



The Jewish Federations®
OF NORTH AMERICA
Israel Office

JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

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Despite four weeks of intense fighting, Russia has so far failed to conquer any major Ukrainian city, including the capital Kyiv. Nearly four million Ukrainians, including tens of thousands of Jews, have fled the country.

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

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- Despite four weeks of intense fighting, Russia has so far failed to conquer any major Ukrainian city. According to Ukraine's military intelligence head General Kyrylo Budanov, Russia's operations around the capital Kyiv had failed and it was now impossible for the Russian army to overthrow the Ukrainian government.
- In recent days, the Ukrainian cities of Lutsk, Kharkiv, Zhytomyr and Rivne have been hit by numerous Russian missiles in what Ukrainian officials have described as "carpet bombing."
- According to the United Nations, thousands of people have been killed, 3.8 million refugees have fled the country, and many millions more are internally displaced. A staggering 50% of Ukrainian children have now been displaced.
- A new round of peace talks is scheduled to begin tomorrow, Tuesday, in Istanbul. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky said that his goals are "peace and the restoration of normal life" for his country. "Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are beyond doubt. Effective security guarantees for our state are mandatory." He added that a neutral, non-nuclear status for Ukraine in the form of a "serious treaty" was acceptable as part of a deal with Russia.
- US President Joe Biden answered "No," in response to a question from a reporter asking if he had been calling for regime change in Russia. Biden had earlier said Russian President Vladimir Putin "cannot remain in power."

ISRAEL

The Israeli field hospital in Mostyska, Ukraine, "Kohav Meir" (named after Ukrainian-born former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, and meaning "Shining Star") began operating last week. A team of medical professionals led by Dr. David Dagan arrived at the hospital on Monday, joined by 60 staff members from the Sheba Medical Center. The hospital, financed in part by Federation-supported JDC, is Israel's flagship humanitarian effort and is scheduled to be active for at least one month. It includes an emergency ward, a maternity ward and several other departments.

The field hospital's inauguration ceremony was attended by the Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Health, the Governor of the Lviv district and Mayor of Mostyska and the Chargé d'Affaires of the Israeli Embassy in Ukraine. Professor Dagan, addressed members of the medical delegation and stated: "We are here to be the star that lights the path of refugees in need of medical care. We will extend a helping hand to them, as has always been the State of Israel's custom. I feel extremely privileged to be a part of this fantastic group." Israel remains the only country in the world to have set up a hospital in Ukraine.

Meanwhile Israel's Ministry of Education has embarked on a plan to ensure the integration of some 2,000 students into the Israeli school system. The two-stage plan includes educational, emotional, and social components aimed at guiding newly arrived Ukrainian students as well as providing therapeutic support for them and their parents. In addition, the Ministry has established a dedicated Ukraine situation room.

During the first month, activities will be held in hotels and hostels where immigrants are being housed, including organized tours to heritage sites throughout the country. The Ministry is also recruiting psychologists from the Educational Psychology Service, educational counselors, and trauma experts who speak Ukrainian and Russian to provide support to the new arrivals. Later, the Ministry will provide support for students and their parents as they prepare to move into permanent homes and schools.

In addition, the Ministry of Education also recently provided an online briefing to some 500 teachers in Ukraine designed to help them deal with emergency situations and times of war, based on the Israeli education system's wide experience in teaching students during emergency situations.

Read a [story](#) about an Orthodox Israeli IDF veteran who has volunteered to fight with Ukrainian forces.

FLEEING UKRAINE, FEDERATIONS AND PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

In just one month since the fighting began, **Jewish Federations** have raised more than \$41.9 million for Ukrainian relief efforts (see details [here as to how first funds in are impacting in the field](#)). JFNA's Special Allocations Committee has already met twice to designate funds for Ukrainian relief, and a third round of allocations is scheduled for this coming Thursday. The relief efforts are being undertaken by Federation partners The Jewish Agency for Israel, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and World ORT; as well as by United Hatzalah, Hillel International, Nefesh B'Nefesh, HIAS, the Israel Trauma Coalition, Hadassah Medical Organization, Chabad, and Shma Yisrael.

President Biden has authorized the immigration to the United States of 100,000 Ukrainian refugees. In addition to [JFNA's recent Fly-In to D.C.](#) to lobby on Capitol Hill for such refugee relief and resettlement, Jewish Federations had [catalyzed a campaign by more than 375 Jewish and interfaith groups](#) to urge the government to admit these refugees to the country.

Also last week, 30 leaders of Federations from across North America, participated in a second mission to the Polish-Ukrainian border, which was [featured in this article](#). In addition, JFNA's Board Chair Mark Wilf appeared widely in both the Jewish and mainstream media last week in relation to his experience leading the first mission, including interviews with [CNBC](#), [i24](#), [JNS](#), and the [Minnesota Vikings](#).

JFNA is now offering half-hour webinars twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, to update everyone about the rapidly evolving situation in Ukraine. To register for the entire series, [click here](#). For a recording of Thursday's session, [click here](#).

