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Ukraine crisis: Facts, FAQs, and how to help

☐ A Ukrainian mother with brown hair and dimples smiles and holds an infant in a long-sleeved white shirt.

☐ A Ukrainian teenage girl with s

GALLERY


Rita, a mother of two who fled the war in Ukraine, gets emergency relief supplies for her family through World Vision partners in Brasov, Romania. "In Romania, help is there for many people, for my neighbors, for people on the street, for our host, and for your organization so that you can help us," says Rita. (©2022 World Vision/photo by Christopher Lete)

GALLERY

Students like 13-year-c Brasov, Romania. More to this class because th Romanian language to World Vision/photo by

Nearly one year in, the war in Ukraine has forcibly displaced people on a scale unparalleled in Europe since World War II. As of late January, the mass is of refugees — mostly women and children — has surpassed 8 million (https://data.unhcr.org/situations/ukraine), according to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Since the escalation of the conflict on February 24, 2022, the war has sparked economic shocks and disruptions worldwide that continue to impact people in poverty and an escalating global hunger crisis.

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FAQs: What you need to know about Ukraine’s humanitarian crisis

Find answers to frequently asked questions about the war in Ukraine and learn how to help children and their families.

- Fast facts: War in Ukraine and the Ukrainian refugee crisis
- What's the latest with the war in Ukraine?
- How many people are affected by the war in Ukraine?
- Where are Ukrainian refugees going?
- How many Ukrainians have gone back?
- What are the impacts of the crisis in Ukraine?
- How has the war in Ukraine affected the global hunger crisis?
- What's World Vision doing to help families impacted by the war in Ukraine?
- How many people has World Vision helped since the start of the war in Ukraine?
- How are children being impacted by the conflict in Ukraine?
- What about the effects of war on the education of Ukrainian children?
- What are other concerns for children affected by the Ukraine crisis?
- How can I help refugees who have fled the war in Ukraine?
- How can I be praying for children and families made vulnerable by this crisis?

Fast facts: War in Ukraine and the Ukrainian refugee crisis

- Ukraine is the second-largest country in Europe (just after Russia) with a landmass slightly smaller than the state of Texas and a population of about 43 million.
- Kyiv is the nation's capital and the largest city in north-central Ukraine.
- Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine declared independence on August 24, 1991.
- The country has experienced years of political and economic instability and remains among the European countries suffering the most severe health impacts from the coronavirus pandemic.
- Due to conflict that began in eastern Ukraine in 2014, nearly 3 million people already needed humanitarian aid before the February 24, 2022, escalation.
- More than 7.1 million children, including 1.2 million displaced inside Ukraine, will need humanitarian aid in 2023, according to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF).
- 18,483 civilian casualties were reported between February 24 and January 23, 2023 — with 7,068 people killed, mostly resulting from explosive weapons in populated areas, according to the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (https://www.ohchr.org/en/ohchr_homepage)(OHCHR).
- 1,276 children have been killed or injured in violence between the beginning of the conflict and January 23, 2023.
- About 5.7 million school-aged children have been affected by the conflict, including 3.6 million due to school closures (<https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ukraine/card/5UD2SjqvZT/>).

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Krystyna, a Ukrainian lawyer who fled the war from Kherson, sits with her children, 4-month-old Eleonor and 6-year-old Matvi, inside Romexpo, a convention center hosting Ukrainian refugees like her in Bucharest, Romania. Krystyna says she is grateful to World Vision and its partners for supporting her family with essentials, including warm clothes for the winter, food, and "absolutely everything." Now, she volunteers to help other mothers get support. (©2022 World Vision/photo by Christopher Lete)

What's the latest with the war in Ukraine?

Millions of Ukrainians have endured nearly a year of intense hostilities, triggering widespread forced displacement within the war-torn country and across the region. Humanitarian needs continue to rise sharply.

Air strikes and bombings continue in Ukraine, where people are living in damaged homes or buildings with no electricity, running water, or proper heating to protect them from freezing winter temperatures. Many citizens live daily without access to food, water, healthcare, education, protection, and other essential services.

