



The Jewish Federations®
OF NORTH AMERICA
Israel Office

JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

April 21, 2022

After nearly two months 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 neediest.

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

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- On Monday, officials said that Russia appeared to have launched a large-scale ground offensive in eastern Ukraine. On Tuesday, Russia declared that the “next phase” of the war in Ukraine was underway and on Wednesday, the Russian offensive pressed on. The focus of the assault is on the Donbas region in the southeastern part of the country. The Pentagon stated that thousands of Russian troops had moved into the east. Russian missile strikes continue on eastern cities, including Kharkiv and Mykolaiv.
- Three explosions hit the Western city of Lviv in the first lethal attack on the city since the conflict broke out. Lviv has been a channel for humanitarian supplies and a haven for refugees fleeing the eastern region. These strikes represent a frightening reality that no city in Ukraine is immune from attack.
- The offensive in Mariupol continued this week. Officials said that Russian forces surrounded a steel plant where the last Ukrainian troops appear to be holding out. On Thursday morning, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed victory in the besieged city, while the remaining Ukrainian forces refuse to surrender.
- Following last week’s announcement by the Biden administration that it would be sending an additional \$800 million in weapons and other security aid to Ukraine, the U.S. will begin training Ukrainian troops to operate American artillery. A Pentagon official said that a group of Ukrainian soldiers would be trained in locations, which have yet to be decided, that border Ukraine.
- According to the UN Human Rights Council, 5 million refugees have fled Ukraine since the beginning of fighting. The largest influx of refugees has been into Poland, with approximately 3 million, followed by Romania with approximately 750,000. However, more than 870,000 refugees who fled Ukraine have returned. According to the UN Human Rights office, at least 2,104 Ukrainians have been killed and 2,862 injured since the breakout of fighting on February 24th. The office notes that the actual figures are likely considerably higher, as the relaying of information is often delayed especially in areas of intense fighting.

ISRAEL

Russia's Foreign Minister accused Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid of an "anti-Russian attack" after the country voted in favor of the suspension of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council one week ago. Russia's Foreign Ministry attacked Israel for its "effort to take advantage of the situation around Ukraine to distract the international community from one of the longest unresolved conflicts - the Palestinian-Israeli one." The Ministry also accused Israel of "the illegal occupation and creeping annexation of Palestinian territories." Neither Lapid nor Israel's Foreign Ministry responded to this statement. On Sunday, Russia's deputy foreign minister, Mikhail Bogdanov, summoned the Israeli Ambassador to Russia Alexander Ben Zvi in what Israeli media reports called a "normal diplomatic reprimand."

A third shift of 70 medical professionals arrived at Israel's "Shining Star" Field Hospital in Ukraine. A total of more than 4,000 Ukrainians have been treated at the hospital to date. Israel is the only foreign country that is operating a field hospital in Ukraine.

The Israeli Embassy in Hungary, working with Mashav Israel (the arm of Israel's Foreign Ministry responsible for international aid programs) sent an additional thirteen tons of food and humanitarian supplies to Ukraine last week.

The Magen David Adom hotline for Ukrainian refugees in Israel has received 12,000 calls over the past month. Refugees are seeking help with basic necessities including food, clothing and medical care. This program is run in partnership with the JDC.

REFUGEES, FEDERATIONS, AND PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

Jewish Federations have collectively raised \$50 million to date for Ukrainian relief efforts since the fighting began. [Click here](#) to see the latest update on the allocations process and decisions.

Thirty-five NGO's are coordinating the relief efforts, including our Jewish Federation partners, The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and World ORT; as well as United Hatzalah, Hillel International, Nefesh B'Nefesh, HIAS, the Israel Trauma Coalition, Hadassah Medical Organization, Chabad, Shma Yisrael, Project Keshet, JCC Krakow, the Emergency Volunteer Program and others.

Jewish Federations host half-hour webinars twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, to update audiences about the rapidly evolving situation in Ukraine. We will NOT hold webinars this week during Passover, but webinars will resume on April 25th. [Click here](#) to register.

Jewish Federations have brought over 100 Jewish communal leaders from around North America to the Poland-Ukraine border on a series of humanitarian aid delegations, to provide relief to refugees and to evaluate the ongoing needs on the ground.

Jewish Federations launched the creation of a first-of-its-kind central volunteer hub in support of refugees fleeing Ukraine. The first two cohorts have now returned from Poland and Hungary where they provided humanitarian assistance, aided olim in their immigration process and cared for children. The initiative is being run in partnership with the Jewish Agency, the JDC and IsraAID. "At the border, you will see lots of different signs and symbols, for the Jewish Agency, for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and other agencies," Jewish Federation of Columbia Executive Director Ana Sazonov said in [this interview](#) with Algemeiner

Journal. “There are so many Israeli flags and Israeli volunteers. It really warms my heart to see the flag of Israel flying there.”

Sazonov was also featured in an [article in NBC News](#) on her personal story that led her to volunteer in Poland with the Jewish Federations. In addition, she was interviewed by Fox News’ [Cavuto Live](#) about the preparations for Passover with refugees. Jewish Federations lay leader Alina Spaulding spoke on local [Fox News](#) and [CBS News](#) channels on her experiences volunteering with Jewish Federations in Hungary.

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, email [Sarah Eisenman](#).

Thousands of refugees celebrated Passover at seders in Moldova, Hungary, Poland and Romania. These celebrations were sponsored by the Jewish Agency and JDC in partnership with Jewish Federations. Chabad offered seders in Ukraine, while the Jewish Agency hosted seders for recent Ukrainian olim in absorption centers around Israel. JDC shipped large quantities of matzahs, grape juice and kosher for Passover food for use by refugees in Poland, Moldova, Hungary and Romania.

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, see [here](#).

Below are some striking examples from the work of our two primary partners, the Jewish Agency and JDC:

- 34,000 people have been served through the JDC
- 2,415 people have received medical assistance
- 12,276 people have been evacuated to other countries
- 1,800 people have been treated using telemedicine at Israel’s field hospital
- 11 emergency hotlines have been set up
- Over 11,500 olim have come to Israel from Ukraine and Russia through the Jewish Agency
- 18 facilities have been operated at 5 border crossings

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 Alisa Bodner alisa.bodner@jewishfederations.org