

QUARTERLY DIGEST

January–March 2026



The first quarter of 2026 was shaped by a difficult winter, continued attacks on energy infrastructure, and the fourth year of the full-scale war. This digest highlights how the Ukrainian Red Cross Society combined winter response, community support, preparedness and cooperation on different levels to sustain assistance under prolonged conflict.

250 000 people reached	560 generators delivered	100+ SES heating points supported
4 600 home-care visits	1 000+ volunteers engaged	120 000 litres water provided

IN THIS DIGEST

- The winter context and the humanitarian effects of attacks on energy infrastructure
- Operational highlights, including generators, heating points, and social support
- URCS priorities: preparedness, health and mental health, rehabilitation, and social services
- URCS engagement with communities, public authorities, Movement partners, and European institutions
- Key developments across January, February, and March, plus upcoming engagement

CORE THEMES

- Winter response
- Energy resilience
- Preparedness
- Social services
- Auxiliary role
- European cooperation

OVERVIEW

The first quarter of 2026 was shaped by a difficult winter, continued attacks on energy infrastructure, and the fourth year of the full-scale war against Ukraine. By this stage of the crisis, humanitarian needs were no longer defined only by acute emergencies. They had become structural, cumulative, and deeply embedded in the daily lives of communities across the country. Repeated outages, disrupted heating and water supply, pressure on institutions, and prolonged uncertainty created a context in which emergency response, continuity of services, and community resilience had to advance at the same time.

This was the wider context in which the Ukrainian Red Cross Society carried forward its operational response, supported communities under sustained pressure, continued to fulfil its auxiliary role to the State in the humanitarian field, and strengthened cooperation with public authorities, Movement partners, and European counterparts. In a crisis of this duration, a National Society is not only a responder. It provides continuity when systems are strained and helps ensure that humanitarian support remains present and trusted at community level despite repeated shocks and ongoing insecurity.

Throughout the quarter, the Ukrainian Red Cross demonstrated an approach built on continuity: combining emergency response with support to community functioning, social services, health-related assistance, preparedness, and practical cooperation with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, local authorities, and partners at different levels. This quarter showed clearly that humanitarian action in Ukraine increasingly depends on the ability to keep people supported, institutions functioning, and communities connected to services under sustained strain.



HIGHLIGHTS

During the reporting period, around **250,000 people** were reached through winter response and related support. The Ukrainian Red Cross supported approximately **100 SES heating points** and operated 15 of its own heating points, helping communities access warmth, charging, food, water, and short-term support during outages and cold weather.

The response included the distribution of **15,260 blankets**, **1,380 bedding sets**, **5,040 sleeping kits**, and **5,940 hygiene kits**, as well as **120,000 litres of water**. Food support remained equally important, with **5,000 food packages** delivered to SES field kitchens and **5,000 hot meals and drinks** distributed to people in need. Alongside this, more than **8,000 vulnerable** people received targeted assistance, **4,600 home-care visits were conducted**, and **4,300 people received psychosocial support**. More than 1,000 volunteers were engaged nationwide, including over 100 in Kyiv.

Energy resilience remained one of the defining operational lines of the quarter. A total of **560 generators** with a combined capacity of 9.16 MW were delivered, together with 20 heating point grants and one mobile boiler house. Within this broader effort, 447 generators arrived from the European Union's strategic rescEU reserves under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with delivery coordinated in cooperation with the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine. By the end of the quarter's most intensive winter phase, this support had expanded further to nearly 500 generators for almost 200 communities across the country.

Taken together, these figures show more than scale. They describe a response built around continuity: keeping communities warm, supporting social institutions, protecting vulnerable people, and sustaining local services in the fourth year of the full-scale war.

