

# CARE Ukraine Crisis Update

## One year of war, one year of battle-hardened humanitarian response

For CARE, an organization with a mission forged in the ashes of war-torn Europe, the conflict in Ukraine marks a return to that grim history – and the return of dark days on the European continent many hoped would never return.

Now, standing at the one-year mark, holding onto the strength of new partnerships, CARE and our partners have reached nearly one million people. With efforts spanning Ukraine, Georgia, Germany, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, we have provided protection, psychosocial support, cash assistance, food, water, sanitation and hygiene assistance, health services, support for accommodation, and education.

As the crisis becomes protracted and the humanitarian needs continue to grow, funding for our response is dropping. The biggest number of refugees from Ukraine in the region remains in Poland. Most of them, some 90%, are women, children, elderly, and people with disabilities. We need to keep going and support affected populations, especially women and girls in need of help.



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# Borscht on the frontlines

Chef-soldier brings a taste of home

By Daria Khrystenko and Travis Nichols



Dmytro Lihmer (far right) with the team at his restaurant.

Dmytro had been used to working in a modern kitchen, cooking ribs, shrimp, steak, or any other kind of dish that would go well with beer. He was a chef, and he was good at it.

His restaurant's slogan was, "Take everything you can't imagine living without, and we make the best of it."

Dmytro had no military experience, but when war broke out, he volunteered. That's when the slogan became his unique challenge.

Dmytro and his fellow soldiers often must walk for hours into the forests. On these journeys, meals are mostly ready-to-eat packets, to be cooked in water heated quickly on a small camp stove.

## How to improvise

From the start, Dmytro wanted his fellow soldiers to have homemade food, even or especially when they were in uncomfortable conditions, like living for days in the forest, waiting for whatever would come next.

Sometimes, Dmytro's team is driven to the battle. When they arrive for these longer episodes of fighting, the team improvises a kitchen out of what they can find, things like bricks to make a "stove," or a simple campfire on the ground.

As the war has gone on, Dmytro has invented some new dishes but what he likes to do most is cook traditional Ukrainian foods. Even in the forest, he tries as best he can to eat what he and his fellow soldiers would have eaten everyday back home, like mushroom soup, and, of course, borscht.

Borscht is one of the most well-known Ukrainian meals – a traditional, hearty soup with multiple layers of ingredients held together by a savory beet broth. To make borscht the traditional way, it takes hours to simmer all the ingredients properly.

But borscht during wartime is different.

You can find a video of Dmytro cooking borscht, along with his recipe, at [CARE.org](https://www.care.org).

# Finally safe: Yulia's story

By Halyna Bilak

In the cellar, Yulia's only light source is a small flashlight. She pushes puzzle pieces across the small table toward her six-year-old daughter, wrapped in a pink blanket against the cold.

For now, there's no electricity. The city has scheduled cuts to help it manage the power system's wartime instability. But even temporarily without electricity or heat, Yulia is grateful to be here.

Her family is from Skadovsk, a small town in southern Ukraine. While millions of other families fled to the West and across the border to neighboring countries, Yulia didn't want to leave her elderly parents behind. So she and her family stayed for more than five months in territory uncontrolled by the Ukrainian authorities.

**"We got used to living in the war zone."**

"Our children were playing outside on the street, while rockets were flying overhead," Yulia remembers. "There was no air raid warning system that warned us. Only the sound of explosions or the whistle of missiles made us aware of the danger."

