



MÉDECINS DU MONDE 世界の医療団 ÄRZTE DER WELT منظمة أطباء العالم
ΓΙΑΤΡΟΙ ΤΟΥ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ DOKTERS VAN DE WERELD MÉDICOS DEL MUNDO
MÉDICOS DO MUNDO LÄKARE I VÄRLDEN DOCTORS OF THE WORLD

MDM Statement on the war in Ukraine

We at Médecins du Monde (MDM) are deeply concerned by the ongoing war in Ukraine. We are especially concerned about the rising number of attacks on health facilities. **Civilians and civil infrastructures are no targets. They must stay unharmed.** We stand in solidarity with all the victims of the war and their families and appeal to all involved parties to immediately **end the fighting, open humanitarian corridors and grant full humanitarian access to the affected areas.**

We strongly condemn the ongoing violation of international humanitarian law. The recent attacks on medical facilities, residential areas and other civil infrastructure are unacceptable. According to the WHO, 18 attacks on Ukrainian hospitals and ambulances have been confirmed, with even more suspected attacks referring to eyewitnesses. Among others, the maternity and children hospital in Mariupol was attacked and severely damaged on Wednesday.¹ This leaves many civilians without access to health care. Attacks on healthcare facilities constitute a serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, and amount to war crimes. The integrity of civilians and civil infrastructure must be an absolute priority. **Civilians and humanitarian personnel must stay unharmed** and civilian objects especially hospitals and infrastructure must be preserved. We join the resolution 2573 (2021) of the UN Security Council which strongly condemns attacks against critical civilian infrastructure.²

Especially the population of besieged cities and contested areas like Kiev, Charkiw, Mariupol as well as Donetsk and Luhansk is in need of humanitarian aid. In total, OCHA estimates that around 6 million people are in need of humanitarian health care and 18 million have been affected by the war.³ Again, we urge all parties to **ensure humanitarian access to the heavily affected population establishing at least humanitarian corridors and windows of silence.**

With a quickly rising number of people fleeing from the fighting in other areas or neighboring countries, **safe migration channels for everyone, regardless of their citizenship, must be ensured.** According to UNHCR more than 2 million people have already fled the country with around 1.8 million internally displaced.⁴ In this context, we are deeply concerned by reports of discriminatory treatment by state officials of non-European citizens trying to flee combat zones and enter neighbouring countries.⁵ **All states that are considered safe countries must be open to people from the affected regions.** This includes every country, even if it does not share a direct border with Ukraine.

¹<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/russia-ukraine-news-18-attacks-hospitals-ambulances-world-health-organization/>

² <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3924402#record-files-collapse-header>

³<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/document/ukraine-public-health-situation-analysis-phsa-ukraine-03032022-eng>

⁴<https://www.unhcr.org/neu/76513-swedens-support-provides-a-lifeline-to-people-fleeing-and-displaced-in-ukraine.html>

⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/04/ukraine-unequal-treatment-foreigners-attempting-flee>



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With the outbreak of the war the already existing humanitarian crisis in Eastern Ukraine has rapidly spread to the whole country and risks spreading even beyond its borders. We must act now, providing the people remaining in the conflict zones and those on the move with the fundamental necessities. Shortages of medical supplies and limited access to health care facilities do already affect large parts of the population.⁶ Confronted by the Ukrainian winter, especially the displaced and those in combat areas urgently need adequate shelter but also food, hygiene, health care and access to information.

Since most of the displaced persons are women and girls, a specific focus needs to be on sexual and reproductive health services and rights as well as protection from gender based violence.

Local civil society organizations know the needs of the people in conflict situations, so they need to be consulted and included in planning the political and humanitarian response.

Civil infrastructure and especially healthcare structures must be built up and strengthened in the affected areas. In this context, MDM will support the local authorities and healthcare facilities in Ukraine and in the neighboring countries to provide healthcare for everyone. MDM has been providing humanitarian assistance and health services to vulnerable people living along the line of contact in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts in eastern Ukraine for almost eight years. During this time, we have handled some 125,000 consultations. Because of this work, we are well accepted in the country and intend to continue to serve the population in the best possible way.

16/03/2022, Médecins du Monde International Network

⁶<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukraine-phsa-shortform-030322.pdf>