WINTER

Winter provided one of the clearest illustrations of how layered risks now manifest in Ukraine. Continued attacks on energy infrastructure across Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk and other regions resulted in prolonged outages affecting electricity, heating, water supply, and essential services. Combined heat and power facilities were damaged or destroyed in multiple regions. In some areas, temperatures dropped to **-22°C**, while indoor temperatures in unheated residential buildings fell to between +2°C and +8°C. Entire households were left without heating, electricity, and water.

In these conditions, winterisation was not merely a seasonal programme. It became the protection of life and dignity under compounded risks. Heating points, generators, food and water provision, psychosocial assistance, and community outreach all responded to the same underlying challenge: how to keep people safe, warm, and supported when daily life is repeatedly disrupted by attacks on critical infrastructure.

The generator response was especially important because it connected large-scale partner support to very concrete local effect. Generators helped maintain heating points, shelters, social institutions, hospitals, water utilities, and other essential services. In this sense, winter response became inseparable from preparedness and continuity. It showed that in the current phase of the war, humanitarian action must increasingly support not only people directly, but also the systems on which they depend.

PRIORITIES

As the war entered its fourth full year, the Ukrainian Red Cross continued to focus on three long-term priorities: preparedness and civil protection, continuity of health, mental health and rehabilitation services, and social services that enable people to regain stability and self-reliance.

Preparedness and civil protection have become daily operational realities. Continued cooperation with SESU and local authorities remains essential to strengthen coordinated response capacities and ensure that communities are better equipped when new emergencies occur. This quarter showed clearly that preparedness is not an abstract future agenda. It is already embedded in heating points, emergency teams, volunteer mobilisation, generator support, first aid, and local coordination.

Continuity in health, mental health and rehabilitation services is equally important. The prolonged nature of the war means that needs are no longer limited to immediate injuries or acute emergency care. They include the accumulated physical and psychological consequences of sustained insecurity, displacement, and pressure on local systems. The Ukrainian Red Cross continued to respond through psychosocial support, home-based care, mobile service models, and support that keeps services close to communities where access remains limited.

Social services remained central because communities themselves continue to change under prolonged pressure. Demographic shifts, displacement, pressure on host communities, and strain on local support networks all affect how people cope and what kind of assistance they need. In this context, programmes that support dignity, stability, and self-reliance are not secondary to humanitarian action. They are part of how humanitarian response remains relevant over time.



OUR ENGAGEMENT

A major strategic line of the quarter was the Ukrainian Red Cross Society's contribution to wider discussions on humanitarian priorities, preparedness, civil protection, and sustained support. This was visible in its participation in the Senior Officials Meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine in Brussels, as well as in a number of external briefings and meetings held around the four-year mark of the full-scale war.

These engagements were important not only because they gave the Ukrainian Red Cross an opportunity to present its operational experience, but because they connected community-level realities in Ukraine with broader discussions on preparedness, continuity of services, and long-term humanitarian response. They also reflected the organisation's role as a nationally rooted actor able to work across communities, public authorities, Movement partnerships, and European cooperation.

Around the four-year mark of the full-scale war, this became especially visible in a series of external briefings involving Maksym Dotsenko, which helped frame the current phase of the crisis not only as an emergency, but as a prolonged humanitarian reality requiring continuity, preparedness, and sustained partnership. The Canadian Red Cross donor town hall was built around the reality of the winter, the effect of outages on daily life, the impact on vulnerable groups, the psychological burden of prolonged crisis, and the current priorities of the winter response, including heating points, generators, basic assistance, and home-based care.

The IFRC donor briefing further reinforced this framing, presenting the Ukrainian Red Cross as Ukraine's largest humanitarian organisation, an auxiliary to the Government, and a nationally coordinated, locally led actor working through branches, staff, volunteers, and Emergency Response Teams. It also articulated the organisation's long-term priorities and linked them directly to a crisis in which humanitarian needs remain high and increasingly overlap with recovery.

The same strategic line continued through the German Red Cross online briefing for private-sector partners, where the conversation focused on the humanitarian situation four years into the war, the particularly difficult winter, the pressures faced by communities and responders, and the transformation of the Ukrainian Red Cross in response to growing demands.



