

FLASH UPDATE (22 Jun 2023)

UKRAINE – DESTRUCTION OF KAKHOVKA DAM – FLASH UPDATE #8

HIGHLIGHTS

- Over two weeks after the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam on 6 June, the massive flooding caused by the disaster has significantly receded, leaving behind devastation, an unconfirmed number of civilians killed and injured and a worsened humanitarian situation in areas already facing the dire consequences of the war.
- Humanitarians, health workers and authorities have raised important concerns about the possibility of disease outbreaks caused by stagnant and contaminated water in areas where health services are extremely limited due to the widespread destruction caused by the war.
- The disaster and the consequent depletion of the Kakhovka Reservoir have created enormous challenges for civilians to access drinking water and for agricultural activities in southern Ukraine.
- Humanitarian assistance has been restricted by ongoing hostilities, and the Government of the Russian Federation has declined requests to access to areas under its temporary military control.
- Denise Brown, Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, in a [statement](#) published on 18 June, urged the Russian authorities to act in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law, adding that aid cannot be denied to people who need it.
- Despite challenges, the UN and humanitarian partners continued to respond to the most immediate needs of people impacted by the destruction of the Dam, complementing the work carried out by the Government and volunteer groups.



The World Food Programme (WFP) deployed boats and amphibious trucks to enable humanitarian assistance to isolated areas of the Kherson region. On 19 June, humanitarians delivered food, water and hygiene items to small communities along the Inhulets River. Photo: OCHA/Saviano Abreu

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Over two weeks after the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam on 6 June, the massive flooding caused by the disaster has significantly receded, leaving behind devastation, an unconfirmed number of civilians killed and injured, and a worsened humanitarian situation in areas already facing the dire consequences of the war. While access to drinking water, hygiene items and food are amongst the most immediate needs of people affected, humanitarians, health workers and authorities have raised important concerns about the possibility of disease outbreaks caused by stagnant and contaminated water in areas where health services are extremely limited due to the widespread destruction caused by the war.

Despite the receding levels of floodwater, an estimated 200 houses remain flooded in areas of Khersonska oblast controlled by Ukraine, according to the Government. The number of people displaced has also increased to nearly 4,000 people in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts, up from 3,000 on 15 June, according to Ukrainian authorities. Although most displaced people are seeking shelter with their relatives, over 470 people are taking refuge in evacuation centres, including nearly 70



people with limited mobility and a dozen children, according to the Ukrainian authorities. In addition, thousands of people have reportedly been evacuated from the areas under Russian military control, according to the Russian-installed authorities. The UN has not been able to verify information on displacement or humanitarian needs in areas controlled by Russia.

The disaster and the consequent depletion of the Kakhovka Reservoir have created enormous challenges for civilians to access drinking water. The Government of Ukraine informed that a new pipeline, with a total length of nearly 150 kilometres, will be necessary to provide water to the 700,000 people who used to rely on the Kakhovka Reservoir. The Ukrainian authorities also informed that almost 600,000 hectares of agricultural land will remain without irrigation, which will likely hamper crop production in Ukraine.

Hostilities are adding to the challenges faced by people affected by the disaster and those trying to support them. On 20 June, for example, an attack on Kherson city killed and injured, in the line of duty, rescue workers from the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), who were reportedly carrying out the removal of debris in areas affected by the flooding that followed the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine confirmed that at least one rescue worker was killed and four more injured during the incident. The Mission is in the process of confirming an additional four civilian casualties due to the same incident. The Humanitarian Coordinator (a.i) for Ukraine Matthew Hollingworth [condemned](#) the attack, recalling that civilians, including rescue workers, are protected under international humanitarian law.

Hostilities and impediments imposed by the Government of the Russian Federation have also prevented humanitarians from supporting people in areas under its temporary military control or conducting assessments to determine the extent of the humanitarian impact of the disaster. Denise Brown, Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, in a [statement](#) published on 18 June, urged the Russian authorities to act in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law, adding that aid cannot be denied to people who need it.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The UN and its humanitarian partners continue to work tirelessly to assist people impacted by the devastation caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam, complementing the work carried out by the Government and volunteer groups. Since 6 June, humanitarians have been supporting both the flood-affected communities downstream of the Dnipro River in Khersonska and Mykolaivska oblasts and those living in upstream locations in southern, south-eastern and central Ukraine facing water shortages caused by the depletion of the Kakhovka Reservoir. The humanitarian community, however, has not yet been able to reach people in areas currently under the military control of the Russian Federation.

