



CONFLICT in UKRAINE

SITUATION REPORT AND MATTERS OF COMMUNICATION:

MDM'S OPERATIONAL RESPONSE AND POSITION

For the attention of members of the MdM community for use in exchanges with our various interlocutors.

Our external communications take into account protecting our teams – from MdM-F and the international network equally – and ensuring their security.

REMINDER OF THE CONTEXT

- On 24 February, Russia launched a military offensive in Ukraine directed at several cities in the country. The attacks have prompted massive population movements and a major humanitarian crisis:
 - o An increasing flow of people is heading for Ukraine's external borders, particularly for the border with Poland. On 15 March the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 2.8 million people had already fled Ukraine.ⁱ They are mainly women¹ and children, a number of whom are unaccompanied or have become separated from their parents.
 - o On 4 March², the Council of Europe enacted the temporary protection mechanism envisaged in Directive 2001/55/CE.
 - o By 11 March, 10,000 people had arrived in France according to the Ministry of the Interior³, 3% of them non-Ukrainians.⁴ Given the rapid rise in the number of arrivals, the Ministry anticipates a scenario of 50,000 or even 100,000 arrivals. A proportion of the people are transiting French territory principally to reach Spain and Portugal where large Ukrainian communities reside.⁵
An initial operation to relocate 2,500 people from Moldova has been announced by the French authorities.
- The outbreak of war in Ukraine translates as a humanitarian crisis that gets bigger by the day in a country where 3 million people were already dependent on humanitarian aid before this fresh escalation in the conflict. Of them, more than 850,000 had been displaced by the conflict in the east of the countryⁱⁱ (Donbass/Crimea).

¹ Care conducted a rapid analysis of gender in the Ukrainian context. Available here:

<https://careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Ukraine-Rapid-Gender-Analysis-Brief-Final.pdf>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022D0382>

³ The figures given by the Ministry correspond to French Border and Air Police records. They have to be put into context in part because some people are in transit and in part because a Ukrainian national with a biometric passport can access the Schengen Area without requesting a visa. A number entered French territory without any border control.

⁴ At the day reception centre specifically for people arriving from Ukraine in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, run by France Terre d'Asile, the proportion is close to 40%.

⁵ The 17,000 Ukrainian nationals resident in France have seen their right to remain automatically extended by 90 days.



- Massive destruction of housing and infrastructure and particularly of health facilities has taken place, including the destruction of a hospital complex comprising a maternity unit in Mariupol on 9 March, causing many civilian casualties. The World Health Organization has recorded '18 attacks on healthcare establishments, health personnel and ambulances'.
- The civilian populations who have not left the war zones are holed up in shelters and are having difficulty maintaining their basic needs (food, drinking water, heating, communication, etc.).
- A significant demonstration of solidarity is being observed in Poland and elsewhere in Europe to ensure that those exiled are welcomed.
- MdM continues to ensure that this crisis does not push other crises into the background, particularly among donors with the potential reallocation of funds.

The situation remains extremely fluid and volatile.

Operational set up as of 6th of March



MdM's OPERATIONAL RESPONSE

■ **MdM's network**

Médecins du Monde has been working in Ukraine since 2014 (programme initiated by MdM France).

For the last few years, the Ukraine programme has been managed by **MdM Spain** and **MdM Germany** who have been working in Donbass and the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. Most of the people living in this region are elderly and the regular clashes since 2014 have contributed to the collapse of the healthcare system – lack of specialist doctors, qualified personnel, pharmacies, medical staff, etc. The aim of MdM's project was to support the public healthcare system by ensuring access to care through mobile clinics in the areas which were the most vulnerable health wise. The range of services offered by MdM included primary healthcare, sexual and reproductive healthcare, psychological care and psychosocial support, accompanied by donations of material and equipment and training of nursing staff. The activities were rolled out in government-controlled areas as well as in separatist areas.



Since the escalation of the conflict on 24 February, the teams have left the Donbass region and have relocated to the Polish and Romanian borders. Further support in the form of medical personnel and equipment is being organised. Despite everything, the teams in place have continued to work from the outset to deliver care, providing online mental health and sexual and reproductive health consultations, for example.

In Ukraine, an emergency team has been deployed by MdM-Spain to provide additional support to the programme and to help redirect their operations with MdM-Germany. Both sections have established their logistical base in Romania and a coordination office in the west of Ukraine.

