



## **IFRC | Ukraine: As violence continues, the Red Cross appeals for more support for people forced to flee their homes**

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As the number of people fleeing the outbreak of violence in eastern Ukraine approaches 2.2 million people, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has increased its appeal for support to Ukrainian Red Cross Society and launched an additional appeal for Belarus. The two countries, together with the Russian Federation, currently host the majority of people displaced from eastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian Red Cross Society activated its emergency response system at the onset of the civil unrest in December 2013, deploying first aid teams to provide support and aid to those affected by the violence.

Dr. Alla Khabarova, Secretary General, Ukrainian Red Cross said the operational needs were changing and growing. “As the situation in the country evolved, the Red Cross was faced with the challenge of meeting ever-growing needs, not least a steadily increasing number of internally displaced people. Today, that number exceeds 1.3 million people,” she said.

For many people in the country, life has become increasingly difficult, with high inflation and rising food prices compounding the daily challenges. While insecurity remains, most are reluctant to even consider returning home. Since April 2014, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society has provided assistance to more than 502,400 people. In concert with its partners, the society has provided food, essential relief goods including clothes, shoes and kitchen items, hygiene items, medical assistance and first aid, medication, monetary aid, and psychosocial support. To date, over 318 tonnes of relief items have been distributed to those in need.

The IFRC has revised its emergency appeal for 20 million Swiss francs to enable Ukrainian Red Cross Society to scale up its assistance to vulnerable communities, including those who have been forced to leave their homes. The National Society plans to expand its assistance to support 107,750 people through the provision of food and other essential aid, safe drinking water, improved access to health services and cash-voucher distributions, which will enable them to purchase items they need the most.

The IFRC has also launched an emergency appeal to support the Belarus Red Cross in providing aid to forced migrants from Ukraine. The focus here is on vulnerable migrants, including single-parent families, the elderly, large families, and people with disabilities. To date, the Belarus Red Cross has used its own emergency contingency funds to respond to these critical needs. However, as the number of people needing assistance continues to grow, these funds have been depleted, and the society now calls upon the international community for support. Through this appeal for 743,000 Swiss francs, 2,400 families in greatest need will receive assistance over the coming months.

“The protracted nature of the crisis in eastern Ukraine has resulted in enormous humanitarian needs not only in Ukraine, but also in the neighbouring countries. It calls for greater commitment and collaborative efforts in order to provide assistance for the mounting needs of the hundreds of thousands who are most severely affected,” said Elkhan Rahimov, IFRC’s head of cluster for Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Turkey.

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With no end in sight, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement stands in solidarity with the primary objective of ensuring that the critical needs of the most vulnerable people are met, regardless of their location.

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