



## **JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE**

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**While intensive fighting continues between Russia and Ukraine, both sides acknowledged that some progress was being made in negotiations aimed at ending the conflict. Meanwhile millions of Ukrainians, including tens of thousands of Jews, are still attempting to flee the country.**

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

### **THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS**

- Earlier today, President Zelensky addressed the U.S. Congress by video, and called for further military assistance from the United States, including a no-fly zone over Ukraine, saying “Russia has turned the Ukrainian sky into a source of death for thousands of people.” Zelensky also asked for further sanctions against Russia, including the withdrawal of all U.S. businesses from the country.
- Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said today that there is hope for reaching a compromise at peace talks. Moscow’s chief negotiator Vladimir Medinsky said the sides are discussing a possible deal that will leave Ukraine with a smaller, non-aligned military. “A whole range of issues tied with the size of Ukraine’s army is being discussed. Ukraine is proposing an Austrian or Swedish option of a neutral state, but a state that has its own army and navy.”
- Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has indicated that he is willing to accept that his country will not join NATO, a key Russian demand. “For years we have been hearing about how the door is supposedly open [to NATO membership] but now we hear that we cannot enter. And it is true, and it must be acknowledged.” Zelensky also said that NATO's Article 5 (the principle that an attack on one member is an attack on all), "has never been as weak as it is now."
- Meanwhile fighting continues, and major Ukrainian cities, including the capital Kyiv and Mariupol, have suffered extensive damage, while the situation on the ground is deteriorating rapidly. Explosions were reported in numerous Kyiv suburbs early today as air raid sirens once again sounded across the capital. Yesterday, Russian bombardments hit buildings in residential areas across Kyiv, and the Ukrainian military said that it had destroyed at least three Russian military helicopters at Kherson airport in the south.
- Ukraine has accused Russia of holding people captive at a Mariupol hospital. Local officials said that doctors and patients were being held against their will, while the city's deputy mayor also said Russian forces are "destroying" the besieged city. Ukrainian officials estimate that more than 2,500 civilians have died in Russian attacks in the city.

- Nearly 29,000 civilians left areas of fighting through evacuation corridors yesterday, (20,000 of them from Mariupol).
- According to the UK Ministry of Defence, the Russian military is calling up reinforcements from across the entire country as it is faced with "continued personnel losses" in Ukraine.
- The leaders of Poland, Slovenia and the Czech Republic are currently in Kyiv "to tell Ukrainians they are not alone in their fight against the Russian invasion." The three leaders arrived Tuesday and met with Zelensky and Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal.
- Jewish Ukrainian Serafim Sabaranskiy, a 29-year-old, active member of the Hillel chapter in his hometown of Kharkiv, was killed in action, as one of hundreds of Russian missiles fired in recent weeks landed near his position. Sabaranskiy z"l enlisted with the Ukrainian armed forces when fighting broke out. His fellow soldiers say he had saved several of their lives in the past three weeks.

## ISRAEL

United States Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides said that the Biden administration is in "hourly contact" with the Israeli Government over Ukraine. He also said that the Administration appreciated the mediator role Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has played to try to resolve the conflict. "The Prime Minister has not made a move without talking to the White House. We have no complaints. Israel has done everything we have asked it to do. All the communication has been clear."

The Israeli Government has approved a plan to establish an Israeli field hospital in western Ukraine. Approximately \$6.5 million will be invested in establishing the hospital which is expected to treat around 100 patients a day. An emergency room, in-patient wards for men, women and children, a maternity ward, a medical lab and an imaging department will be among the services offered. Israel's Foreign and Health ministries will lead the operation in the field, which will be operated by the Sheba Medical Center and representatives from the health system in the Jewish state.

The establishment and operation of the hospital will be financed by the Israeli Government, the Federation-supported American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Schusterman Family Foundation. Commenting on the initiative, Israel's Prime Minister Bennett said, "Establishing a field hospital there, in Ukraine, is an initiative that not many countries are capable of taking on themselves. The State of Israel has this capability and we are getting underway. This is important and I am pleased that we are leading it."

The Government also approved a new plan to absorb olim and to offer humanitarian assistance to non-Jewish Ukrainian nationals who are in Israel until the situation in Ukraine calms down. The new plan includes providing rent assistance, refurbishing government-owned buildings for housing for olim, providing solutions stemming from the challenges of integration in education and social services; and strengthening community support through local authorities.

