

MSF'S RESPONSE IN AND AROUND UKRAINE



► CONTEXT

The brutal war continues in Ukraine leaving thousands of people behind while millions remain displaced. People still experience incredible hardship as daily shelling and fighting persist in the east, southeast and northeast of the country.

Even far from the frontlines, the Russian missiles attacks on critical energy infrastructure across Ukraine ongoing since October 2022, are causing significant damage including to civilian areas, which continues to endanger civilian lives, with power outages and water shortages impacting millions of homes as well as healthcare facilities in the middle of a bitter winter.

The war has disrupted people's access to healthcare amidst increasing humanitarian and medical needs. The nature of the injuries we see near the frontlines, as well as the stories patients tell our teams, clearly show that civilians including elderly, and children are not spared the war in Ukraine. In the east and the south, healthcare facilities were often facing serious shortages of staff, equipment and medicine. Many have been damaged or destroyed, further reducing people's access to healthcare.

Displaced people too, often struggle to access healthcare, in new and unfamiliar surroundings. Across the country, mental health remains a serious concern as needs are enormous. Our teams have been raising the alarm on the worrying psychological symptoms they are seeing among children, elderly as well as healthcare workers.

MSF works closely with health facilities and local communities in Ukraine to identify and respond to medical needs as they emerge. We currently focus on ensuring the continuity of care for patients through mobile clinics in areas near the frontlines or those recently retaken by Ukrainian forces after long periods of Russian occupation. We are also assisting with the evacuation of patients to safer areas through ambulances and a medical train. In addition, our teams are providing mental health support in shelters for displaced people, at mobile clinics in remote villages. For war-wounded patients, where the needs are huge, we continue to assist in treatment, provide assistive devices and physiotherapy.

Our intervention focuses too on filling the gaps when needed by providing medical donations and training to healthcare workers, hospitals, including specialized institutions for people with special needs.

