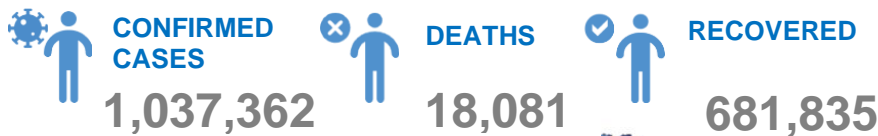




This report is a consolidation of United Nations informational products, drafted by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ukraine.

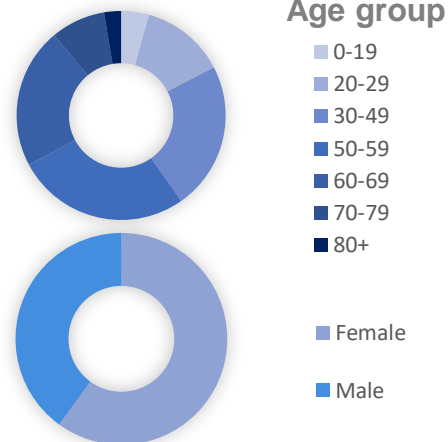
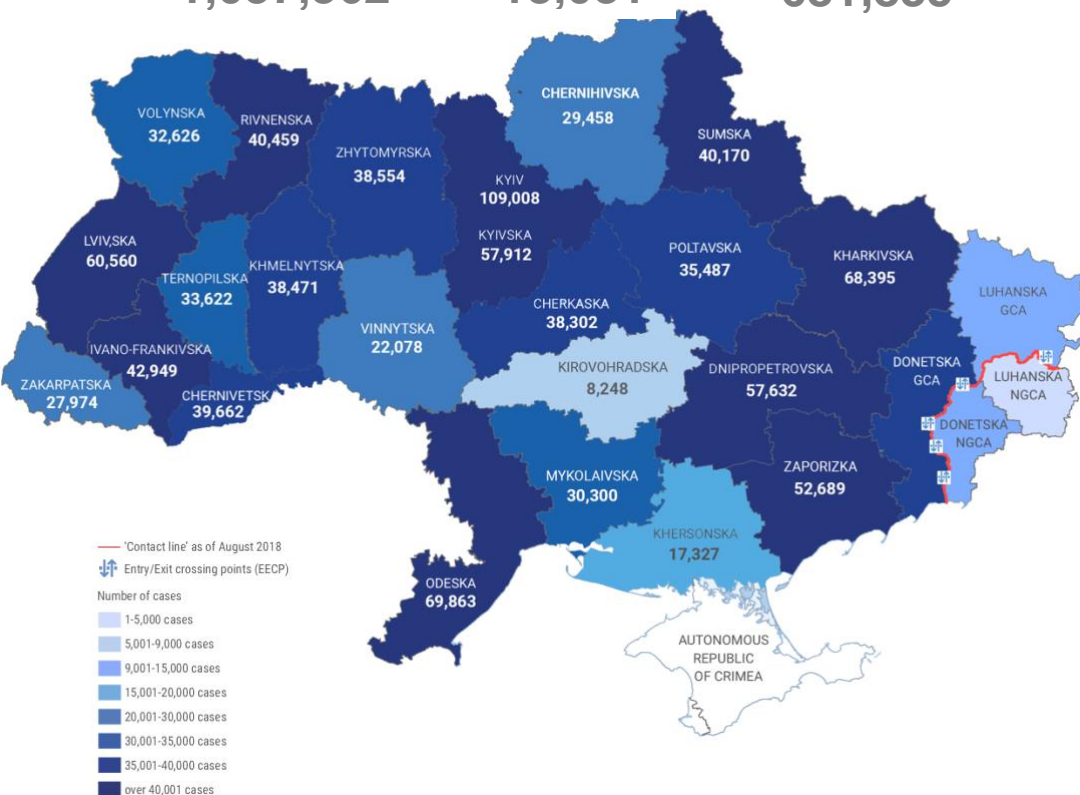
HIGHLIGHTS



Eastern Ukraine COVID-19 confirmed cases



*This figure does not include the number of confirmed cases in the non-Government-controlled areas (NGCA).
Data source: Ministry of Health, Ukraine and entities in control of certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.