In areas under Ukrainian control, critical assistance was delivered through at least 12 **inter-agency humanitarian convoys to Khersonska and Dnipropetrovska oblasts** since 6 June. On Monday, 19 June, for example, a convoy coordinated by the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the World Food Programme, with the support of the Logistics Cluster, used boats and amphibious trucks to assist people in small communities in the bank of the Inhulets River, where access became challenging due to flooding and damage to roads. In Khersonska oblast, inter-agency convoys reached Bilozerka, Beryslav, Chornobaivka, Darivka, Kalynivske, Kherson city, Kozatske, Inhulets and Vesele. Inter-agency convoys in areas facing water shortages in the neighbouring Dnipropetrovska oblast reached Apostolove, Marhanets, Nikopol, Pokrov and Zelenodolsk. The supplies delivered by these convoys included food, bottled water, water tanks, hygiene kits, materials for emergency house repairs, solar lamps, blankets, sleeping bags, mattresses and other vital household items provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the NGOs Intersos and Solidarités International.

This response modality is complemented by the UN agencies and NGOs' regular programme in the affected areas, which was reinforced to meet the increased level of humanitarian needs.

Since 6 June, organizations under the **Water, Hygiene and Sanitation Cluster** have delivered over 2 million litres of water through bottled water distribution, water trucking and water treatment to the affected communities in Dnipropetrovska, Khersonska, Mykolaivska and Zaporizka oblasts. In addition to the water distribution, humanitarian partners are mobilizing resources to support Government efforts to drill boreholes, provide treatment and construct an alternative piped supply following the depletion of the Kakhovka Reservoir.

The **Health Cluster** continued to work closely with the authorities to provide medical supplies and medicines to both increase the capacity of clinics and hospitals to respond to the immediate needs of people and to also enable a rapid response in case of disease outbreaks caused by stagnant and contaminated water. Over the past few days, for example, WHO has delivered 15 additional medical modules and supplies, including emergency health kits, trauma and paediatric kits, amongst other items, to 4 hospitals in Khersonska oblast. The supplies are sufficient to provide care for over 11,000 patients for 3 to 6 months. This complements cholera kits that had already been provided to hospitals in Kherson and surrounding areas in April 2023. WHO is also supporting the authorities and health workers to strengthen surveillance and prevention of water-borne diseases. Rapid assessment of epidemiological risks related to the contamination of drinking water due to the flooding of cemeteries, toilets and landfills has been undertaken, with no related confirmed cases reported to date.

Humanitarians have provided **multi-purpose cash assistance** to nearly 6,600 people and registered over 30,000 more for this type of support, in line with the commitment made by the UN, including IOM, to provide financial assistance to approximately 40,000 people in areas directly affected by flooding. Currently, 14 organizations, including UNICEF and international NGOs – Acted, Adra, Danish Refugee Council, Estonian Refugee Council, Mercy Corps, Solidarités International, Polish Humanitarian Action (PAH) – are coordinating the Kakhovka Dam response under the activated standard emergency procedure of the Cash Working Group.

Over 3,000 people, including 1,700 children and nearly 1,370 parents, have received **Child Protection** services, including psychological first aid and psychological and pedagogical sessions for children, legal aid and support with evacuation and at transit hubs and collective centres. Humanitarians are operating child-friendly spaces at the train and bus stations in Odesa and Mykolaiv, providing recreation and psychosocial support to children. Services are provided by at least 14 organizations, including UN agencies – UNHCR, UNICEF – and national and international NGOs such as IsraAID, Intersos, Nonviolent Peace Force, Save the Children, SOS Children's Village, Support Kherson, The Tenth of April, Voices of Children (VC) and Way Home.

In addition, the **Protection Cluster** is providing services in 14 centres in Kherson, housing 400 people evacuated from flooded locations, including legal assistance to restore documentation for those who lost it due to the disaster. The NGOs Children New, East-SOS, Help to Leave, Nonviolent Peaceforce and Proliska continued to provide support with transport to reach transit hubs in Kherson city, as well as to neighbouring oblasts.

The **Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster** is complementing by providing services in the 14 centres for displaced people that are operational now in Kherson city. IOM and the NGO Proliska are providing the sites with critical household items and providing referrals for the multi-sectoral response.

The **Shelter Cluster** is conducting a technical assessment as part of multi-agency missions in the affected areas, where the water level has receded and they have become accessible, to evaluate the extent of damage caused to the housings. Furthermore, in central Ukraine, the Cluster partners have repositioned approximately 5,000 non-food item kits, primarily



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provided by UNHCR, to effectively respond to the needs of the affected population when more areas become accessible as water levels recede.

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For more information, visit:

<https://www.unocha.org/ukraine>

<https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/ukraine>

<https://reliefweb.int/country/ukr>

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