Medicines and inputs have been rapidly distributed to different hospitals and health centres in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The teams are in the process of identifying new areas for donations, as many health facilities are suffering disruption to their supplies. As well as arranging donations, the Spanish and German teams are looking to redeploy their local teams and to extend their medical activities both in the west of Ukraine and as close to Donbass as possible.

In addition, **MdM-Turkey** is sending a lorry-load of medicines to local health authorities; a team from **MdM-Greece** is on the ground in Romania to arrange a donation and another from **MdM-Belgium** is fact-finding on the Slovakian and Hungarian borders.

- ***MdM France – International operations***

- *Response to the Ukrainian crisis*

To support the operations conducted by other sections of the MdM network on the ground in Ukraine, MdM-France is making part of its Emergency Stock available, so that additional medical inputs can be forwarded.

Teams from the Emergency Unit are at this very moment deployed along the borders in Poland, Romania and Moldova to assess the needs of people on the move as well as the facilities for receiving them.

Based on initial observations, the border and reception points are generally well organised. More recently, border waiting times have dropped from a few days to a few hours. Virtually all people are in transit for a maximum of 24-48 hours before reaching other destinations in Europe.

The vast majority of sites have adequate infrastructure in place – heated tents, water, hygiene and sanitation – as well as enormous quantities of non-foodstuffs from local and private donations.

We are attentive to the fact that crises exacerbate inequalities and vulnerabilities and have a particular impact on women and children.ⁱⁱⁱ Medical provision appears fairly satisfactory at crossing points and reception centres – ambulances, seconded medical personnel, system of referral to neighbouring hospitals, etc. – but some specific needs do not seem to be adequately met, for example in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)^{iv} and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)^v. It should be noted that abortion is illegal in Poland and that access to SRHR generally remains complex in this country.



MdM offers added value in responding to these specific needs. This is over and above our experience of working in crisis settings.

Our perception of existing needs is improving from one day to the next, and we are confident of our capacity to launch activities promptly based on analyses conducted in the field.

In addition, the MdM Foundation is in contact with a former partner, the organisation Club Svitanok operating in Donbass, to provide emergency financial support. It is also exploring the possibility of supporting other Ukrainian civil society actors.

- *Project in Russia*

MdM-France has been working in Russia for many years and is currently supporting several civil society organisations working with and near sex workers. The team is still operating, and we are closely monitoring the situation to adapt our strategy and ensure the security of team members.

MdM France is also paying close attention to the repercussions of the war on other countries where projects are being conducted: **Georgia, Bulgaria and Armenia.**

➔ Overall, the situation is extremely changeable. Our objective is therefore to adapt in order to respond as effectively as possible to needs, while complimenting the actions of numerous other actors in the field.

▪ **MdM France – French operations**

The regional delegations in several cities are seeing the arrival of people fleeing the war in Ukraine, with local authorities putting in place specific care packages.

The French authorities were quick to announce that accommodation⁶ for more than 10,000 was being mobilised, announcing two days later on 10 March that the figure was 25,000. The French Interior Ministry indicated that the accommodation earmarked was not part of the national reception scheme (Dispositif National d'Accueil – DNA)⁷, nor part of the 'already saturated' emergency accommodation programme.

For the moment, we did not have a specific response as our projects are opened to all nationalities. Field actors are following closely the situation to assess needs.

MdM French Operations Directorate (DOF) has set up a tool shared with regional delegations for observing the conditions in which Ukrainian refugees are received and any differences in treatment compared with refugees of other nationalities in the various regions of France. This tool will allow us to take action in the short term if necessary as well as to contribute to MERH (Migration, Exile, Rights and Health) advocacy in the longer term.

⁶ The initial count detailed the type:

- 6,000 concerned accommodations volunteered by French citizens
- 3,700 offered by local authorities
- 1,100 offered by major housing providers, notably in the social housing rented sector

⁷ 'The DNA must not be used as a tool for managing the crisis', in the words of the Interior Ministry.