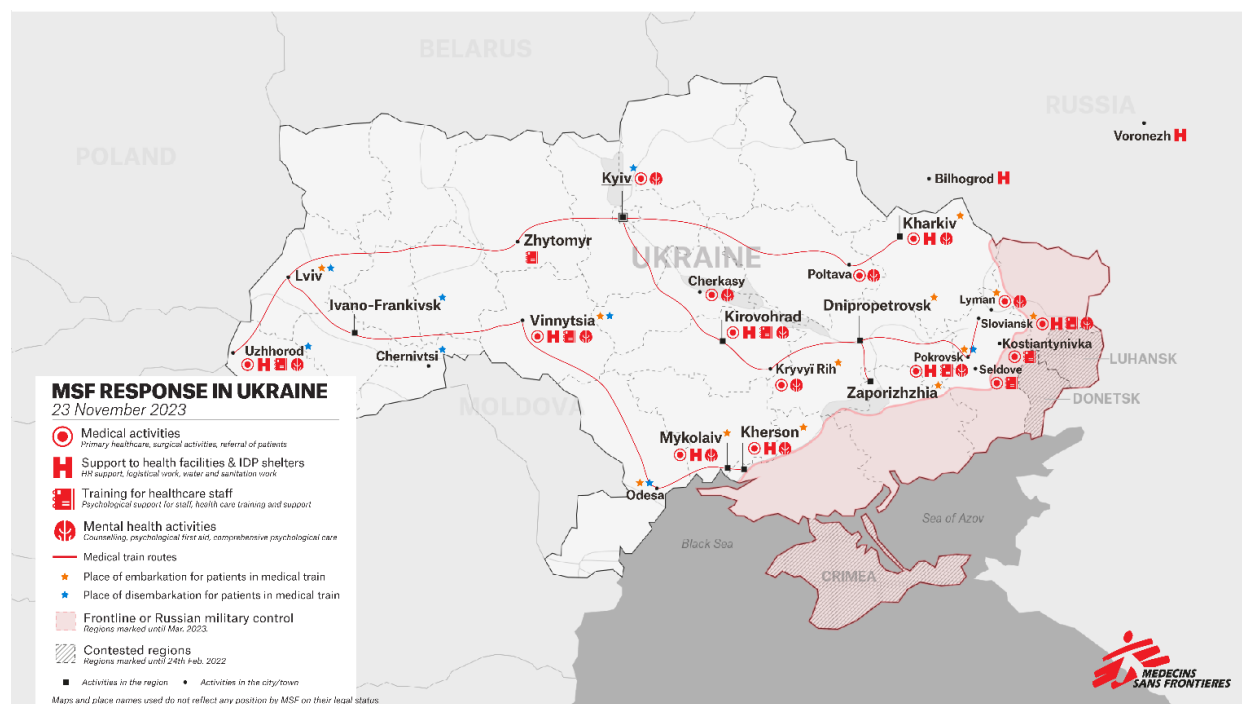


Medical evacuation from Kherson, 9 October 2022 © Verity Kowal/MSF

MSF HISTORY IN UKRAINE

MSF first worked in Ukraine in **1999**, supporting the Ministry of Health to treat HIV. From 2011 to 2014, MSF ran a **drug-resistant tuberculosis programme** within the regional penitentiary system in Donetsk. MSF responded to the war in eastern Ukraine from 2014 onwards and has also continued to provide specialised programmes to **treat infectious diseases**, such as hepatitis C. When the current war broke out in February 2022, MSF was running a **drug-resistant tuberculosis project in Zhytomyr**, an **HIV project in Sievierodonetsk** and **working to improve access to primary healthcare for people affected by conflict in eastern Ukraine**. These projects were suspended as we reoriented our activities to respond to the needs created by the war.

MSF RESPONSE IN UKRAINE



Facts and figures:

- **Staff:** We currently work with approximately **74** international staff in Ukraine and employ around **567** Ukrainian staff.
- **Areas:**
 - **East:** Dnipropetrovsk region, Kharkiv region, Poltava region, Donetsk region
 - **South:** Mykolaiv region, Kherson region and Dariivka
 - **Central:** Kyiv region, Vinnytsia, Kirovohrad region, Cherkasy, Zhytomyr



► Evacuations and referrals: train and ambulance

MSF runs a medical evacuation train to evacuate patients from east and south of Ukraine to the west of Ukraine. The train began operating on 28 March 2022. Ambulance referrals are in Donetsk, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia region.

Between 28 March 2022 and 31 October 2023, the medical train completed **133** trips, referring **3,727** patients, and **310** were admitted to the ICU carriage. Between 6 May 2022 and 31 October 2023, MSF ambulances completed **9,745** transportations and **1,530** ICU transports; **62%** of patients had suffered violent trauma.

As the lack of capacity of the healthcare system is causing delays to refer patients from primary care to specialised care, and with an increase of patients with needing referrals due to trauma injuries related to violence, especially in the Donetsk and Kherson regions, MSF ambulance teams refer patients to other hospitals where patients can receive the appropriate care, or to the MSF train where they are transferred to other medical facilities in central and western parts of Ukraine. Near the frontlines in the east and south, the healthcare system is struggling to cope with both the old and new emerging medical needs caused by the fighting. To support the healthcare system, MSF (OCB) runs a medical evacuation train and ambulances to evacuate patients from overburdened Ukrainian hospitals close to the frontlines to safer Ukrainian hospitals with more capacity.

Both MSF ambulances and the train have the capacity to transfer patients in severe conditions. The train has an intensive care unit and MSF runs four ambulances with ICU capacity. To support the evacuation and referral system, MSF teams (OCB) also run a stabilization point in the Kherson region close to the Dnipro River.

► **Mobile clinics: primary healthcare, mental health support, sexual and reproductive health**

The mobile clinics are located in Donetsk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovohrad, Poltava and Kharkiv. Between the 1st January 2023 and 31 October 2023, there were **12,334** mental health consultations (not including group sessions), **61,929** primary health consultations and **2,451** Sexual and reproductive health consultations.