By the end of the quarter, this wider engagement was further reinforced through the EU Preparedness Conference in Brussels and the accompanying meetings with European counterparts. Supported by cooperation with RCEU and DG ECHO, this process gave the Ukrainian Red Cross an opportunity to present its practical experience of winter response, emergency teams, preparedness, and community resilience to a much broader audience, and to place that experience within a wider European discussion on preparedness and response.

Together, these engagements showed that the Ukrainian Red Cross is not only responding at scale on the ground, but is also contributing to a shared understanding of what this phase of the crisis requires — in terms of preparedness, continuity of services, community resilience, and sustained partnership across local, national, Movement, and European levels.

JANUARY

In January, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society entered a more intensive phase of winter response following the large-scale strike on energy infrastructure on 9 January. This marked an important shift. Winter response could no longer be understood simply as seasonal support; it became part of a broader effort to protect life, dignity, and continuity for communities affected simultaneously by cold weather, power outages, disrupted water supply, and pressure on essential local services.

During this period, heating points became one of the most visible and practical forms of support. They provided warmth, charging, food, water, and short-term relief, but they also served a broader function: they offered a stable and trusted point of assistance in an increasingly difficult environment. This visible presence on the ground reflected the role of the Ukrainian Red Cross not only as an emergency responder, but as an organisation helping communities endure prolonged strain.

At the same time, January included several important external engagements. Also URCS together with the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine, began delivering generators that arrived from the European Union's strategic rescEU reserves under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism; overall, around 560 generators were delivered, including nearly 500 generators for almost 200 communities across the country. Representatives of the United Kingdom visited Ukrainian Red Cross activities, including a heating point and broader programme areas such as emergency response, evacuation, psychosocial support, and recovery-related work. These engagements helped demonstrate that the Ukrainian Red Cross was operating through a connected and practical response model, rather than through isolated interventions.

The Ukrainian Red Cross Society's participation in the Senior Officials Meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine was also an important part of the month's broader engagement on preparedness, humanitarian priorities, and sustained support. In the context of a difficult winter, continued attacks on energy infrastructure, and the fourth year of the full-scale war, the meeting helped ensure that the realities faced by communities across Ukraine remained visible in the wider European discussion. It also created space to connect operational experience from the ground with broader conversations on preparedness, civil protection, continuity of services, and the kind of support required in a protracted crisis.

For the Ukrainian Red Cross, this was particularly important because it reinforced the organisation's role as a nationally rooted humanitarian actor able to bring practical experience into strategic discussions while remaining closely connected to communities and public authorities. It also contributed to a stronger shared understanding that the current phase of the response requires not only solidarity, but predictable support that allows humanitarian action to remain continuous, adaptive, and responsive to evolving needs on the ground.

FEBRUARY

February was the most intensive month of the quarter, combining large-scale humanitarian response, continued winter pressures, high-level visits, and broader reflection around the fourth year of the full-scale war.

Throughout the month, the Ukrainian Red Cross Society continued responding to the consequences of attacks on energy infrastructure while also reinforcing its role in civil protection, community support, and cooperation with public authorities and partners. February showed particularly clearly that humanitarian response, preparedness, and local resilience are increasingly interconnected.

One of the most important leadership-level engagements during the month was the meeting in Kyiv between Maksym Dotsenko, Director General of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, and representatives of the German-Ukrainian parliamentary friendship group in the Bundestag, including Robin Wagener, Chair of the group and Member of the Bundestag. The discussion focused on the work of the Ukrainian Red Cross in the context of the full-scale invasion, including its auxiliary role to the public authorities, its cooperation with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, and its place within the Unified State Civil Protection System and the European Civil Protection Mechanism. Particular attention was also given to the humanitarian consequences of the latest attacks on energy infrastructure and their effect on communities across the country. The discussion also looked ahead to further areas of cooperation aimed at addressing the long-term humanitarian consequences of the war.

