



The Jewish Federations®
OF NORTH AMERICA
Israel Office

JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

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Civilian and military deaths continue to mount in Ukraine as fighting enters a fourth week. Despite enormous Russian efforts, the capital Kyiv has still not fallen. Millions of Ukrainians, including tens of thousands of Jews, are still attempting to flee the country.

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

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- While heavy fighting continues across many areas of Ukraine, British military sources said that Russia still hasn't achieved air superiority, and is largely depending on stand-off weapons, "launched from the relative safety of Russian airspace to strike targets within Ukraine."
- Some of the heaviest Russian bombardments continue to take place in the besieged city of Mariupol, where residents are rationing food and water as bodies are left in the streets. Reports claim that some city residents are being taken to Russian territory against their will by Russian forces. Captured residents were apparently taken to camps where Russian forces checked their phones and documents before redirecting them to remote Russian cities. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said what Russian forces have done to Mariupol is an "act of terror that will be remembered for centuries."
- United States officials have confirmed that Russia launched "hypersonic missiles" against Ukraine last week, marking the first known use of the weapon in combat. Russia says that it launched hypersonic missiles on Friday to destroy an ammunition warehouse in western Ukraine. The missiles are part of an array of "invincible" weapons unveiled by Russia four years ago, which have both higher speed and range than previously developed missiles. Carried by fighter jets, they can fly at 10 times the speed of sound and can hit a target some 1,250 miles away.
- Over the weekend more than 6,600 people were rescued through evacuation corridors from besieged Ukrainian cities.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that the number of refugees fleeing Ukraine has now reached 2.95 million. Poland is hosting 1.8 million, 300,000 fled to Moldova, 190,000 went to Hungary, 100,000 found shelter in Romania and 300,000 are moving westward.

ISRAEL

Following his address to the US Congress last week, President Zelensky will deliver a live video address to Israel's parliament, the Knesset, this evening (Sunday). In response, Russia has issued Israel a warning not to become too "unbalanced" saying that too much support for Ukraine could see Israel lose its ability to mediate the conflict. According to Israeli media, the warning was conveyed by Russian Ambassador to Israel Anatoly Viktorov during a meeting

Wednesday with Knesset Speaker Mickey Levy who will host the video link-up. The speech will also be screened simultaneously on a large screen at Tel Aviv's Habima Square for the public to watch.

See [here](#) for an article by a former spokesperson of Israel's Prime Minister's Office on the diplomatic dilemmas Israel is facing from the conflict.

Yoav Bistritsky, Israel's deputy ambassador to Ukraine, said over the weekend that the rate of refugees exiting the country appears to have slowed down. "There is a drop in the movement of refugees heading west, including among Israelis and Jews, but there still hundreds of inquiries a day to assist Jews in crossing the border."

Israel has also made a special effort to assist the families of "righteous gentiles," non-Jewish people who saved the lives of Jews during the Shoah. [Watch](#) a moving piece from CNN about this effort.

Set up of the Israeli "Kohav Meir" (named after Ukrainian-born former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, and meaning "Shining Star") field hospital in Mostyska, Ukraine began yesterday, with the hospital expected to begin operating on Tuesday. A team of medical professionals led by Dr. David Dagan will arrive at the hospital on Monday, and will be joined by 60 staff members from the Sheba Medical Center. The hospital, financed in part by Federation-supported JDC, is part of Israeli humanitarian efforts and is scheduled to be active for at least one month. It will contain an emergency ward, a maternity ward and several other departments.

FLEEING UKRAINE, FEDERATIONS AND PARTNERS ON THE GROUND

In just over three weeks since the fighting began, **Jewish Federations** have raised more than \$34.5 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 efforts being undertaken by Federation partners The Jewish Agency for Israel, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and World ORT; as well as to United Hatzalah, Hillel International, Nefesh B'Nefesh, HIAS, the Israel Trauma Coalition, Hadassah Medical Organization, Chabad, and Shma Yisrael.

A second JFNA delegation will visit Poland and the Ukrainian border this week, following a successful mission last week. That mission began with a briefing in Warsaw by Poland's chief rabbi and other experts, after which the Federation leadership group traveled to the border near Krakow and witnessed thousands of refugees (mostly women and children, since the majority of men have stayed behind to defend their country) streaming across the border and being cared for by the Jewish Agency, JDC, and a host of other aid organizations from around the globe. [Here is a video](#) from the mission and here is a [JFNA blog post](#). You can view brief clips of participants reflecting about the trip [here](#). In addition, JFNA's Chair of the Board of Trustees Mark Wilf [appeared on CNBC](#) on Friday to share his reflections and give an idea of the scale of humanitarian support that is still needed to take care of both the short and long-term needs of the refugees.