MdM'S POSITION IN THE FACE OF A MAJOR HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

MdM generally sees crises as having a direct and indirect impact on individuals' health. In particular, crises bring about:

- Violations of the right to health and disruption to access to care (insecurity, clashes, attacks on personnel or health facilities, destruction of infrastructure and checkpoints preventing access to good quality healthcare in a timely manner).
- An increase in individuals' vulnerability, particularly among those already marginalised by societies and/or healthcare systems (increased gender-based violence and sexual violence in particular, greater risk of exposure to violence and exploitation of unaccompanied minors). The impact of crises on sexual and reproductive health and rights is systematic: disruptions to provision of contraception and preventative services and limited access to emergency obstetric and neonatal care, assisted delivery, treatment for obstetric complications and abortion.
- An undermining of states and state healthcare systems (a cut or end to funding of healthcare facilities, disruption to supplies for health centres, irregular or non-existent payment of healthcare staff salaries, reduction in the range of services offered and in the quality of the care, etc.).
- Specific health needs – for displaced people or refugees, injured people, women, children, people with a disability and older people.

Reminder of the strategic objectives of MdM's humanitarian advocacy adopted in December 2021^{vi}

- To protect humanitarian and health personnel in crisis settings
- To improve access to populations living in crisis settings
- To raise awareness of humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law and human rights and to demand these be respected
- To document and minimise the impact of measures to combat terrorism and money laundering and of sanctions (or restrictive measures) imposed on humanitarian action and NGOs, including as part of international solidarity work

➡ ***In the context of the war in Ukraine, MdM is calling for international humanitarian law to be respected and civilians and humanitarian and health service personnel to be protected.***

- *Protecting civilian populations*

MdM is warning of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and is calling for the introduction of humanitarian corridors to allow for the evacuation in safe territories of civilians trapped in combat zones and for the supply of humanitarian aid.

Protecting human life must be the absolute priority of all political and military decision-making. Civilian populations must never be taken as targets. Moreover, humanitarian aid must be facilitated, and safe routes must be opened for people who wish to leave Ukraine. All those states seen as safe countries must be open to people coming from war zones.

MdM condemns all obstacles to evacuating civilians from besieged zones.

- *Protecting humanitarian and health personnel*



Médecins du Monde condemns attacks on healthcare personnel and facilities. These acts of violence constitute serious breaches of international humanitarian law, defined as 'war crimes' under international criminal law.

Those waging war are obliged to guarantee to protect humanitarian personnel in order to ensure aid is delivered to civilians and to protect healthcare staff and facilities in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Access to healthcare must be guaranteed in all circumstances. No conflict justifies attacking hospitals, nursing and medical staff and those who seek to provide medical assistance.

➡ ***MdM welcomes the demonstration of solidarity and the EU's implementation of the temporary protection mechanism and calls for all exiled people on French territory to be treated with dignity.***

MdM praises the unanimous and rapid implementation by the 27 countries of the EU of the temporary protection directive.

The schemes put in place by the French government, the instructions issued to different institutions, the series of inter-ministerial meetings and the engagement of local, area and regional authorities demonstrate a desire to welcome people with dignity and to support them in their ordeal.

From the moment they arrive, people who were living in Ukraine⁸ (and not solely those who are Ukrainian) can:

- Go to the government office of the Préfecture to request temporary protection; a provisional residence permit for 6 months is then issued, renewable as of right for as long as the EU temporary protection mechanism remains in force (for 1 year in the first instance). While securing temporary protection is a right for all Ukrainian nationals and their families, it is conditional on the provision of proof by non-Ukrainian residents that it is impossible for them to return to their own country 'in sustained conditions of safety'.
- Access universal healthcare protection immediately as well as complementary top-up health cover (no application form or means-testing required) on production of a temporary residence permit.
- Have the right to work, requiring authorisation in advance.
- Obtain facilitated access to accommodation and housing: access to temporary accommodation on arrival and subsequent referral as quickly as possible to long-term accommodation or housing involving an element of housing support (places are earmarked in the rented housing sector with additional support or in accommodation offered by private citizens). In each French department, a specialist third-sector organisation will be in charge of providing support.
- Access asylum-seeker benefits if age and means criteria are met.
- Access the educational system in the case of those under-18s covered by the temporary protection mechanism.

⁸ Ukrainian nationals living in Ukraine before 24 February 2022, stateless persons and nationals from third countries other than Ukraine, who have benefited from international protection or the equivalent national protection in Ukraine before 24 February 2022; third-country nationals whose regular place of residence was Ukraine 'on the basis of a valid permanent residence permit and who are unable to return to their country or region of origin in sustained conditions of safety' and family members of the people covered by the above points.