JFNA is preparing, in collaboration with the Jewish Agency and the JDC, to send Russian- and Ukrainian-speaking volunteers to the war-torn region to provide humanitarian support and assist Jewish refugees who wish to make Aliyah. The first cohort will likely depart in early April. To apply for the program, [click here](#). For a list of FAQ's, [click here](#). For more information, please email [Sarah Eisenman](#).

Rebecca Bardach, currently providing expert assistance to JFNA, wrote [this](#) moving piece about her recent experiences on the border working with refugees.

In anticipation of a massive wave of Aliyah from Ukraine, **The Jewish Agency for Israel** has launched its Aliyah Express program, which aims to expedite the immigration process resulting in thousands of Ukrainian olim (immigrants) arriving in Israel per week.

Since the outbreak of the war at the end of February, **4,000** Jewish Ukrainian refugees have made Aliyah. That number is expected to dramatically increase, especially if the situation worsens. As such, the program will expedite the Aliyah process on the ground, significantly reducing the timeline for eligibility checks, and olim will board flights to Israel faster.

The Agency will also assist in absorbing immigrants when they arrive in Israel. Dozens of employees are being recruited to assist the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration with housing olim in hotels upon their arrival, as well as working with an emergency program that will enroll young Ukrainians in Masa, a program co-founded by The Jewish Agency. Following a request from the Israeli government, the Agency will help the Government of Israel establish a situation room to coordinate among the various organizations working on the ground in the region, enabling a more streamlined and efficient process.

The Jewish Agency has created temporary shelters for those fleeing Ukraine in Poland, Romania, Hungary and Moldova. These facilities have so far housed over **8,000** refugees, and there are currently **4,500** refugees at Agency facilities who will soon make their way to Israel. In addition, the organization is now planning to increase its capacity by opening additional facilities in Romania, as well as renting a stadium in Bulgaria.

As reported previously, the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee** (JDC) has significant operations on the ground in Ukraine working with the population under fire, and along the border, working with refugees who have managed to escape. During the past month, JDC has:

- Delivered lifesaving emergency assistance to **tens of thousands** of vulnerable Jews under attack within Ukraine.
- Provided more than **18,700** refugees with vital necessities, like food, medicine, and psychosocial aid as they crossed from Ukraine into Romania, Moldova, Poland, and Hungary – places where JDC is often their first line of support.
- Fielded over **12,600** incoming emergency hotline calls and resolved thousands of requests; and made over **12,100** outgoing calls. JDC established many of these hotlines during the pandemic, and is now leveraging the existing network to deliver aid and human connection to Ukraine's Jews.
- Evacuated more than **10,000** Jews fleeing towns and cities under fire, including Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Chernikiv, organizing caravans to make the days'-long journey to Moldova and bring people to safety.
- Delivered more than **165** tons of humanitarian aid, including food, medicine, soap, and other crucial supplies to Jews sheltering in Ukraine and to those who have fled to Moldova.

JDC is also assisting refugees and internally displaced people by delivering immediate medical support through Israeli telemedicine technology, which will continue to serve ailing Ukrainians for months to come. JDC has considerable experience using Israeli technology to provide remote medical care - piloted successfully in India during COVID-19 - to help in Ukraine. The assistance includes supplying Israel's field hospital in western Ukraine with telemedicine devices that remotely monitor vital signs and allow doctors to diagnose and recommend treatment. When the field hospital is no longer needed, JDC will transfer the devices to Ukrainian hospitals and train their staff, so that care can continue. So far, **131** telemedicine devices have been delivered.

Stefan Oscar, who oversees JDC's operations across the former Soviet Union, has been on the ground during this crisis. In this [video](#) he shared his reflections.

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](#) and those of the Jewish Agency [here](#).

While providing humanitarian aid to Ukrainian refugees on the Moldovan border, as well as around the Moldovan capital of Chisinau at several refugee centers, **United Hatzalah's** team and its volunteers have also undertaken a series of small-scale missions inside Ukraine itself. The group, a recipient of Jewish Federation funding, has sent special teams inside Ukraine from Moldova and Slovakia to distribute medical supplies to hospitals near the western border and to rescue and recover injured and ill people who wish to flee the country but are unable to do so due to medical conditions.

Michael Brodsky, Israel Ambassador to Ukraine, will give a special briefing on Israel's Response to the Ukrainian Crisis today, Monday, March 28, 2022 at 11:00 am ET. To join the NCSEJ webinar, click [here](#). **NCSEJ** also hosted a webinar last week featuring the Ambassadors of Moldova and Slovakia to the United States discussing their countries' efforts to assist with the refugees as well as their ongoing security concerns with Russia. [Listen to a recording here](#).

American Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott has donated \$10 million to **HIAS** (the Jewish humanitarian group) for its work aiding refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. Scott, the ex-wife of Amazon executive chairman Jeff Bezos, has just announced donations of \$3.8 billion to 465 organizations. See [here](#) for more.

Tens of Israeli and **Jewish organizations** are working to provide humanitarian relief for Ukraine. JFNA has put together a summary of these efforts, which can be found [here](#).

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.

For more information, please contact: JFNA's Dani Wassner dani.wassner@jewishfederations.org