The same month also made the European dimension of the response especially visible. The visit of the EU Commissioner for preparedness and crisis management highlighted how generator support translates directly into continuity of care and institutional stability for vulnerable people, particularly in social care settings. The visit of the Ambassador of France to a Ukrainian Red Cross heating point brought another European perspective to one of the most practical elements of the winter response.

Cooperation with the Swedish Red Cross also deepened during the month, both through strategic discussion on future priorities and through broader engagement involving business actors.

February also included important Movement-level engagement. The meeting with Pierre Krähenbühl, Director-General of the ICRC, reinforced the role of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society within the Movement as a National Society responding to a prolonged and structurally complex humanitarian crisis through a broad range of operational tools and services. The visit of the Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross further highlighted the breadth of the organisation's work, including rehabilitation, home care, mental health and psychosocial support, mobile medical brigades, and emergency response.

Around the four-year mark of the full-scale war, a series of external briefings helped place this work into a broader frame. These conversations focused not only on operational delivery, but on what this winter meant in human terms: relentless attacks on energy infrastructure, widespread outages, pressure on households and institutions, the impact on older people, people with disabilities, and families with children, and the growing psychological burden of prolonged crisis. This helped present the Ukrainian Red Cross response in a way that was both operationally grounded and closely connected to lived experience.

This was especially visible in leadership-level participation by Maksym Dotsenko in the Canadian Red Cross donor town hall, which brought direct field-based perspective into a partner discussion on winter needs and the realities facing communities across Ukraine. It was reinforced further through the IFRC donor briefing at the four-year mark of the full-scale war, where the Ukrainian Red Cross Society was presented as Ukraine's largest humanitarian organisation, an auxiliary to the Government, and a nationally coordinated, locally led actor working through branches, staff, volunteers, and Emergency Response Teams.

This briefing also clearly articulated the organisation's long-term priorities: preparedness and civil protection, continuity of health and rehabilitation services, and social services that help people regain stability and self-reliance.

February also produced some of the clearest local examples of the quarter. The delivery of generators to a geriatric care institution in Kyiv showed how large-scale support can be translated into a specific, humane, and visible result for people in institutional care. The continuing operation of heating points, the expansion of generator support to communities and institutions, and the visits of partners from the Movement and from European governments all reinforced the same message: in this winter, effective humanitarian action depended on practical support delivered consistently and close to people.



MARCH

In March, the quarter moved more clearly toward a forward-looking discussion on preparedness, continuity, and the next phase of cooperation. The humanitarian situation remained difficult, but the conversation increasingly focused not only on current needs, but on how to sustain effective response over time and how to strengthen the links between humanitarian action, civil protection, and community resilience.

This was visible in the working meeting with DG ECHO, the German Red Cross, and the Danish Red Cross, where the focus extended beyond immediate humanitarian needs to winter preparedness, civil protection, and future cooperation within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The value of this meeting lay in its practical orientation: it helped move the discussion from observation of immediate needs toward alignment on future priorities.

March also included an important high-level online engagement through the German Red Cross briefing for private-sector partners, in which Maksym Dotsenko took part alongside colleagues from the Ukrainian Red Cross Society and the German Red Cross. The discussion focused on the humanitarian situation four years into the war, one of the most difficult winter periods in recent years, the pressure facing communities and responders, and the continued development of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society as it adapts to growing and changing demands. This was an important leadership-level opportunity to speak directly with long-standing and potential supporters about both immediate humanitarian realities and the organisation's longer-term resilience and capacity.

By the end of the month, this line developed further through the EU Preparedness Conference in Brussels and the accompanying programme of meetings. The conference itself created a platform for the Ukrainian Red Cross Society to bring its practical experience into a wider European discussion on preparedness. This included participation in the session on Population Preparedness: Lessons From Across Europe and in the high-level panel From Strategy to Action: One Year of Preparedness Union.