The war has had a devastating impact on the continuity of care for those with pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, and the mental health of people after experiencing fear, isolation and fighting – both for internally displaced people and those still living near the frontlines. With thousands of internally displaced people living across Ukraine in shelters and lack of healthcare staff and destroyed healthcare facilities near the frontlines, people's access to healthcare has been severely disrupted.

To ensure continuity of care and respond to the emerging mental health needs, MSF mobile clinic teams of psychologists, doctors and health promoters are supporting patients and communities with medical consultations, psychological consultations, medical and non-medical donations, and supporting the capacity of the healthcare system by reconstruction of health facilities and training healthcare staff.

In regions heavily affected by the fighting, such as in the Donetsk (OCB, OCG), Kherson (OCB), and Mykolaiv (OCBA), especially in the areas that are near the frontlines and areas retaken by Ukraine, most of MSF's mobile clinic patients are elderly people, who are either unwilling or unable to leave their homes. MSF doctors are seeing high prevalence of chronic illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease and epilepsy – many of which are diseases that if uncontrolled can have long-term consequences on health and require continuous care. Through our mobile clinics in the Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, we have also begun screening for tuberculosis, and will shortly commence screening in Donetsk as well.

In the central Kirovohrad region, internally displaced people are highly vulnerable, often living without proper access to healthcare. The teams (OCBA) are supporting patients who have suffered the consequences of the war. In addition to mental health support, psychologists are providing psychoeducation and recreational activities to patients to ensure that mental health support benefits can provide a larger impact support for the community. In Vinnytsia MSF (OCG) began accepting patients in a new space - a center where psychological support is provided to patients experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder. Both individual sessions and sessions with relatives are held.



Mobile clinic in Kherson region ©Laurel Chor

► Emergency department, intensive care unit and surgical interventions

The emergency department, intensive care unit and surgical interventions is located in Kostiantynivka and Selydove hospitals in Donetsk region, and hospitals in Kherson city, Kherson region. Between the 1st September 2022 and 31 October 2023, **3,078** patients were admitted in emergency room; MSF assisted and performed **319** surgical interventions; and **2,390** patients were admitted to ER due to violent violent trauma (**78%** of total admissions).

Near the eastern and southern frontline areas, people are experiencing incredible hardship as daily shelling and fighting persists. MSF is seeing patients with traumatic injuries from shelling, bomb and shrapnel blasts. At the same time, as health facilities are coping with emerging and increased needs, patients injured in car accidents or those with non-communicable diseases (for example, cardiovascular emergencies), are still prevalent.

Kostiantynivka is one of the last civilian hospitals functioning near the eastern frontline. In August 2022, MSF teams (OCB) set up an Emergency Department, two beds in the ICU and one operating room on the ground floor of the hospital to run a contingency trauma facility. Currently MSF runs the emergency department activities, including 2 ICU beds, medical donations and equipment, and the MSF medical staff provide surgical care. The same activity MSF (OCB) began in Kherson in September 2023.

Most of the patient admissions are related to violent trauma. The number of severe cases is very high, with every fifth patient coming into the hospital deemed to be a “red case”, meaning that there is an immediate life threat to the patient and that the treatment window should be within 30-60 minutes of first medical contact. The MSF staff aim at alleviating the burden on the healthcare system and specifically on the trauma centres, by triaging and stabilising patients. The

staff assess the needs, determine the urgency, and depending on the needs, stabilise them and refer to in-hospital department, to emergency damage-control surgery or refer them to other Ministry of Health hospitals.