The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

- Due to the current epidemiological situation related to the COVID-19 in Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has adopted a resolution to intensify anti-epidemic measures. The new restrictions will be introduced nationwide from January 8 to January 24, 2021. Grocery stores, banks, pharmacies, postal operators and hotels will remain operational, while all public events will be banned with public transport operating in accordance with the orange epidemiological zone. The Ministry of Education and Science has recommended for the schools to extend their holidays during the quarantine.
- Confirmed COVID-19 cases in Ukraine have surpassed a 1 million benchmark on December 24.

5.5 M
COVID-19 PCR tests conducted

3.4 M
People are projected to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021

6,988
Daily confirmed COVID-19 cases

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The impact of the crisis on the socio-economic situation

- COVID-19 has put Ukrainian health system under severe strain. The country continues to face shortages of medical supplies and has limited testing capacities. On December 22, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine approved the national COVID-19 vaccination program, which will begin in the first quarter of 2021, prioritizing medical workers. The vaccination plan will be carried out in four stages.
- Pandemic continues to affect women disproportionately. The COVID-19 response is still lacking gender-sensitive measures that would address the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Hotlines reports indicate an increased number of domestic and gender-based violence, mainly against women.
- People living in homelessness continue to face problems in accessing COVID-19 testing and medical treatment and are at a higher risk of contracting the virus. During this winter season, homeless persons in Ukraine will face a doubled risk being exposed to both COVID-19 and of receiving cold-related injuries and hypothermia because the existing shelter services in Ukraine do not meet the increased demand. In addition, six regions in Ukraine still lack any municipal shelter.
- 1082 COVID-19 cases had been detected in penitentiary facilities (affecting 885 penitentiary staff, 129 medical personnel, 37 prisoners, and 31 detainees), representing an increase by over 30 per cent since 28 November, with the majority of those infected among penitentiary staff.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its NGO partners continue to report about temporary interruptions in the work of the regional asylum authorities and courts due to the COVID-19 restrictions. While the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) procedures remain operational, significant delays are observed at all stages starting from the registration. UNHCR observed that applications from asylum-seekers who arrived in Ukraine and requested to be accommodated in Temporary Accommodation Centres (TACs) are reviewed by the State Migration Service (SMS) only on an exceptional basis. To be admitted into TACs, asylum-seekers need to undergo COVID-19 testing. UNHCR covers the cost of the test.

The humanitarian, socio-economic and human rights situation in the eastern conflict area

- The overall humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine remains relatively stable, while the security situation has notably deteriorated and is characterized by heightened tensions. The number of ceasefire violations has increased, resulting in military and civilian casualties.
- Freedom of movement through the contact line in eastern Ukraine continued to be restricted. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) is concerned this is affecting a number of rights, including the right to social security, namely pensions. Individuals registered on the territory controlled by entities in control of certain areas of Luhansk regions of Ukraine with Ukrainian ID cards continue to face problems while crossing from Government controlled areas (GCA) to non-government controlled areas (NGCA) via Stanytsia Luhanska entry-exit crossing point (EECP). The simultaneous opening of the new EECPs in Luhansk region at Zolote and Shchastia, initially scheduled for 10 November, continues to be delayed.
- During the reporting period, the crossing of the contact line remained restricted with only two EECPs functioning on both sides of the contact line: in Stanytsia Luhansk - operating daily and Novotroitske - operating on Mondays and Fridays only. As of 27 December, 1,171 crossings were reported through the Novotroitske checkpoint; of those, 27 persons who crossed from NGCA to GCA side were admitted to the observation facility in Hostre where they had to undergo the self-isolation period. Through the Stanytsia Luhanska EECP, 40,543 crossings were recorded, representing the highest number since movement

restrictions were introduced in March. This increase is linked to the more regular functioning of the checkpoint after the Joint Forces Operation (JFO) Command lifted its requirement to apply for special permission in order to cross the contact line since November.

