

QUARTERLY DIGEST

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **annual edition of the Ukraine Red Cross Society's (URCS) quarterly digest**, designed to keep our partners and stakeholders informed about our activities and plans in the field of humanitarian operations and diplomacy.

Throughout the year, we engaged in extensive operational activities to alleviate human suffering and demonstrate future perspectives through our humanitarian and development services. Concurrently, we devoted substantial efforts to humanitarian advocacy and diplomacy initiatives, which may not be as visibly apparent as our ground-level activities but holds crucial importance in shaping future policies and approaches for developing strong civil societies and resilient communities in Ukraine.

In this digest, we will highlight our efforts to advocate on behalf of vulnerable populations during the 4 quarters of 2023 year and key achievements in 2023.

OPERATION IN UKRAINE



KEY ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS FROM 24.02.2022 AS OF 20.12.2023

2 500 EMPLOYEES

8 000 VOLUNTEERS

200 LOCAL BRANCHES OF THE URCS
23 offices are damaged or destroyed



More than 12 500 000 people received assistance from the URCS

SOCIAL HELPERS

- Operate on **676** locations in **23** regions
- 1 083** employees support **6 011** lonely people



22 AREAS IN WHICH MOBILE HEALTH UNITS WORK

126 mobile health units

622 263 consultations provided

310 931 people were evacuated

94 546 people were informed on mine danger

541 397 people received psychosocial support

185 524 people were trained in first aid



The information center received **852 121** calls

MODULAR HOUSES

Construction of modular houses with an area of **12 170 m²** for more than **910 IDPs** in:

- Kyiv region
- Chernihiv region
- Zhytomyr region
- Zakarpattia region

SHELTER

With a total area of **1 300 m²** for more than **100** pregnant IDPs women in Lviv.

HEATING STOVES

More than **25 000** of heating stoves were given to people.

HYGIENE CENTERS

6 hygiene centers for IDPs were opened: in Kamianets-Podilskyi, Poltava, Chernivtsi, Volyn, Cherkasy and Zhytomyr region.

OPERATIONAL AND POLICY HIGHLIGHT:

MHPSS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) are essential services and a strategic priority for URCS during Ukraine's long-term recovery phase. URCS is actively engaged in various projects with different partners, with #EU4Health being a notable initiative implemented in collaboration with the European Commission. In partnership with the Ministry of Social Policy, the Ukrainian Red Cross is pioneering a ministerial program focused on MHPSS for veterans and their families; and with Georgian RC and IFRC, URCS is providing MHPSS support to children and parents from Okhmadyt Hospital.

2023 MHPSS HIGHLIGHTS:

More than

★ **34 000 MHPSS activities**

were conducted



321 400 people received MHPSS services



2300 people were trained in the provision of Psychological First Aid



10 000 of URCS staff and volunteers participated in peer sessions, self-care sessions

While recognising the necessity for prolonged and consistent intervention, URCS underscores the importance of a sustainable approach tailored to the population's needs. This advocacy message was prominently conveyed at various policy moments focusing on MHPSS, notably at the largest national Mental Health Forum in Ukraine on October 18th. The forum, organised by WHO, the Coordination Center for Mental Health under the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, and the All-Ukrainian Mental Health Program of the First Lady, "How are you?".

Additionally, URCS, in the framework of EU4Health cooperation, hosted its first press briefing dedicated to the importance of the MHPSS needs and the work that URCS does in this field.

The press briefing was held on World Mental Health Day, on October 10th, to explain the importance of psychosocial support for people during the war in Ukraine. The briefing reached a significant number of Ukrainian media outlets, raising awareness of the importance of mental health care among the population.



URCS Head of the Rehabilitation and Support Department at Mental Health Forum in Ukraine. October 2023

HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY SPOTLIGHT

Key URCS Advocacy Highlights during 2023

✓ **Completed 13 high-level international advocacy and diplomatic visits**

✓ **Co-hosted 5 diplomatic visits to Ukraine,**



The visit of the Austrian President **Alexander Van der Bellen**



High-level representatives of the governments of **Belgium**, the **United Kingdom**, and **Sweden**

✓ **Established cooperation with 8 Ukrainian embassies and missions in Europe**



• **Organised 2 international exhibitions** of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society in Brussels and Luxembourg