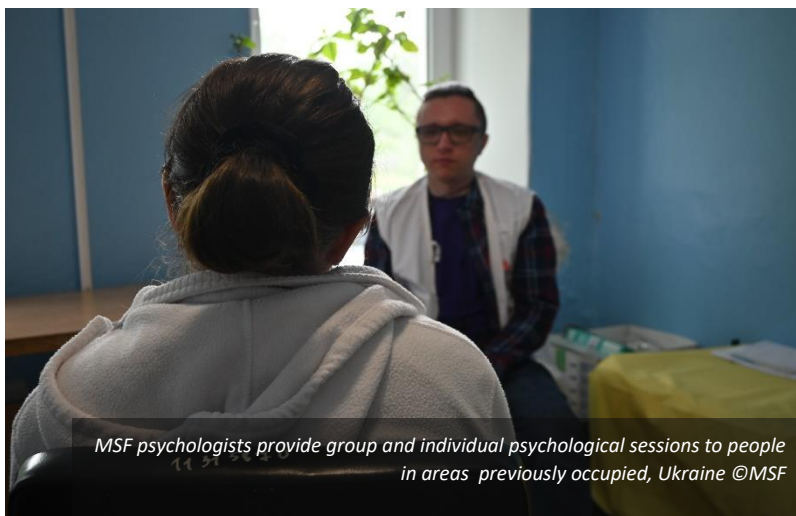
► Rehabilitation: Physiotherapy and psychological care

It's located in Kyiv city, Vinnytsia city, Cherkasy, Kropyvnytskyi, Poltava, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Sumy. Between the 1st April 2022 and 31 October 2023, there were **19,773** physiotherapy sessions and **1,007** patients.

A huge number of people have suffered severe injuries caused by the war. Without adequate, early post-surgical treatment, their recovery may remain incomplete or take much longer than necessary, affecting their lives and weighing on an overwhelmed system. MSF teams are supporting the Ukrainian healthcare system with specialisation and training in physiotherapy and post-operative care, as well as psychological consultations. Rehabilitation and mental health services were not particularly developed in the healthcare system prior to the war, but now there are a huge number of people with major injuries and the need for post-operative care is enormous; the trauma patients we see are at risk of developing long-term medical problems or permanent disabilities without proper care.

In Kyiv city and in Vinnytsia, MSF (OCP) run a rehabilitation project for war-wounded people in hospitals managed by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health respectively. This includes physiotherapy, as well as a mental health and social worker component, including counselling services.

MSF (OCBA) have provided both theoretical and on-the-job physiotherapist training to the staff involved in physical rehabilitation of war-wounded patients in six different hospitals – one in Mykolaiv, one hospital in Kropyvnovisky, two hospitals in Poltava region and two hospitals in Kharkiv region.



MSF psychologists provide group and individual psychological sessions to people in areas previously occupied, Ukraine ©MSF

MSF (OCB) also run an early rehabilitation project for war wounded in Cherkasy and Zhytomyr regions. In the Ministry of Health hospital in Cherkasy, the team supports incoming war wounded patients. Using a multidisciplinary approach with physiotherapy, psychological and nursing care. In addition, trainings and technical support is given to hospitals in Zhytomyr.

► PTSD Centre: comprehensive psychological care for post-traumatic stress

The PTSD Center is located in Vinnytsia. Between the 1st may 2023 and 31 october 2023, there were **471** counselling sessions and **153** patients.

In 2023, MSF (OCG) started providing specialised psychotherapeutic services for people experiencing war-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in Vinnytsia. A newly custom designed mental health center was opened in September this year. MSF offers psychological sessions for both individuals and members of the patient’s support network. Our specialists provide them with techniques to help reduce and prevent worsening of symptoms, increase coping skills, improve interpersonal functionality, and decrease consequences of traumatic stress.

A specially trained mental health promotion team is responsible for community engagement and mobilisation through partnerships with key organisations and other health providers in Vinnytsia city. In addition, we train relevant staff (medical doctors, psychologists, social workers, etc.) in partner organisations, and medical staff in primary healthcare centres in referral criteria to MSF services.

► Other MSF activities across Ukraine: Donations, Training, Health Promotion (HP) and Tuberculosis (TB)

In the northwest of Ukraine, the MSF (OCB) tuberculosis (TB) project in Zhytomyr that has been running for five year is coming to a close. At the end of November, the Biosafety Level 3 Lab will be handed over to the Ministry of Health. However, in Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, MSF (OCB) are continuing some TB activities, providing screening of suspected TB cases through mobile clinics.

At community level (IDP shelters, women’s organisations, etc), a psychoeducation training plan (PF alert signs in mental health) has been developed and implemented in Poltava, Kropyvnytskyi, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv.