- UNHCR’s NGO partner, Right to Protection (R2P), reported about difficulties that internally displaced persons (IDPs) are facing in accessing pensions and social benefits in Stanytsia Luhanska. The local branches of the Pension Fund, Department for Social Protection and Oshchadbank refuse to receive IDPs who cannot show that they have completed self-isolation in the mobile application “Act at Home” or present a negative COVID-19 PCR test, while this requirement is not applicable for local residents. R2P recorded at least 50 IDPs in Donetsk oblast who had their IDP certificates cancelled after notification by owners of housing where IDPs were registered. The decision was made without informing IDPs. Consequently, the Pension Fund cancelled pension payments to these IDP pensioners.
- On 18 December, the state Oshchadbank extended the validity of the banking cards issued to pensioners in NGCA until 1 March 2021. This is the fourth such extension since March when the COVID-19 restrictions severely impacted freedom of movement across the contact line preventing thousands of pensioners in NGCA from travelling to the GCA side in order to access their pensions. The extension of the cards’ validity has been the focus of the UN agencies and other humanitarian actors’ advocacy during the past months. UNHCR also advocates for simplifying the crossing procedures for residents of NGCA who have to install the “Act at Home” mobile phone application or undergo self-isolation for 14 days, even if their visit to GCA is planned to last from 24 to 48 hours.
- UNHCR’s partner, R2P, resumed its regular monitoring survey at the operational EECs in eastern Ukraine – in Stanytsia Luhanska. In November, R2P surveyed 424 persons who indicated that visiting relatives and accessing administrative services and pensions were the main reasons for travelling across the contact line. Approximately 64 per cent of those arriving from NGCA reported issues with installing the mobile phone application “Act at Home”, required by the Ukrainian authorities for tracking the self-isolation.
- UNHCR jointly with OCHA facilitated the delivery of four humanitarian convoys to the non-government controlled areas in Donetsk and Luhansk:
 - On 3, 10 and 24 December, three convoys transferred PPEs, hygiene items and materials for WASH projects on behalf of IOM, as well as COVID-19-related assistance and medical equipment belonging to UNICEF to Donetsk NGCA.
 - On 23 December, UNHCR facilitated the delivery of a 25-truck convoy which transported COVID-19-related materials on behalf of UNICEF, WHO and the NGO Médecins du Monde, as well as 225 metric tonnes of construction equipment, timber, roofing sheets, bedding, kitchen sets for UNHCR-led projects in Luhansk NGCA.

For more information on the situation in the eastern conflict area, see the [OCHA Situation Report](#).

THE UNITED NATIONS IN UKRAINE – COVID-19-RELATED RESPONSE AND COORDINATION

In Ukraine, the overall coordination for nationwide COVID-19 response is led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Country Team oversees the United Nations nationwide response, and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has overall responsibility for the humanitarian response to COVID-19 in eastern Ukraine.

Medical procurement and assistance

- WHO delivered Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) commodities for installation of 500 hygiene stations to COVID-19 designated hospitals and distributed 20,000 masks to four rapid response teams. WHO also delivered and distributed ten oxygen concentrators and 40,000 examination gloves to the local health facilities in Luhansk NGCA designated to provide care to the patients with COVID-19. WHO donated PCR consumables, reagents and RNA extraction kits to nine laboratory centres in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Odesa, Kramatorsk, Kharkiv, Cherkasy, Chernivtsi and Rivne.
- UNHCR provided Monthly Subsistence Allowance (MSA), covering four months for urgent needs and medical expenses to 82 refugee and asylum-seeking households. UNHCR also provided 36 refugee and asylum-seeking families with the second tranche of school assistance to ensure that children have access to education during the pandemic. One-time financial assistance was also provided to 140 IDPs with specific needs to help them endure the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In December, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) distributed Female Health Workers Sanitary kits to 25 health facilities across the country. Kits are designed to provide basic hygienic and dignity items to support female frontline health workers.

Assessment of medical needs and technical support

- During November, WHO conducted assessments of five laboratories. The assessments revealed strengths and sub-optimal procedures in technical areas such as diagnostics including COVID-19, documentation, human resources, biosafety and biosecurity. During the assessments recommendations to strengthen laboratory capacities and optimise corresponding processes were provided. WHO conducted technical support visits on IPC program strengthening to 10 COVID-19 designated hospitals in Lviv, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kyiv and Cherkassy regions as well as Kyiv city.
- In order to ensure the uninterrupted COVID-19 laboratory diagnostics in Ukraine, WHO conducted an assessment of electric power grids and collected information on the capacity of laboratory equipment installed in 29 oblast laboratory centres and other laboratories involved in COVID-19 testing.
- WHO supported establishment of 150 hand hygiene stations in ten COVID-19 designated hospitals following the multimodal approach that includes provision of goods, trainings and use of a monitoring framework.
- Two 3-day laboratory-based trainings on real-time PCR were conducted to strengthen qualifications of medical staff. During November, webinars and online meetings were convened to provide guidance on how to deliver essential HIV services and ensure continuity of care and uninterrupted HIV treatment while protecting service providers and PLHIV accessing services from COVID-19. Data and intelligence were collected on the extent, and measures taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on HIV services from the five regions. Throughout November, UNHCR jointly with ILO organized three two-day online trainings on HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis and COVID-19 for staff members of the State Migration Service (SMS).