Jewish Federations, along with other North American Jewish organizations, have also sent a [letter](#) to President Biden asking him to live up to the United States' proud legacy of serving as a beacon for immigrants. Federations asked the president to share responsibility for those refugees with the European countries currently doing so, and to extend special asylum to those refugees with family in the United States.

The Jewish Agency for Israel's Director General Amira Ahronoviz said that the organization is "saving a life every minute," following her trip to the Ukrainian border. See her reflections and update [here](#).

Some numbers from the Jewish Agency Since the outbreak of the fighting:

- **1,950** olim from Ukraine have arrived in Israel
- **823** olim have arrived from Russia.
- **7,120** people are currently accommodated in the Jewish Agency's transit facilities in five countries (including in Ukraine itself).

- **8,088** candidates for Aliyah have filed papers, according to applications submitted to the Jewish Agency, from Ukraine .
- **357** candidates for Aliyah from Russia and Belarus have filed papers.
- **10,282** Ukrainian nationals have arrived in Israel, including 6,513 Ukrainians who are not eligible for Aliyah. The current directive of Israel's Ministry of Interior allows entry without quota of Ukrainians who have relatives in Israel, even if they are not eligible for Aliyah. Many of these refugees entered Israel as tourists, and officials estimate that 70% of them will eventually apply for Aliyah status.
- **24,120** calls from Ukraine and from relatives of Ukrainians in Israel received on the Agency's Global Center emergency hotline.
- **13,500** calls on the hotline from Russia and Belarus, plus another **2,664** calls from the rest of Former Soviet Union.
- **40** volunteers assisting professionals operating the hotlines.
- **46** Agency employees, emissaries and local workers, in five countries are handling Aliyah arrangements for Jewish refugees seeking to arrive in Israel immediately.
- **\$559,000** has been transferred by the Jewish Agency's Security Assistance Fund as emergency grants to **66** communities and organizations in Ukraine. The grants help improve and upgrade the protection and security of community facilities.
- **23,000** items of humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees have been collected in an Agency initiative, to amass basic equipment such as coats, blankets, gloves, hats and scarves, as well as personal hygiene equipment such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper, etc. The campaign received massive support through a special telethon on Israeli TV. A first plane with 120-tons of aid has already been dispatched, and a second plane with 110 tons will follow. Some 6,000 boxes were transferred to the Jewish Agency's Aliyah and Absorption Unit for the benefit of new Olim from Ukraine.

The Jewish Agency is also about to establish an [operational center](#) that will coordinate the activities of all organizations working to assist Jewish refugees, whether they intend to make Aliyah or are absorbed into local communities in Europe.

Also see this piece from the LA Times [Ukrainian Jews escape to Israel: 'We were happy, and now, we will start again.'](#)

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.

JDC reports the following latest numbers:

- **32,000** Jews currently being serving in Ukraine.
- **4,000** Jewish refugees have been evacuated from Ukraine by JDC. These evacuations are happening almost daily, and numbers can fluctuate between one hundred and several hundred.
- **70%** of the approximately 9,000 elderly Jews that were receiving homecare prior to the war are still being serviced by JDC in Ukraine, despite near-impossible wartime conditions.

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](#).

World ORT's schools in Ukraine are physically closed, but the Odessa, Chernivtsi, and Belaya Tzerkov schools are continuing to learn remotely. Online sessions with psychologists are available to offer counseling for children and adults. Across Ukraine, ORT school principals are assessing how many students have left their cities and the country and

how many have remained. At the same time they are gathering information about the needs of the families including financial support required, supply of medicines and whatever else may be needed. They have so far learned that:

- **75%** of families have left Kyiv
- **50%** of families have left Odessa
- **25%** of families have left Chernivtsi

Some students from ORT Schools in Russia and Ukraine have moved to the Baltic states and have enrolled in ORT schools there, and more are expected in the coming days and weeks. Others have gone to schools in Europe. ORT students who have arrived in Bulgaria and Romania are now connected with Jewish schools there. A directory of contacts from schools across the ORT network has been shared with ORT Ukraine parents to contact for assistance.

The Ukrainian Jewish community joined the rest of the Jewish world in celebrating Purim at the end of last week. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia didn't prevent Jewish communities from Kyiv to Dnipro to Lviv from the traditional reading of the Megilla. See a photo [here](#) of celebrations in Dnipro.

See here an article from the Washington Post from the end of last week, [“For Holocaust Survivors from Ukraine, Russian invasion stirs painful memories.”](#)

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