According to the U.N., nearly everyone in Ukraine has been impacted by power cuts due to the country's damaged or destroyed energy infrastructure. With 50% of the country's energy infrastructure affected, the World Health Organization (WHO) fears millions of people will be at risk of sickness and death as the deep winter sets in. Evening temperatures are known to dip 4 degrees below zero during December through March, the coldest months.

As of February 2, 2023, the WHO has documented over 760 hospitals and healthcare facilities that have been attacked, destroyed, or damaged since the escalation of conflict a year earlier.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

How many people are affected by the war in Ukraine?

According to the U.N., some 17.7 million people need humanitarian aid and protection. In addition to the more than 8 million refugees outside Ukraine, an estimated 5.5 people have been displaced within the besieged nation.

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One-year-old David rests in his mother's arms after receiving care in a hospital in Ukraine to which World Vision delivered food and medical supplies on March 6, 2022. David's 31-year-old mother, Olga, said the family fled their hometown in the Kyiv region seeking safety from the escalating conflict. "We've been staying in the country for several days," Olga says. "After the second bombing, we decided to leave. We were hiding in the underground shelters." Olga said she turned to the hospital after David developed a temperature and seemed unwell. David's health was improving, and his family also found support and shelter at the medical facility. (©2022 World Vision/photo by Brianna Piazza)

Where are Ukrainian refugees going?

Refugees have fled across Europe, including Poland, which has received more Ukrainian refugees than any other European nation, with more than 1.5 million refugees recorded there as of January 31, 2023. Refugees also have crossed into the Czech Republic, Moldova, Slovakia, Romania ([/our-work/country-profiles/romania](#)), and Hungary, where governments and local communities have widely welcomed them. However, experts warn that as the conflict drags on, host community resources are being stretched — requiring support for local services that benefit both host community members and refugees.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

How many Ukrainians have gone back?

Despite the continuing violence in Ukraine, many refugees are returning to their home communities. More than 5 million people have returned to Ukraine as of January 2023, according to the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration (https://displacement.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11461/files/reports/IOM_UKR%20Returns%20Report_R9%20GPS_FINAL_0.pdf) (IOM). It's unclear how many of those have returned to check on family or property or opted to remain in country.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

What are the impacts of the crisis in Ukraine?

With over 8 million fleeing Ukraine as of early January, this has become one of the largest and fastest displacement crises in the world today, according to the UNHCR (<https://www.unhcr.org/ua/en>). It is also one of the bloodiest conflicts in Europe since World War II.



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The war has devastated the lives of Ukrainian children and families and has created economic disruptions impacting child poverty far beyond Eastern Europe. It continues to threaten regional stability and has sharply raised humanitarian needs.

U.N. agencies have observed a dramatic increase in global hunger, which was already on the rise, as conflict has complicated the delivery of critical food exports from Ukraine.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

How has the war in Ukraine affected the global hunger crisis?

Even before the war in Ukraine (<http://www.fightfoodcrises.net/crises>), global hunger was on the rise. The conflict has dramatically increased the costs of wheat and other grains, fuel, and fertilizer, supercharging the global hunger crisis and contributing to widespread hunger. Food shortages and prices are causing hardships in Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East.

Considered the “breadbasket of Europe,” Ukraine and the Russian Federation provided 30% of the world’s cereal grains and two-thirds of the world’s sunflower oil. The crisis in Ukraine has exposed 1.7 billion people — 1 in 5 of the world’s population — to greater risk of hunger through soaring food prices, rising energy costs, tightening financial conditions, or all three, according to the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP).

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

In Chernivtsi, Ukraine, Lyudmyla, a mother of five, helps her son with a new winter coat. The family can stay warm this winter because of a World Vision–supported cash assistance program that helps families pay for coats, shoes, and necessities. (©2022 World Vision/photo by Oleksandra Shapkina)

What’s World Vision doing to help families impacted by the war in Ukraine?

Since the onset of the conflict, World Vision has supported the most vulnerable people with life-saving aid, shelter, child protection, and essentials, bringing our global expertise in partnering to the Ukraine crisis.