Furthermore, Ukrainian nationals without a biometric passport are not required to apply for a visa and have a legal right to remain for 90 days within the Schengen Area. They can if they wish obtain protection from the country in which they find themselves. In the absence of a request for temporary protection, Ukrainians who do not apply for temporary protection during these 3 months are not covered by French national health or emergency medical insurance.

Lastly, Ukrainians residing in France whose leave to remain expires will have their right to universal health protection automatically extended.

Our demands

Concerning the scope of the temporary protection

It must rightfully and unconditionally benefit anyone arriving from Ukrainian territory, whether a Ukrainian national or not.

Concerning the policy of receiving people in exile

Given the efforts and resources mobilised at the present time for people fleeing the war in Ukraine and with regard to the disgraceful living conditions currently experienced by a large number of people living in exile in France as well as the abuse to which they are often subjected, we consider it essential that the authorities be called on to recast the policy governing how people in exile are treated. This policy must fully respect the rights of people living in exile in France, whatever their region or country of origin and their reasons for leaving.

In the immediate term, we demand:

- ✉ That the determination by the authorities to house all exiled people arriving from Ukraine be similarly demonstrated with regard to housing in a dignified manner all people currently living in exile on French territory.
- ✉ That the facilitating of administrative procedures at the Préfecture stipulated by the Interior Ministry for those with the right to temporary protection become the norm in the administrative processing of applications by all foreign nationals to access rights.
- ✉ That the 3-month waiting period imposed at the end of 2019 on asylum seekers before they can access French universal health insurance be waived.

Concerning the demonstration of solidarity

As we can testify, we too are participating in this demonstration of solidarity. It is comforting to see the majority of French citizens showing solidarity. It serves as a riposte to the increasingly powerful hate/xenophobic speech issuing from some of the French presidential candidates.

COMMUNICATION ON FUNDRAISING

From the start of the crisis, MdM has adapted its fundraising activities to appeal to the generosity of its donors: three appeals for donations via email have been made and a Ukraine Emergency flyer was added to the mailing of the March edition of the donor newspaper, currently being distributed. The feedback and response at this stage show the generosity and commitment of our donors who stand by us.



Furthermore, we have launched a fundraising effort directed at the employees of some businesses and have finalised new corporate partnerships focusing on this crisis (Agnes b and CSS France).

Lastly, Alliance Urgences (the collective of French emergency organisations) has also launched a public fundraising campaign that will benefit from the ticket sales for a concert in support of Ukraine being organised by the Paris Opera on 27 March.

➔ As a reminder, we do not accept donations in kind and, if approached, we redirect enquiries to official government websites such as <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A15542>

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- As of 24 February, an initial statement was drafted by the MdM network, entitled 'Médecins du Monde concerned about protection of civilians in Ukraine'.
- On 4 March, MdM France circulated a press release [Médecins du Monde France renforce ses actions aux frontières de l'Ukraine | Médecins du Monde \(medecinsdumonde.org\)](#)
- On 4 March, the MdM network also signed a joint statement issued by NGOs working in Ukraine. [Joint I/NGO statement on humanitarian protection and access in Ukraine - Ukraine | ReliefWeb](#)
- On 10 March, MdM Spain published a further statement [La salud se asfixia en el campo de batalla | Médicos del Mundo \(medicosdelmundo.org\)](#)
- On 16 March, a new network [statement](#) was published for internal and external use.
- Interviews with MdM, including on TV, were conducted in several network countries.
- Requests for interviews with colleagues in the field are managed by MdM Spain.

Spokespersons will shortly be identified to facilitate our response to approaches by the media.

ⁱ <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/ukraine-emergency.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.unocha.org/ukraine>

ⁱⁱⁱ It is generally estimated that in a crisis women and girls represent an average of 4% of the displaced population and 15% of them will require emergency obstetric care to treat pregnancy complications. In the case of Ukraine, the needs are expected to be much greater given that the refugees and displaced people are essentially women and children.

^{iv} [Pour en savoir plus sur les DSSR à MdM](#)

^v [Pour en savoir plus sur la SMPS à MdM](#)

^{vi} [Pour en savoir plus sur le plaidoyer humanitaire de MdM](#)