Since the beginning of 2023, MSF (OCG) has made nearly 600 donations (amounting more than 2 million EUR) of medicines, medical consumables and equipment, hygiene kits and blankets. (OCBA) has made donations to 96 different health facilities across nine different regions of Ukraine – 35 of them providing primary healthcare services and 61 of them are secondary healthcare facilities.

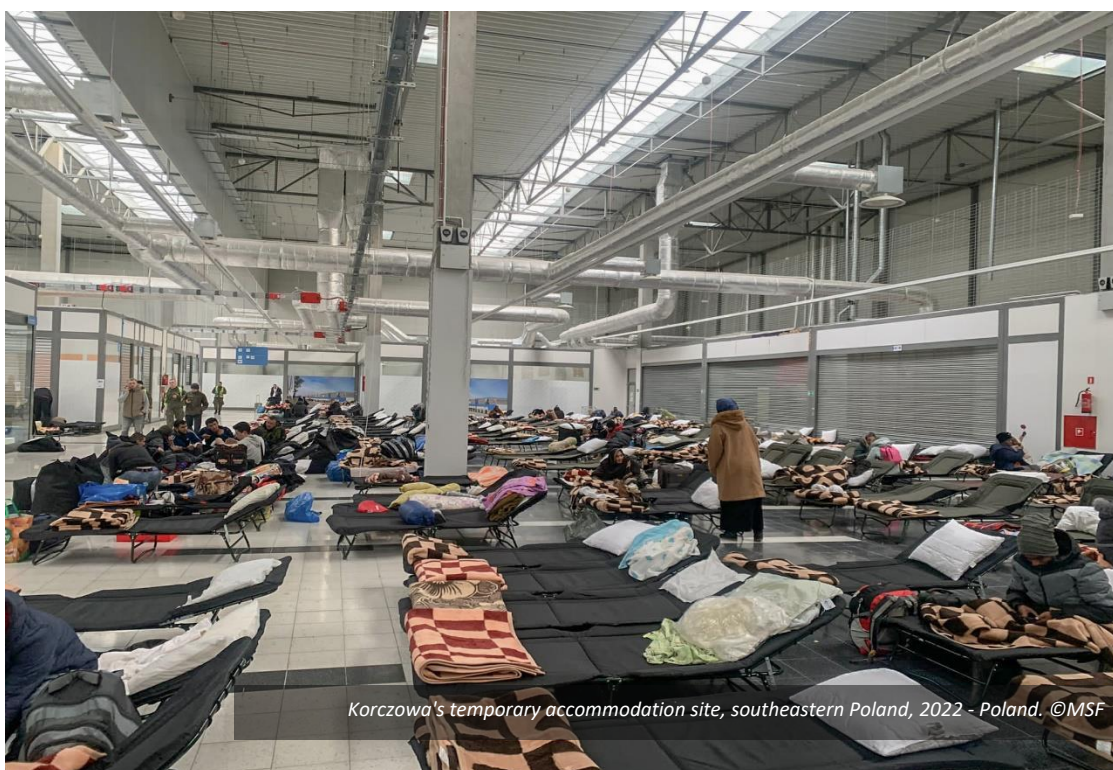


► MSF HISTORY IN UKRAINE

- **1999 – 2005: HIV/AIDs and prevention of mother-to-child transmissions.** Odesa, Mykolaiv and Simferopol.
- **2011 – 2015: Drug-resistant tuberculosis treatment activities in pre-trial detention centres and prisons.** Donetsk region. Self-proclaimed Luhansk People’s Republic issued a notification to MSF at the end of 2015 to withdraw and stop activities in Donetsk and Luhansk.
- **2014 – 2015: Primary healthcare and mental health support through mobile clinics and medical donations to hospitals.** More than 40 cities in northern Luhansk and Donetsk region. Self-proclaimed Luhansk People’s Republic issued a notification to MSF at the end of 2015 to withdraw and stop activities in Donetsk and Luhansk.
- **2015 – 2022: Primary healthcare and mental health support through mobile clinics. Buffer zone of Mariupol and Kurakhove, and Volnovakha.** Based in Mariupol and Kurakhove, teams worked near the frontlines and areas controlled by Ukraine in Orliukse, Stepanivka, Starohnativka, Berdianske and Pavlopil.
- **2015 – 2017: Drug-resistant TB treatment in pre-trial detention centres.** Mariupol and Dnipro.