- In November, UNHCR jointly with its NGO partner Proliska installed three WI-FI hotspots at the newly opened EECF in Shchastia.

Crisis Management Support and Capacity Building

- WHO continues supporting the Government of Ukraine in the areas of epidemiological surveillance and data management.
- In November, a webinar on collection of samples from the upper respiratory tract for COVID-19 PCR testing, safety and security packaging, transportation, and storage of the samples was delivered by WHO experts for the rapid response teams (RRTs) in NGCA. A second wave of training on “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support during COVID-19 Preparedness, Outbreak, and Response” was launched in November. Healthcare facilities from Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, Sumy regions and Kyiv city joined the training. Teams from UPHC went through an online Mental Health Gap Action Programme.
- WHO also conducted a mission in Donetsk region to assess health problems and the current situation of COVID-19 response in the area. Six days of on-site laboratory training was carried out in the Donetsk and Kramatorsk City Laboratory Center. The brand-new laboratory became functional for COVID-19 testing in Donetsk oblast (GCA) thanks to support of WHO. WHO conducted on-site biosafety and biosecurity training in Ternopil. Two online trainings on Clinical Management of COVID-19 were conducted, where approximately 60 healthcare workers from 30 hospitals took part in each session.
- UNFPA provided support to improve COVID-19 readiness and response capacity of geriatric institutions /nursing homes located in 6 regions most affected COVID-19 regions of Ukraine (total 2094 elderly persons/beneficiaries). Support included training of the personnel in IPC, provision of PPE and sanitary items and information/awareness-raising materials.
- On gender-based violence (GBV) response front UNFPA provided support to local partners to establish shelters in Rubizhne (Lugansk region) and Myrhorad (Donetsk region, two crisis rooms in Kyiv and a day-care center in Mariupol that already provided assistance to over 200 GBV survivors.

PUBLICATIONS, REPORTS & DEVELOPMENTS

The life in front-line villages during the pandemic –

[https://novosti.dn.ua/article/7712-pandemyya-y-pryfrontovye-poselky-donbassa-yzolyacyya-teper-tyagoty-
vdvoyne-](https://novosti.dn.ua/article/7712-pandemyya-y-pryfrontovye-poselky-donbassa-yzolyacyya-teper-tyagoty-vdvoyne-)

Dmytro Plechko: Progress in ending statelessness in Ukraine –

<https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/dmytro-plechko-progress-in-ending-statelessness-in-ukraine.html>

Joint IOM/ILO Ukraine op-ed on COVID-19 impact on migration – Face to Face with Migration –

<https://voxukraine.org/en/face-to-face-with-migration/> (ENG)

<https://voxukraine.org/uk/vich-na-vich-z-migratsiyeyu/> (UKR)

Briefing Note: Impact of COVID-19 and its prevention measures on homeless people in Ukraine in [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#)

UNHCR social short film depicts the main challenges of displacement over the last 25 years in Ukraine in [English](#) and [Ukrainian](#)

Thematic report by OHCHR on the Impact of COVID-19 on Human Rights in Ukraine, available in [English](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#). This is the first such report by OHCHR globally. It described the difficulties in accessing their rights faced by the conflict-affected population in eastern Ukraine, notably because of freedom of movement restrictions and their impact on social and economic rights. It also covered the effect of restrictions on groups in vulnerable situations and particularly women and girls within these groups, which include healthcare workers; Roma; persons with disabilities and older persons, in particular those living in long-term care facilities; and people living in homelessness. It concluded with recommendations aimed at the Government and other actors to ensure that human rights are at the core of response and recovery efforts.

Within the Human Rights Day campaign, HRMMU in partnership with one of the key media outlets in Ukraine issued a series of stories of people from the groups in vulnerable situations to ensure that their voices are heard when developing COVID-19 recovery policies. The stories showcase practical, innovative or even inspirational ways people are already building back better throughout Ukraine. HRMMU have spoken to [a regional coordinator of Ukraine’s Human Rights Commissioner](#), [a nurse from Toretsk](#), [a civilian from eastern Ukraine](#), [a Roma human rights activist](#), [a sign language interpreter](#) and [a human rights activist who helps homeless people](#) to find out how these people are addressing challenges caused by the pandemic. HRMMU has also presented these stories in a form of an outdoor exhibition, available in Kyiv city center from 10 to 27 December.

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*A list of used sources is available upon request.