



IRISH RED CROSS APPEAL FOR DONATIONS TO AID THEIR UKRAINE CRISIS FUND – ADVICE IS NOT TO SEND PHYSICAL GOODS AT THIS STAGE DUE TO UNCERTAINTY OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOGISTICS IN CRISIS HIT REGION

Monday 28th February 2022

The Irish Red Cross is very much heartened to see such a great outpouring of solidarity which is heart-warming and will be critical for our successful humanitarian response in delivering assistance to hundreds of thousands of people in Ukraine over the coming weeks, months, and years. In less than two days the Irish Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal has seen donations to its website www.redcross.ie and to Revolut heading for €1.25 million.

Re Irish people asking, 'How can I help'?

The Irish Red Cross has launched an appeal to raise funds to support people affected by the conflict. These funds will be used to repair vital infrastructure, support health facilities with medicines and equipment, and support families with food and hygiene items. In the last week, Red Cross aim to help more than 3 million people access clean water and improve the living conditions of more than 66,000 whose homes have been damaged in recent days by heavy fighting.

The Irish Red Cross would like to thank the Irish people for their generosity but with airports closed and transportation systems under pressure, sending physical goods is likely to add more stress to the situation on the ground. In circumstances of disaster, the Red Cross always advises against sending goods to affected areas as it is very difficult to get these goods into a country in crisis and to distribute them to right people. Experience from other crises shows that many of these items will end up in landfill and will not help the people you wish to support. Providing cash contributions to organisations like the Red Cross or other organisations responding to the crisis in Ukraine allows the Red Cross to source solicited standardised emergency relief goods locally. This system means everyone in the affected communities gets the same, high-quality items.

Unsolicited or unwanted aid, especially containers, can clog up logistic chains and can have a detrimental effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of relief operations. National Red Cross Societies end up spending time on custom clearance, sometime with incomplete paperwork, warehouses fill up and handling takes time and energy distracting staff from more important tasks. This is widely known as the “second disaster”. It also means that the Red Cross is left with large quantities of unneeded goods, sometimes at great cost.

We do our best to keep our operations as efficient and cost effective as possible. This includes the procurement of relief items that meet humanitarian specifications and buying them in bulk to keep cost low.

What is the Red Cross doing in response?

In Ukraine **over 30,000 people** have been assisted with Red Cross emergency stock. Trained Emergency Response volunteers (ERT) have been activated and are supporting fire brigades and the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU) responding to damage to civilian residences and infrastructure; **ERTs have so far saved over 50 lives**. Staff and volunteers are helping people to relocate to safer areas. Over **1,000 people have received first aid training conducted in shelters and online** since the beginning of the conflict. Ukrainian Red Cross branches are coordinating with local authorities to provide assistance to internally displaced people, many of whom will not or cannot cross the border into a neighbouring country. Reception centres are being established in schools and other community buildings to accommodate a growing number of displaced people.

In neighbouring countries, Red Cross National Societies have established first aid points and volunteers are distributing food, water, non-food items, hygiene products and communication equipment.