Partners like United Nations agencies — including the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF — local churches in Ukraine and Romania, and national organizations are helping strengthen the community’s response to support refugees and people displaced in the crisis.

We’re continuing to support our response across the region with partner networks to reach more people in conflict-affected areas. Our emergency response is focused on providing food, shelter, and child protection services to those fleeing conflict. Now, we’re shifting our focus to long-term support and adding psychosocial support and educational programs for children and families.



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World Vision is continuing to set up Child-Friendly Spaces to help meet the emotional needs of children impacted by the crisis. In these safe spaces, children can play, engage in informal learning, and express their worries and fears to trained, caring staff. Most importantly, they get a chance to just be a child with other children who are facing the same situation.

“We’re supporting local and national organizations, including faith-based organizations, in Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania, with the knowledge and expertise so that they can build and strengthen aid efforts, from emergency food-aid distribution, winterization efforts, education in emergencies, psychosocial support, to cash-based programming, and more,” says Jacobus Koen, partnership manager for World Vision’s Ukraine response in Chernivtsi, Ukraine.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)



Staff from World Vision, Computer Aid, and Geeks Without Frontiers set up a mobile CommsHub at Romexpo in Bucharest, Romania. The mobile hub helps refugees connect to the internet to gather information and services, plan their onward journeys, and communicate with loved ones who are still in Ukraine. (©2022 World Vision/photo by Brianna Piazza)

How many people has World Vision helped since the start of the war in Ukraine?

We’ve been responding since the first week of the crisis. Our cash assistance program, run by World Vision partners, continues to support people in Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, and Georgia, where freezing winter temperatures have worsened conditions for affected people.

As of December 31, 2023, our staff have provided essentials for 613,393 people across the region.

- 344,299 people have received emergency food assistance
- 36,941 people have received temporary shelter assistance
- 86,205 people have been reached with hygiene kits
- 24,574 people have benefited from mental health and psychosocial activities
- 15,271 people have been supported with child protection programs

In Ukraine, World Vision is working with a dozen trusted partners in 24 municipalities and has supported 393,957 people with life-saving essentials including temporary shelter, hygiene kits, child protection services, and educational programs.

In Romania, where we’ve had a presence for more than three decades, our local staff began responding at the very outset of the crisis, working to make refugee processing areas more child-friendly, facilitate transportation for refugees, establish temporary shelters, and facilitate medical support for children. To date, we’ve provided 152,452 people with support including food, shelter, protection resources, and education and hygiene kits.

In Moldova, World Vision is working in partnership with WFP to support Moldovan families hosting refugees in 17 districts and is also supporting the improvement of sanitation conditions at a shelter near the border. Some 56,000 people have been reached through our programming.

In Georgia, we've helped support 10,886 people with education and child protection and programming that includes distribution of vouchers to cover food, hygiene, clothing, and pharmacy costs.

World Vision's years of work in Eastern Europe have positioned us well to support those affected by this crisis. In 2021, we assisted 3.2 million people across the Middle East and Eastern Europe through emergency response programs.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)



Yulia and her son, 3-year-old Marat, play at World Vision's Child-Friendly Space at Romexpo. For more than 30 years, World Vision has been active in Romania and currently supports refugees from Ukraine as well as host communities and institutions with 19 partners in 10 municipalities. (©2022 World Vision/photo by Christopher Lete)

How are children being impacted by the conflict in Ukraine?

An estimated 7.1 million children, including more than 1.2 million children displaced within Ukraine, will need humanitarian aid in 2023, according to UNICEF.

Ukraine's children have been put at grave risk. The conflict has forced them into situations of extreme vulnerability and has led to mental and emotional stress, the loss of loved ones, interruption in education, and the destruction of homes and family livelihoods.

Children continue to be killed, injured, and deeply affected by the violence. At least 438 children's deaths have been documented (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/01/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-23-january-2023>) between February 24, 2022, and January 23, 2023, along with injuries to an additional 838 children, according to OHCHR.

