



IRISH PUBLIC DONATE €750,000 EURO IN JUST 24 HOURS FOR IRISH RED CROSS HUMANITARIAN APPEAL FOR UKRAINE

Saturday 26th February 2022

The Irish public have donated €750,000 Euro in just 24 hours to the Irish Red Cross Ukraine Crisis Appeal for humanitarian aid. The staggering amount came via a wave of donations to the Irish Red Cross website and on Revolut since the appeal was launched in response to the devastating conflict and unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine. All funds received will go directly to Red Cross partners in Ukraine and neighbouring countries to assist them in their humanitarian efforts, repair vital infrastructure, support health facilities, reconnect families separated by conflict and provide with life-saving food and hygiene items as well as shelter given the cold and snow on the ground.

Irish Red Cross Secretary General Liam O'Dwyer said "We are so grateful and humbled at the huge generosity shown by the Irish people and we are so thankful for their support. The humanitarian needs over the coming days and weeks will be massive and we are appealing for more donations. Anyone wishing to donate can do so by visiting our website, www.redcross.ie or via Revolut. Our immediate priority is to support the delivery of shelter, food, medical care, and other basic necessities to vulnerable families in Ukraine and its neighbouring countries. The escalation in fighting brings further upheaval, loss, and fear to people's daily lives, including threatening to bring a halt to key essential services. We are extremely concerned about the impact that the conflict will have on people with the latest intensification uprooting hundreds of thousands of people from their homes"

ABOUT THE HOSTILITIES – The current situation

Critical infrastructure that people depend on must be spared. In the past week, at least two major pumping stations in Donetsk region, serving more than one million people and hospitals on either side of the line of contact, were left inoperable by the hostilities. Over the past eight years, the hostilities in eastern Ukraine have regularly left towns, villages, and rural communities on either side of the line of contact without essential water, gas or power for days or weeks on end. Without urgent action to protect these services, large scale humanitarian implications are expected.

While communities are already bearing the brunt of eight long years of conflict, they now face more violence, pain, loss and turmoil. We fear continued escalation will worsen an already appalling

humanitarian situation and wreak havoc on more lives. People on both sides of the line of contact have already suffered from violence, trauma, and economic hardship as a result of the protracted conflict that started in Ukraine in 2014. As soon as the security situation allows, we are ready to expand our work to adapt to emerging and new needs as best as we can, including in neighbouring countries.

The ICRC is responding to severe water shortages resulting from intensified fighting disrupting supply, leaving several water stations and pipelines out of order, which serve more than 1 million people.

- On February 25, the ICRC provided over 16,000 litres of drinking water in Olenovka village in Donbas.
- In Donetsk, 3,000 litres of water have been provided to Dokuchaevsk hospital to keep services running, along with 7,000 litres of water to Donetsk municipality for essential services.
- Five water points of 5,000 litres each have been set up for people to collect water in Olenovka.

National Red Cross Societies in surrounding countries are assisting people leaving Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of people have left their homes and tens of thousands have crossed into neighbouring countries, according to UN data. Contingency plans are in place to provide shelter, basic aid items and medical supplies for displaced people. Red Cross Volunteers and staff are also ready to provide first aid and psychosocial support when needed.

Over the course of the almost eight-year conflict, thousands of people, civilians and those fighting, have been killed or injured. More than 800 persons still remain unaccounted for, over seven years after the conflict started, out of a total of some 1.800 missing persons registered with the ICRC and the Ukrainian Red Cross Society since the beginning of the conflict. The families of the missing are longing for answers about what happened to their loved ones.

Mines and unexploded ordnances constitute an additional layer of risk for civilians living close to the line of contact, with potentially devastating consequences. Affected families have lost loved ones or seen them severely injured, including children, while they were working in the field, collecting firewood or simply playing in the yard. Several hundreds of civilians have died or been injured since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in this way, and such cases continue until this day.

We are calling urgently on parties to the conflict not to forget their obligations under international humanitarian law. They must ensure the protection of the civilian population and those no longer taking part in the fighting, such as detainees or the wounded and sick. International humanitarian law is clear: all parties to the conflict have a legal obligation to ensure that military operations are planned and conducted in a way as to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian objects.

Space for neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian action must be protected so that aid actors like the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the wider International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement can maintain access to civilians.

Critical infrastructure must be spared, such as water, gas, and electrical systems that, for instance, provide civilian homes, schools and medical facilities with vital water and electricity supplies, including spared from attacks by new technologies and cyber means.

Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) has 3,000 volunteers and **550** staff working across the country in 280 local branches and 24 regional branches. It activated its Emergency Operations Centre on 14 January and has completed safety and security plans, shelter identification, trainings on first aid, psychological first aid, resource mobilization, satellite and radio comms, pre-positioning stock and also preparing for hibernation and evacuation scenarios.

The **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** operations in Ukraine are among the ten largest ICRC operations worldwide, with over 600 staff members with a delegation in Kyiv and operating on either side of the line of contact with offices in Donetsk, Luhansk/Lugansk, Severodonetsk, Sloviansk and Mariupol. With the Ukrainian Red Cross Society and Movement partners, it works closely with communities, to respond to their existing and growing humanitarian needs generated by long years of conflict, to support increased resilience, and to deliver urgent assistance – food, water, fuel for heating, medical supplies, and support for housing. The ICRC is working to support efforts to restore the water supply and support emergency interim solutions, including the distribution of water by tankers for the affected communities. Recent work also includes visits to places of detention to help improve hygiene and nutrition.

The ICRC is in confidential and bilateral dialogue with all sides to ensure that civilians, their access to essential services, their housing, and all infrastructure essential to their survival are protected at all times.

The **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)**, through its **Country Delegation in Ukraine** and its Regional Office for Europe, is providing emergency surge support in several technical areas, including Operations, Logistics, and Information Management.

National Societies in neighbouring countries are urgently responding to the unfolding crisis. Hundreds of thousands of people have left their homes and tens of thousands have crossed into neighbouring countries, according to UN data. At the border crossing point in Ubla, the Slovakian Red Cross is setting up tents to provide temporary shelter for people arriving from the Ukraine. In Poland, the Red Cross is providing bedding, shelter, medical assistance, and basic aid items at several reception points along the border. Hungarian Red Cross has 300 volunteers ready to provide shelter, bedding, and hygiene items.