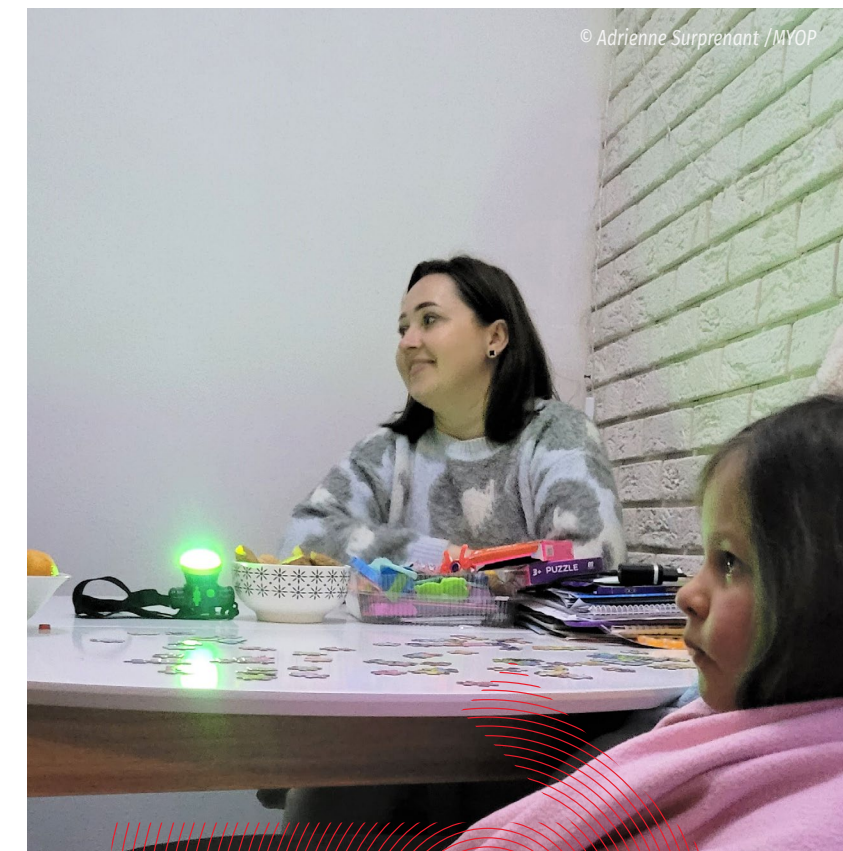
## 'Vasylivka's roulette'

In August, faced with forced, Russian-language schooling of her children, Yulia fled west. Scheduled evacuations needed to be booked three months in advance, so with the money she had left, Yulia hired a driver and decided to play something that is locally called "Vasylivka's roulette."

The town of Vasylivka is a checkpoint in the Zaporizhzhia region where no one can ever be sure that they will be able to pass through. On some days, 200 cars are let through, on others only four.

Once they finally reached the Vasylivka checkpoint, after 50 others, they had to wait for four days.

"We were scared that we would be shot at any time. Or that a bomb would go off. But we were lucky," she says. "We made it across."





### The importance of a home

The family now lives in a semi-basement shelter in Lviv, furnished and made livable for the young family by partners of CARE.

Just as it is for thousands of Ukrainian women, safe housing has given Yulia and her children the opportunity to return to normal life again.

According to research conducted by CARE’s partner organization Center for Women’s Perspectives, over half of internally displaced women in Ukraine are in need of individual permanent or temporary housing, and almost 74% indicated they need financial support.

“I do not make plans for the future,” says Yulia, who is currently unemployed. “I just do what gives joy to my children at this moment,” “If the children want to see the mountains, I take them to the mountains. If they want to go to the zoo or eat cotton candy, I give them that.”

Yulia’s youngest daughter struggled when she first arrived in western Ukraine, but she was able to get psychological support to help. “She is now smiling again,” says Yulia as her daughter continues the puzzle.

*A longer version of this piece is available at CARE.org.*

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 18,589,702

refugees fleeing Ukraine since Feb. 24<sup>1</sup>  
(Up 6.78% from Jan. 10 update)

# 5.4 million

internally displaced<sup>2</sup>  
(Down 8.69% from Dec. 20 update)

## Neighboring countries receiving refugee influx:

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Poland: 9.6M <sup>1</sup>              | 4. Romania: 1.97M <sup>4</sup>  |
| 2. Russian Federation: 2.85M <sup>3</sup> | 5. Slovakia: 1.16M <sup>1</sup> |
| 3. Hungary: 2.2M <sup>1</sup>             | 6. Moldova: 770K <sup>4</sup>   |
|   | 7. Belarus: 17K <sup>5</sup>    |

# 11,756

civilians injured<sup>6</sup>  
(Up 5.49% from Jan. 13 update)

# 769

healthcare facilities damaged  
or destroyed<sup>7</sup> (Up 2.95% from Jan. 3 update)

# 2,528

education facilities damaged  
or destroyed<sup>8</sup> (No new reporting since Sept. 2022)

### SOURCES

<sup>1</sup>UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Feb. 14, 2023; <sup>2</sup>International Organization for Migration (IOM), Jan. 23, 2023; <sup>3</sup>UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Oct. 3; <sup>4</sup>UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Feb. 12; <sup>5</sup>UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Feb. 7; <sup>6</sup>UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), Feb. 16; <sup>7</sup>World Health Organization (WHO), Feb.16; <sup>8</sup>Multiple Sources, Sept. 21