"I woke up hearing the bombs dropped in our small village located near Borodyanka," said Nina, who with her two sisters endured shelling in northwest Ukraine. She is one of the first areas to be hit by air strikes in late February 2022. Bombings forced the local school to shutter. The family, terrified of the fighting, stayed inside their home for one month. "It was a terrible time. During my visit with our next-door neighbors, we were all crying," added Oksana, Nina's sister.

World Vision's programming through a local partner helps support children like Nina and her sisters with ongoing psycho-social care in Borodyanka.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

Children like 2-year-old Artiom and his 5-year-old sister, Yeva, are finding safe places to play, thanks to World Vision's child-safe play area at Romexpo in Bucharest, Romania. (©2022 Laura Reinhardt/World Vision)

What about the effects of war on the education of Ukrainian children?

War in Ukraine has displaced students and teachers, destroyed schools, and dramatically hampered education. As the school year continues, an estimated 5.3 million children face extreme challenges in accessing education, including 3.6 million who have been impacted by school closures.

Since the war began, more than 2,600 schools have been damaged as a result of hostilities and over 400 have been destroyed, according to UNICEF (<https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/press-releases/war-has-hampered-education#:~:text=Since%20February%202022%2C%20UNICEF%20has,to%20the%20Ministry%20of%20Education.>).

World Vision is deeply concerned about children losing access to education. We're providing informal education and catch-up materials to children in Ukraine and throughout the region. More than 27,991 children have received educational support in Ukraine and surrounding countries.

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In Brasov, Romania, 10-year-old Katya from Ukraine smiles as she attends a World Vision-supported informal education program. World Vision supports learning opportunities for Ukrainian children with formal and non-formal education through diverse online and offline hybrid options. "I feel calm when I attend this class. I'm also interested in learning the Romanian language; that's why I always try to participate so I can learn the language better," she says. "Also, so I can talk more with my Romanian friends since I have a lot of Romanian friends. Soon, we are moving to Bucharest and finding another school there." (©2022 World Vision/photo by Christopher Lete)

What are other concerns for children affected by the Ukraine crisis?

In addition to missing out on school, over 1.5 million children affected by the war in Ukraine are also at risk of long-term mental health problems as a result of being exposed to the horrors of war. According to the U.N.

(<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/08/1125132>), almost every child in Ukraine has been exposed to deeply distressing events. Children fleeing the war are also at significant risk of family separation, violence, abuse, sexual exploitation, and trafficking.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

How can I help refugees who have fled the war in Ukraine?

Give (<https://donate.worldvision.org/give/ukraine-crisis-fund>) to help provide care and support for children and families who have been forcibly displaced and those suffering the broader effects of the ongoing crisis.

[BACK TO QUESTIONS](#)

How can I be praying for children and families made vulnerable by this crisis?

For World Vision, prayer (/refugees-news-stories/pray-refugees-disaster-survivors#:~:text=Merciful%20Counselor%2C%20we%20grieve%20with,to%20find%20refuge%20in%20You.) is a first response. As a Christian organization, we believe that communities of faith have an important role to play in restoring peace and wellness to Ukraine — both in the country and around the world.

Please join us in interceding with God:



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- For peace and safety to be restored and for children and families to be protected from harm.
- For His protection over children and families as they are uprooted from their homes.
- For the needs of children and families caught up in conflict and threatened by danger.
- For World Vision staff to be able to quickly reach the most vulnerable families with the resources they need most.

At the onset of the war, one of our global staff members shared the following beautiful prayer:

Loving God, Creator of all peoples and source of all love,
 We are saddened by the unleashing of horror and destruction in Ukraine.
 We pray that the very best practices of peace will prevail.
 We pray gratefully that Your Spirit of healing and hope is present.
 We are committed as Your people, as disciples of Your gospel of reconciliation, to wage peace as we are able in all Your good and lovely creation.
 We pray this in the name and healing spirit of Jesus.
 Amen.

”

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Scene of a collapsed building from the February 2023 Syria and Turkey earthquake

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 A group of women and children bundled in winter clothing walk with suitcases and backpacks.


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 A woman with a small water container walks in the distance amid a sandy landscape.

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