- **2017 – 2022: Expansion of mobile clinics to southern parts of Donetsk oblast.** Activities stopped due to escalation of war in February 2022.
- **2017 – 2020: Hepatitis C treatment to people co-infected with HIV and medical personnel infected with Hep C in line of work in the Mykolaiv region.** Due to the spread of Covid-19, MSF decided to close activities in March 2020.
- **2018 – 2023: DR-tuberculosis treatment.** Zhytomyr region.

MSF IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES



Korczowa's temporary accommodation site, southeastern Poland, 2022 - Poland. ©MSF

► POLAND (OCB)

- Context: More than 11.7 million people have crossed from Ukraine into Poland since 24 February 2022 (UNHCR, updated 22 May 2023). More than 1.6 million people have registered for temporary protection.
- MSF (OCB) is actively working to support the Ministry of Health to ensure that patients can access treatment for drug-resistant tuberculosis, including patients previously supported by MSF in Ukraine.

► RUSSIA (OCA)

- Context: Over 2,800,000 people have crossed to Russia from Ukraine as of 31 December 2022 (UNHCR).
- MSF has been present in Russia for 30 years. Currently, MSF's teams in Russia work with regional health authorities to support crucial, life-saving treatment for patients with drug-resistant tuberculosis. In the last few months, MSF scaled up its assistance to partner organizations in St Petersburg and Moscow ensuring continuation of HIV treatment for people from Ukraine and other people in need. We have seen an increase in the number of people from Ukraine living with HIV and hepatitis C in need of refills for their antiretroviral medicines.
- Alongside this, to respond to the needs resulting from the war in Ukraine, MSF has started to support people displaced to Voronezh, Bilhorod and Rostov-on-Don regions. In close collaboration and partnership with regional non-governmental organisations, MSF has organised a team of local social workers, medical consultants, psychologists, and legal counsellors that are making efforts to ensure that people from Ukraine, mostly newly arrived ones, receive all the necessary qualified medical services in licensed medical clinics and have access to other state healthcare and social services. When necessary, we cover any medical care gaps and pay for the necessary medications and medical consultations.
- From August 2023, the support for Voronezh – a partner NGO – ceased and a new partnership has been started with an NGO assisting a transit temporary accommodation centre (TAC) in Taganrog, Rostov region. In many cases, people displaced from the war come to the transit TAC without anything; thus, essential food and personal hygiene items are provided to them. Those in need of medical and mental healthcare are provided with consultations by a medical doctor and a psychologist from the partner NGO.
- Since the beginning of activities, MSF provided support to 20,567 displaced people, including medical support to 6,450 people of whom 4,093 received mental health support.
- MSF is regularly supporting regional local organisations providing support to vulnerable population and displaced people in Voronezh, Bilhorod and Rostov-on-Don regions with urgently needed items such as food, hygiene kits, and small household items and has supported more than 40,000 newly arrived migrants.
- MSF is continuing to pursue efforts to gain access and provide assistance to people in Russian controlled areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, where the fighting is intense and humanitarian needs are understood to be significant.

HOW TO SUPPORT MSF ?



Adelina Ciumac, from Tudora, and Olena Starovoitova, from Cuciurgan, MSF community health workers, help people with general information and emotional support. March 2022. © Peter Bräunia/MSF

SUPPORT OUR EMERGENCY FUND

Our teams have been providing emergency assistance to vulnerable populations around the world for 50 years. Help them to act.

[DONATE NOW](#)

Disclaimer: While MSF teams are assessing what safe and impartial access will be possible for humanitarian aid, MSF Luxembourg has activated its Emergency Fund which allows it to act as quickly as possible in situations such as the Ukrainian conflict. 85% of the money raised goes directly to the field and MSF is audited annually by an independent, accredited body.