✓ **Co-founded Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations**

✓ **Joined Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine**

Influencing reform of Ukraine's volunteer system. URCS' domestic advocacy efforts in 2023 focused in part on supporting the authorities legislative and policy reform of Ukraine's volunteer system, aiming to have volunteer activities recognised in the formal education system as an incentivising measure, cultivating a culture of social responsibility among children and youth, and introducing measures to increase volunteering through society at large. This is part of URCS' humanitarian diplomacy strategy to strengthen its auxiliary relationship to its public authorities, including working on the legal and policy foundations of this relationship. To that end, following a number of dialogues URCS convened a roundtable on the 19th of December 2023 to discuss reform of the volunteer system, bringing together more than 30 representatives from relevant ministries, members of parliament, government departments and civil society. The event presented research initiatives on the issue and introduced a legislative proposal (No. 10026, dated September 11, 2023) aimed at improving the volunteer system and aligning Ukraine's legislation with EU standards.



International Emblem Protection Campaign #protectemblems. On December 8, 2023, the Ukrainian Red Cross, along with national societies from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, held a one-day global campaign to safeguard the emblem across various social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and websites).



The campaign aimed to underscore the emblem's significance and value, emphasising the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's continuous collaboration in preventing their emblem's misuse and humanitarian mission protection. Additionally, the campaign spotlighted the war in Ukraine and highlighted the real risks associated with the improper use of the Red Cross emblem. The campaign reached over 20,000 people.

Joint development of Localisation Strategy. On December 14-15, 2023, the first joint discussion around the development of the Localisation Strategy in Ukraine took place in Kyiv. The strategic session, initiated by the Alliance of UA CSOs, brought together 35 participants representing four groups essential to the elaboration and implementation of a localisation strategy in Ukraine: members of the Alliance, of the NGO Platform, Institutional donors, and the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund along with UN OCHA. Participants had a series of questions to work on to find a common vision: **Localisation in Ukraine** – forming a common understanding and definition of its different components; **Developing a common language** of risks and fears, identifying them so as to work on them concretely; **Mapping out common goals** – what each group can do for localisation, and recommendations for other actors.



Contributing humanitarian insights to the Council of the Baltic Sea States. The Ukrainian Red Cross Director General participated in the "Ukraine Forum" during the Finnish Presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) on the 23rd of November 2023. The Forum's objective was to foster robust discussions on effective strategies to support Ukraine and exchange insights gained through practical experience. The URCS Director General emphasised the ongoing nature of key humanitarian needs and issues in Ukraine, among which were emergency response and preparedness; access to primary health care, especially in hard-to-reach areas, and mine-risk awareness.



The forum was attended by 100 representatives of diverse sectors, including state authorities from Ukraine and the Baltic Sea Region, NGOs, international organizations, and academia.

Piloting capacity-building course on humanitarian advocacy. In November, URCS launched a pilot one-day advocacy workshop for all branches in the Kyiv region, providing them with the necessary tools to develop their influencing skills. This workshop included essential advocacy skills, recognised them as vital tools in their engagements with local authorities and stakeholders.



URCS plans to expand this workshop model to other branches in 2024, ensuring that organisational approaches and narratives align with impactful advocacy efforts at the national, international, and local levels. While building advocacy capacity is imperative for advancing the localisation agenda, it also demands a significant investment of time and dedication. The main objective of this pilot was to enhance dialogue for further collaboration in the field of locally led humanitarian advocacy, identify best practices, and develop a curriculum methodology for a course on humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy for all branches of the Society.

Humanitarian exhibition at the Innovation in Humanitarian Habitat Conference. URCS hosted its photo exhibition of frontline humanitarian response at the Innovation in Humanitarian Habitat conference that took place on 27 October 2023 in Luxembourg.

The event brought together international specialists, donor representatives, builders, engineers, architects to discuss housing needs for vulnerable populations. The Ukrainian Red Cross and the Luxembourg Red Cross shared their experience building shelters for displaced persons, mothers, and large families. Notably, they highlighted the construction of the "Unbroken Mothers" centre for children and their mothers in Lviv, which has been nominated for the prestigious European Union Prize for Architecture.



URCS at the Innovation in Humanitarian Habitat Conference. October 2023

Evidence-based planning. Since April 2023, URCS, in collaboration with IFRC, the German and Belgian Red Cross, supported monthly surveys by IMPACT Initiatives.

