

War in Ukraine: Maintaining Lifesaving HIV and TB Services

The challenge

Since the expansion of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, more than 14 million people have been internally displaced or forced to flee to neighboring countries as refugees, often losing access to health care. HIV and tuberculosis (TB) prevention and diagnosis services have been disrupted, and many people with HIV and TB have been forced to interrupt their lifesaving treatment. The war has left hundreds of thousands of people without electricity or water supplies, and almost half of the population is in need of humanitarian assistance.

Even before the conflict, Ukraine had a high HIV and TB disease burden. Over the past two years, there have been more than 1,500 attacks on the Ukrainian health system, including health facilities, warehouses, vehicles and workers, injuring and killing health care workers and patients and destroying or damaging infrastructure, including three TB hospitals. The dangerous environment caused by the war has challenged our work with partners in Ukraine and neighboring countries on prevention, testing and treatment for HIV and TB.



In Kyiv, call center operators like Mikhail Dyagterev provide counseling and help to protect the rights of people who inject drugs.

The Global Fund/Evgeny Maloletka

The Global Fund's response

Despite this challenging context, HIV and TB programs supported by the Global Fund have maintained operations based on an adapted model and by using more mobile units, extending HIV and TB testing to the military, and offering social support, home deliveries, and mental health services for displaced people and health workers. Global Fund-supported programs are also offering support for people facing gender-based and domestic violence, as well as legal aid and counseling for people who experience stigma and discrimination due to their sexual or gender identity or HIV/TB status.

Emergency funding and support for HIV & TB services and health systems

In March 2022, the Global Fund approved US\$15 million in emergency funding to support the continuity of HIV and TB prevention, testing and treatment services in Ukraine. In 2023, the Global Fund approved an additional US\$12.7 million in emergency funding.

This emergency funding is in addition to the US\$165.5 million approved in December 2023 for the 2024-2026 implementation period to support Ukraine to fight HIV and TB and strengthen its systems for health. This new funding builds on the US\$135.7 million in grants and catalytic matching funds allocated to Ukraine to support the fight against HIV and TB in the country over the 2021-2023 implementation period, and US\$54.5 million for the country's COVID-19 response – totaling nearly US\$190 million. The Global Fund has also approved over US\$28 million to reprogram prior grants to respond and adapt to the programmatic needs of the country.

This includes funding for:

- Generators for regional laboratories where power supplies are limited or at risk.
- Retrofitting vans to deliver essential medicines and supplies.
- Community-led organizations to support affected and displaced members of their communities and link them to HIV and TB services.
- Work to help patients displaced in Ukraine and nearby countries get reconnected to the health care and medicine they need.
- Providing food and care packages for TB and HIV patients.
- Funding legal support for communities and displaced people.
- Locating appropriate accommodation for patients with infectious conditions like multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.
- Additional mental health services, with a particular focus on support for women who have suffered sexual and gender-based violence as a result of the war.

Since 2003, the Global Fund has invested more than US\$1 billion in Ukraine for HIV, TB and strengthening health and community systems, including additional funding during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Protecting the hard-won gains against HIV and TB in Ukraine

Prior to the war, Ukraine had made remarkable achievements in combatting HIV and TB.

Even before the 2022 invasion, Ukraine had the second-largest HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, although the country had achieved strong results in its efforts to address the disease. Good progress was made on HIV after the Global Fund began investing in Ukraine over 20 years ago, both in terms of linkage to treatment and viral suppression, as well as in significantly reducing infections and deaths. Domestic financing for HIV prevention services for key and vulnerable populations also increased, as did the capacity of community-led organizations. In 2021, 75% of people living with HIV knew their status, 83% – or 156,000 people – received antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 94% had a suppressed viral load. In contrast, in 2022, the number of people living with HIV who received ART fell to 121,000, amounting to 72% of people living with the disease in Ukraine. But ART coverage has continued to improve for people living with both TB and HIV, increasing from 65% in 2015 to 92% in 2022.

Ukraine remains one of the high-priority countries for TB in the region. According to World Health Organization data, the incidence rate of TB fell steadily between 2015 and 2021, from 91 to 73 cases per 100,000 population, but increased to 90 cases per 100,000 in 2022. Drug-resistant TB remains a significant public health threat in Ukraine, affecting 39% of people diagnosed with TB. In 2022, over half of Ukrainians with TB were on treatment. Since 2002, deaths from TB have dropped by 78% and new TB cases have fallen by 40%.

Supporting Ukrainian refugees in neighboring countries

More than 8 million refugees fled to other countries since the war began, and while some have returned, there are still 6.4 million Ukrainian refugees, most of them living in neighboring countries. Refugees and internally displaced Ukrainians are particularly vulnerable to TB. Many fled to Moldova, which despite its small population, is one of the top 30 countries in the world in absolute numbers of people with drug-resistant TB. In 2022, the Global Fund added €1.2 million from the Emergency Fund to Moldova's existing TB/HIV grant to maintain uninterrupted HIV and TB treatment for Ukrainian refugees and the host population.



Oleksandr Ratushniak/UNDP Ukraine

The Global Fund approved US\$27.7 million in emergency funding to ensure continuity of HIV and TB services in Ukraine.

About the Global Fund

The Global Fund is a worldwide partnership to defeat HIV, TB and malaria and ensure a healthier, safer, more equitable future for all. We raise and invest more than US\$5 billion a year to fight the deadliest infectious diseases, challenge the injustice that fuels them, and strengthen health systems and pandemic preparedness in more than 100 of the hardest hit countries. We unite world leaders, communities, civil society, health workers and the private sector to find solutions that have the most impact, and we take them to scale worldwide. Since 2002, the Global Fund partnership has saved 59 million lives.