What made this engagement especially important was the result it created for the organisation. Supported by cooperation with RCEU and DG ECHO, it allowed the Ukrainian Red Cross Society to present its operational experience of winter response, Emergency Response Teams, preparedness, and community resilience to a much broader and more strategic audience. It also helped deepen working relationships with key European institutions through meetings with DG ECHO, the ERCC, the EEAS, Permanent Representatives on Ukraine, and DG ENEST.



Leadership participation was especially important in this context. During the briefing for Permanent Representatives on Ukraine, Maksym Dotsenko presented the humanitarian situation, the role of the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, and key outlooks for the coming months. This gave the organisation an opportunity to bring field-based perspective directly into a policy-relevant European setting and to underline that the current phase of the response requires continuity, preparedness, and predictable support.

Taken together, March showed that the Ukrainian Red Cross Society is not only responding to immediate humanitarian needs, but is also increasingly contributing to the wider discussion on how preparedness, civil protection, and community resilience should be understood in a prolonged crisis. It also demonstrated that the organisation's European engagement is becoming more structured and more strategic, supported by ongoing cooperation with RCEU and key EU counterparts.

DG ECHO AND EU COOPERATION

The DG ECHO and wider EU track was one of the strongest lines of the quarter. Operationally, it was visible in the arrival of generators from rescEU under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with delivery coordinated together with the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development of Ukraine. Institutionally, it was reflected in direct engagement on humanitarian priorities, winter preparedness, and civil protection. Strategically, it was reinforced through the Ukrainian Red Cross participation in the EU Preparedness Conference and the wider Brussels meetings, which placed the organisation's operational experience within a broader European discussion on preparedness and response.

This matters because it shows the Ukrainian Red Cross not only as a recipient of support, but as a partner able to contribute practical knowledge and field-based experience to how preparedness and response are discussed at European level. It also demonstrates that the organisation's European engagement is becoming more structured, more visible, and more strategic over time. In this context, the Ukrainian Red Cross is working together with RCEU on further strengthening and shaping its EU engagement track.



FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

April

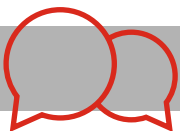
- Visit of the Moldovan Red Cross to URCS office in Kyiv will further strengthen regional cooperation and exchange between National Societies
- Diplomatic roundtable organized by partners of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, jointly with the Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) in Kyiv, aimed at engaging with the diplomatic community on current priorities, presenting the extension of the URCS One Plan, and discussing directions for cooperation in key areas.
- The high-level meeting with the Canadian Red Cross in Kyiv will continue dialogue on partnership and future support.

May

- Event on UK NGO-Military Contact group on “Civilian Resilience in Armed Conflict” organized by British Red Cross, online intervention by Maksym Dotsenko.

June

- “Preparedness in Practice: Building Resilience in a Changing Europe” event in London organized by British Red Cross, will maintain a joint focus on preparedness and response capacities, building on the high-level lessons-learned discussion held in Kyiv in 2025.
- The Ukraine Recovery Conference in Gdansk, Poland will provide an opportunity to contribute to wider discussions on recovery, resilience, and community support.



Outlook

The first quarter of 2026 showed the Ukrainian Red Cross Society at work during one of the most demanding periods of the year. Faced with a difficult winter, energy insecurity, and the fourth year of the full-scale war, the organisation combined scale with structure: winter assistance, generator support, social services, preparedness, and close coordination with communities, public authorities, Movement partners, and European counterparts.

It also showed that the organisation's strength lies in its ability to connect different levels of response. The Ukrainian Red Cross translated partner support into practical assistance for communities, linked humanitarian action with civil protection and social care, and brought operational experience into wider discussions on preparedness, resilience, and sustained support.

Four years into the full-scale war, this is not only a question of response capacity. It is a question of continuity, trust, and the ability to help communities remain supported through prolonged strain.



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