This survey focuses on people who fled the escalation of hostilities in Ukraine to understand their mobility patterns, needs, integration trajectories and intentions to return, and how these change over time. Respondents were first interviewed after they crossed the border out of Ukraine from 28 February onwards and have since been followed up by IMPACT's team, which conducts monthly phone interviews with the same pool of respondents totalling 11,348 individuals whose households make up a total of 32,700 people. URCS uses these findings for operational and strategic planning of its Recovery programmes and humanitarian response, shaping durable solutions for IDPs and returnees.

Check [the link](#) for key survey results.



MOVEMENT PARTNERSHIP – BEST PRACTICES

Short history of cooperation between URCS and French Red Cross. The Ukrainian Red Cross Society and the French Red Cross (FRC) have nurtured impactful cooperation for over 10 years. Since the escalation of the international armed conflict on the territory of Ukraine in February 2022, FRC has supported URCS interventions through multilateral appeals (IFRC); and re-opened a country delegation in Kyiv in September 2022 from which it directly supports URCS in the fields of First Aid, IHL and Home-Based Care, as well as community-based health and MHPSS in cooperation with the Danish Red Cross (DRC).

Visit to Paris, France.

In December 2023, URCS travelled to Paris to meet with the French Red Cross leadership and plan the future of their partnership. On this occasion, the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General for Programmes and Operations met with prominent French donors (AFD and Expertise France) and received a high level of interest regarding the longer-term projects and plans that they presented.

The URCS delegation, accompanied by the FRC colleagues also met Senators of the French Senate (upper house of the French Parliament) where they discussed a wide range of issues, including URCS' role in delivering services to people, and its vision for humanitarian and development activities in the medium to long term.

The visit was also an opportunity for some fruitful exchanges between the sister National Societies' leadership and management; further defining the commitment of FRC to continue supporting URCS in its resilience oriented ONE PLAN and long-term reconstruction vision.

The visit allowed URCS' Management to visit one of the FRC-managed "Nursing Schools", in Arras. These comprehensive presentations and exchanges will contribute to the coming development and opening of a first URCS-managed "Nursing School" in Kyiv; where FRC's expertise will support the project of creating a "Red Cross Paramedical School" in Ukraine.



Short history of cooperation between URCS and Swiss Red Cross. The Swiss Red Cross (SRC) and the Ukrainian Red Cross Society have maintained a partnership since 2017, when they began cooperating in home-based care (HBC) and in strengthening domestic fundraising capacity in Ukraine. In December 2023, SRC and URCS signed an updated Partnership Framework Agreement, defining

cooperation from 2023–2025, with a focus on aligning SRC support to the URCS OnePlan.

With the escalation of hostilities in February 2022, at the request of the URCS, the SRC deployed an emergency response team to western Ukraine in March 2022, where it initiated support to the URCS regional organisations in Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk.

During 2022, the SRC opened a long-term delegation in the country, establishing a coordination office in Kyiv, with sub-delegations in Ivano-Frankivsk and Kropyvnytskyi. Presently, the SRC provides support to the URCS National Committee, as well as to URCS regional organisations in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Kirovohrad and Kherson. In Kyiv, the SRC has thematic experts embedded within the URCS National Committee to provide support in HBC, fundraising and CVA. Among the four regional organisations, the SRC supports these branches in addressing local needs in: health care (including HBC, MHPSS), shelter/IDP accommodation, emergency relief (including cash- and voucher-based assistance and specific NFIs). SRC also supports National Society development (NSD) at these four URCS regional organisations; notably, SRC provides financial support for the URCS BRaVo Programme in Ivano-Frankivsk and Kherson regions.

The SRC's work with URCS is supported by public and corporate donations in Switzerland, as well as by the Swiss Solidarity Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).



Delivery of humanitarian aid to the de-occupied regions. Iziium, Kharkiv region. September 2022



Delivery of humanitarian aid to the de-occupied regions. Iziium, Kharkiv region. September 2022

In Switzerland the SRC is supporting Ukrainian refugees across Switzerland through its cantonal organisations. The SRC launched the information platform "Helpful", where refugees from Ukraine can find out essential information about accommodations, job opportunities, insurance, etc. in Switzerland.

Upcoming Advocacy-Related Events

- Diplomatic visit of URCS leadership to London, marking the second year of the escalation of the conflict
- Participation at the European Humanitarian Forum
- Co-organisation of localisation discussions of Alliance NGO in Kyiv and Brussels