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Attacks on Ukraine's health care increased by 20% in 2025

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As Ukraine enters the fifth year of full-scale war, it is revealed that its people endured the highest number of attacks on their health care in 2025 – increasing by nearly 20% compared to 2024.

Since the beginning of the full-scale war on 24 February 2022, WHO has documented at least 2881 attacks on health care in Ukraine, affecting health workers, facilities, ambulances and medical warehouses.

Health services are under intense pressure on 2 fronts: direct attacks on health care, and the cascading effects of strikes on civilian infrastructure, including thermal power plants that underpin the country's power grid. These have left deep gaps in people's health. According to a WHO assessment conducted in December 2025, 59% of people in frontline areas reported their health as poor or very poor, compared to 47% in non-frontline areas.

"After 4 years of war, health needs are increasing, but many people are unable to get the care they need, in part because hospitals and clinics are routinely attacked," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "WHO is working alongside Ukraine's dedicated health workers to keep hospitals supplied with the means to stay warm, and the medicines people rely on the most. Ultimately, the best medicine is peace."

In 2025, WHO's support reached 1.9 million people across Ukraine through service delivery, medical supplies, referrals and capacity-building, with a strong focus on frontline and hard-to-reach locations.

"Four years of war has created a serious health crisis in Ukraine," said Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe. "Mental health needs are staggering: 72% of people surveyed experienced anxiety or depression in the past year, yet only 1 in 5 sought help. Cardiovascular disease is surging, with 1 in 4 Ukrainians experiencing dangerously high blood pressure, and 8 out of 10 people report they can't access the medicines they need. This is not abstract – it's a heart patient who can't find blood pressure medication, an amputee waiting months for a prosthesis, a teenager too afraid to leave the house. Ukraine's health system needs our sustained support."

Attacks on health care

In a year marked by hope for peace talks, the reality on the ground told a different story. Attacks on health care intensified, reaching a peak in the third quarter of 2025, when 184 attacks claimed the lives of 12 people and injured 110 health workers and patients.

At the same time, attacks on medical warehouses tripled in 2025 compared with the previous year, disrupting logistics and supply chains that are critical to delivering care across the country. Over the past 4 years, 233 health workers and patients have been killed and 930 injured in attacks on health care. Such attacks constitute violations of international humanitarian law.

Impact of destruction on essential health services

This winter has been the harshest since the war began, with multiple strikes on energy infrastructure leaving millions without heating, electricity and water. Many of Ukraine's combined heat and power plants have been damaged or destroyed. In Kyiv alone, a January 2026 attack left nearly 6000 buildings without heat in subzero conditions, prompting an estimated 600 000 residents to flee the capital.

"What we are witnessing in Ukraine is a devastating cycle. A heating station is struck and thousands of homes lose heat within hours. At -20°C, water in the pipes freezes, bursts them and floods buildings with ice. Repairs are made, then the next attack starts it all over again. Behind every one of these system breakdowns are families, elderly residents, and health care workers who must keep saving lives while their own homes are without heat, water or electricity. The burnout after 4 years of war is immense – and the demand for health care has never been higher," said Dr Jarno Habicht, WHO Representative to Ukraine.

The impact does not end at the hospital door. New mothers discharged after giving birth, patients recovering from injuries or heart attacks, and those awaiting or recovering from critical cancer surgeries return home to apartments without heating, electricity or running water. Care that begins

in a functioning hospital is undermined when patients recover in freezing, dark homes, turning medical progress into a daily struggle for survival.

Growing health needs

The rise in war-related trauma injuries has driven a growing demand for surgery, blood products, infection prevention and control, prevention of antimicrobial resistance, mental health services, and rehabilitation.

Access to rehabilitation remains severely limited. Only 4% of hospitals provide inpatient rehabilitation and only 3% of facilities offer assistive technologies, such as prostheses and corrective devices.

Access to medicines is among the most persistent barriers to health in Ukraine, with 4 out of 5 people (71%) reporting difficulties, primarily due to high prices. In frontline regions, closed pharmacies, security risks and financial constraints make the situation even more acute.

WHO's work in Ukraine

In 2025, WHO worked to reach communities through multiple mechanisms, by prioritizing the most vulnerable people in hard-to-reach areas. The work spanned the full continuum of health:

- **crisis response:** delivered trauma care and medical supplies to 954 facilities, supported over 1200 medical evacuations, and ran outreach in 131 hard-to-reach locations;
- **recovery:** sustained primary health care, noncommunicable disease treatment and mental health services for displaced and conflict-affected populations; and
- **rehabilitation:** rebuilt damaged facilities, installing modular clinics, and training over 2500 health workers to restore and strengthen a battered health system.

To help maintain essential health services, WHO has provided 284 generators to health facilities across 23 regions of Ukraine. For 2026, WHO is appealing to raise US\$ 42 million in funding to sustain its work in Ukraine and to protect access to care for 700 000 people.

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