraine since fighting began, when he visits the Israeli field hospital in Mostyska, later today. The hospital is staffed by a team of medical professionals led by Dr. David Dagan alongside 60 staff members from the Sheba Medical Center. The hospital, financed in part by Federation-supported JDC, is Israel's flagship humanitarian effort and is scheduled to be active for at least one month. Leaders of Jewish Federations who were traveling earlier today on a bus on their way to the Ukrainian border with Poland spoke with the Minister near the town of Lublin.

As a result of the fighting in Ukraine, Israeli farmers are destroying thousands of tons of fresh vegetables as produce exports to Russia and Ukraine have almost completely ground to a halt. Up to 50,000 tons of agricultural products destined for the two countries are currently rotting in warehouses. Payments for goods have also stopped as a result of the plummeting value of the ruble and sanctions against Russia.

REFUGEES, FEDERATIONS, AND PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

In just over the one month since the fighting began, **Jewish Federations** have raised more than \$43.4 million for Ukrainian relief efforts (see details [here as to how funds are impacting in the field](#)). JFNA's Special Allocations Committee has already met three times to designate funds for Ukrainian relief. The relief efforts are being undertaken by our Federation partners, The Jewish Agency for Israel, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and World ORT; as well as by United Hatzalah, Hillel International, Nefesh B'Nefesh, HIAS, the Israel Trauma Coalition, Hadassah Medical Organization, Chabad, Shma Yisrael, Project Keshet, JCC Krakow and the Emergency Volunteer Program.

Among other urgent needs, the funds will go towards:

- Providing housing, clothing, medication, cash assistance, mental health services, security, and transportation for Ukrainians sheltering in place, refugees fleeing the war and those seeking to make Aliyah.
- Ensuring the secure evacuation of affected individuals from areas under immediate threat or where active hostilities are already taking place.
- Expediting the rapid Aliyah of those individuals or families who wish to move to Israel and facilitating their absorption on arrival.
- Trauma-focused therapy and emotional first-aid training for those helping refugees outside of Ukraine, as well as for mental health professionals treating patients inside of Ukraine.
- Supporting delegations of medical professionals on the ground in neighboring countries who are treating incoming refugees and providing support to the Ukrainian health system
- Providing assistance to Ukrainian refugees in Israel.

JFNA's third mission of Federation leaders is currently on the ground at the Polish-Ukrainian border where refugees continue to cross to escape the fighting. Mission participants, representing Federations from across

North America, have also visited Jewish Agency and JDC facilities that are temporarily housing refugees in Poland.

Last week, Jewish Federations President & CEO Eric Fingerhut accepted an award in the UK recognizing Federations' Ukraine aid and advocacy for refugee resettlement. At the ceremony, the Jerusalem Post Award was presented to Fingerhut by Yaakov Katz, the newspaper's editor in chief,. Watch [here](#).

JFNA is now offering half-hour webinars twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, to update audiences about the rapidly evolving situation in Ukraine. The most recent program featured Yotam Polizer, the CEO of IsraAID, and focused on humanitarian relief in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe. For a recording, [click here](#). To register for upcoming webinars in the series, [click here](#). Webinars continue at 4:30 pm ET every Monday and Thursday.

The Biden Administration at the end of last week announced further assistance to Ukraine in the amount of \$500 million in direct budgetary aid. This is in addition to the more than \$15 billion of humanitarian and security aid given over the last few weeks. The government has also authorized the immigration to the United States of 100,000 Ukrainian refugees. JFNA will be holding a community-wide webinar, "Welcoming Ukrainians: Preparing for U.S. Resettlement" with the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies and HIAS tomorrow, Tuesday, April 5 at 3:30pm ET. [Register here](#) and [Review our FAQ's](#) about resettlement. Federation communities interested in joining resettlement efforts [should fill out this form](#) so that JFNA can offer coordination, support, and resource sharing when more information becomes available.

The first contingent of Russian-speaking Jewish professionals from North America arrived at the Ukrainian border this week to provide translation services and humanitarian assistance. The program is being coordinated by JFNA in collaboration with the Jewish Agency and the JDC. To volunteer for this program (please note that only those who speak Russian and/or Ukrainian are being selected at this time), [click here](#). For a list of FAQ's, [click here](#). For more information, please email [Sarah Eisenman](#).

The Jewish Agency for Israel has, so far, brought **7,000** Ukrainian Jews to Israel as olim or as eligible to make Aliyah. In the coming week, at least another **1,000** are expected to arrive. The Agency expects this number to surpass **10,000** in the next two weeks and approach **15,000** shortly afterwards. This number represents five times the number of olim who came from Ukraine in all of 2021.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) continues to operate in Ukraine and bordering countries. JDC's relief efforts include:

- Executing and coordinating evacuations across Ukraine, including arranging transport and safe accommodations both inside Ukraine and beyond.
- Providing food, medicine, and other urgent support for Jews who are not in refugee camps or shelters and providing financial assistance to newly vulnerable individuals.
- Staffing key border crossings along with European community partners and volunteers to embrace, inform, and assist refugees fleeing harm's way as they arrive in Poland, Moldova, Hungary, and Romania, while also working to coordinate shelter and home hospitality.
- Operating emergency hotlines in collaboration with local Jewish communities in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland, Moldova, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, and Slovakia.
- Providing JDC welfare recipients with extra essentials like food and medicine, while creating an SOS fund for extraordinary individual needs. JDC is also allocating financial war-time support for Jewish community organizations in Ukraine.

- Coordinating its emergency response with other agencies on the ground to ensure critical assistance reaches Jews in distress across the region.
- Maintaining JOINTECH, a remote care tech initiative launched in 2020 to help combat loneliness among isolated Jewish seniors during the pandemic, to be used for Shabbat and community programming to provide reprieve during this crisis

The Jewish Agency and JDC have both established [emergency hotlines](#) to assist the Jewish community in Ukraine. For more about JDC's efforts, see [here](#); for those of the Jewish Agency [here](#).

Federation partner **World ORT's** staff remain in close contact with their closed schools across Ukraine. It is known that at least 350 ORT families have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries, with the majority now in Poland and Germany. Others have reached countries including Israel, the United States, Britain, France and Turkey, with almost 30 nations in total accepting Ukrainian ORT students as refugees. The organization is ensuring that all families have an ORT or Jewish community contact so they can receive information and support in whichever country they reach. They are also continuing to provide direct financial help to families. More than 400 families have received assistance, with a further \$100,000 to be distributed this coming week.

In addition, shipments from ORT Bulgaria reached the Ukrainian border in the past week, carrying important medications and other humanitarian aid to be delivered to ORT schools. World ORT will also provide funding for a fully-equipped ambulance, with equipment, medication and funding for paramedics, to help serve Jewish communities and the wider Ukrainian public.

Tens of Israeli and **Jewish organizations** are working to provide humanitarian relief for Ukraine. JFNA has put together a summary of these efforts, which can be found [here](#). See [here](#) for an article on how Jewish organizations and the Israeli government are working together to provide humanitarian relief as a result of the war.

Jewish Federations have activated our emergency protocols and are working closely with the Government of Israel and our partners to do everything in our power to support efforts that ensure the safety and well-being of the entire Jewish community in Ukraine, as well as to provide as much general humanitarian aid as we can.

For more information, please contact: JFNA's Dani Wassner dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org