Six mega-generators were donated by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through MASHAV, Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation), and were transferred yesterday to the city of Lviv in Ukraine. The equipment will guarantee a steady supply of electricity to hospitals and vital civilian infrastructure in the city, which is coping with the difficult humanitarian situation created by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

## FLEEING UKRAINE, FEDERATIONS AND PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

In just three weeks since the fighting began, **Jewish Federations** have raised more than \$27 million for Ukrainian relief efforts (see details [here](#)). Most of that money has already been allocated by JFNA's Special Allocations Committee, to Ukrainian relief efforts being undertaken by Federation partners The Jewish Agency for Israel, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and World ORT; as well as to United Hatzalah, Hillel International, Nefesh B'Nefesh, HIAS, the Israel Trauma Coalition, Hadassah Medical Organization, Chabad, and Shma Yisrael. Among other urgent needs, the funds will go towards:

- Providing housing, clothing, medication, cash assistance, mental health services, security, and transportation for 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 facilitate their absorption on arrival.
- Trauma-focused therapy and emotional first-aid training for those helping refugees outside of Ukraine, as well as mental health professionals treating patients inside of Ukraine.
- Supporting delegations of medical professionals on the ground in Poland and Moldova to treat incoming refugees.

A JFNA delegation has just completed a visit to Poland where they visited Jewish refugee centers across the country, as well as the Medyka border connecting Ukraine and Poland. On Monday night, the group spent time with potential Olim at the Jewish Agency housing facility and on Tuesday morning, the group visited a refugee center in Lublin. The center is located in Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin, which was the largest (and one of the most revered) yeshivot in the world before the Holocaust. The synagogue at the site still exists, and JFNA CEO Eric Fingerhut led morning prayers, in the famous room. See more [here](#).

Jewish Federation's CEO Eric Fingerhut was also on a flight of refugee olim when he met [long-lost half-sisters](#) from Kyiv who were reunited on the Jewish Agency flight. Read [Eric's reflections](#) on his "split screen" day, and watch the [video](#) of that day.

Jewish Federations, along with other North American Jewish organizations, have also sent a [letter](#) to President Biden asking him to live up to the United States' proud legacy of serving as a beacon for immigrants. Federations asked the president to share responsibility for those refugees with the European countries currently doing so, and to extend special asylum to those refugees with family in the United States.

In addition to the vast work of the **Jewish Agency for Israel** with refugees reported in earlier updates, local Agency workers in Israel have mobilized over 85 local municipalities, kibbutzim, pre-army academy staff participants, youth villages, and youth movements, who together have joined an Agency initiative, to collect 23,000 carefully packed boxes of supplies for the refugees. The project utilized some 100 trucks (the vast majority driven by volunteers), and collected and dispatched some 230 tons of clothes, essentials, and even veterinarian supplies and food for animals left behind. The supplies were packed and collected from 112 locations around Israel and will be delivered to Poland and Hungary in collaboration with JDC and others. The operation, called "Torenu" (our turn) used the services of more than 600 volunteers, who sorted, packed goods.

As reported previously, the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee** (JDC) has significant operations on the ground in Ukraine working with the population under fire, and along the border, working with refugees who have managed to escape.

JDC reports that most employees at their Hesed welfare centers in Ukraine are still working where possible, including those providing homecare to the elderly Jewish needy.

JDC is also currently providing some 2,000 beds in locations in Moldova, Poland, Hungary and Romania for temporary accommodation for refugees who have fled Ukraine. The JDC centers act as transition points for refugees to stay until they can arrange entry to other European countries or as they wait for their Aliyah papers and evacuation flights to Israel. Many of the refugees are elderly, people with limited mobility, or people who haven't yet decided where to go next. At the centers, JDC provides support, advice, accommodation, and three meals a day. One of the JDC refugee centers, located in Kishinev, is operating as a temporary accommodation facility specifically designed for mothers with young children.

As anticipated by JDC, some areas (especially in Moldova) are starting to see shortages in medicine and basic food products such as pasta, salt and sugar. These shortages are expected to get worse in the near future as Moldova and other countries usually rely on imports from Ukraine that have now stopped completely. JDC is now advancing payments to welfare recipients who live in Moldova, to allow them to stock up on food and medicine that are still available, in preparation for further shortages. In addition, a planeload of JDC humanitarian aid from Israel has arrived in Moldova today. While some goods stay in the country, most of the food, medicine, and hygiene items are more desperately needed in Ukraine and are sent on to Odessa. This humanitarian assistance will be sorted and transferred on to additional cities in Ukraine to help JDC welfare recipients. A second plane is leaving from Israel tomorrow.

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](#) and those of the Jewish Agency [here](#).

A delegation of Israeli doctors and medical staff landed in Moldova at the end of last week to provide immediate treatment to Ukrainian refugees. The delegation of some 40 medical professionals and volunteers consists mostly of Ukrainian speaking Israelis from a wide variety of fields, including psychiatry, psychology, intensive care, orthopedics, pediatrics and even medical clowns and social workers.

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](#).

**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.**

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