

# COVID-19

## GNWP Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy and Appeal

April 2020

### Country Update

# Ukraine

As of April 16, 2020, 4,161 cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Ukraine, 116 of which were lethal. [1] Obligatory self-isolation has been announced until May 01, 2020. Only limited movement – for health purposes and basic grocery shopping – is allowed, and movement between oblasts is not possible. All meetings, events and conferences have been cancelled until May 2020.

The crisis has negatively affected the economy, both because of business closures, and restrictions on the public transport, which mean that people cannot get to work. The cabinet has adopted “policies that support the economy, as well as soft quarantine measures”[2]: the work of the non-essential businesses (such as retail), as well as public transportation, have been limited, but not stopped altogether. As of yet, there has been no postponement of the local elections planned for October, but it is expected that they may be postponed.

The situation in the occupied territories is also precarious, as the government has limited the flow of people into the government-controlled territories, which is leading to long lines at check-points.

Impact on women and on peace and security:

There is a spread of fake news and part of the population do not believe in the pandemic. Some, including the European External Action Service (EEAS) have accused Russia to deliberately disseminating fake news and spreading disinformation, in order to sow chaos and distrust in national authorities and healthcare systems.[3]

The disinformation can have serious impacts for the spread of the virus. For example, in Slavinsk, a city in Donetsk, Eastern Ukraine, many people refuse to accept the seriousness of the pandemic and adhere to the protective measures. According to a survey conducted by Ukrainian research company Gradus, only 20% of Ukrainians would refrain from going to work, even if COVID-19 cases were detected in their local area. Moreover, while most Ukrainians (almost 80%) is aware of the WHO-recommended hygiene measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus, only about 50% adheres to them. Both the awareness and the adherence to the rules is higher among the women.[4]

Social services have been negatively affected and overburdened by the crisis. The central train station in Kyiv has been closed, forcing many homeless who take shelter there to sleep on the street or seek space in homeless shelters, which are understaffed and overcrowded. This means that social services are less readily accessible, including to women who may be victims of domestic violence.

There is a shortage of protective masks and gear, putting the medical personnel and frontline responders – many of whom are women – at increased risk. This is aggravated by “poor financing, complicated public procurement procedures, and unfinished medical reforms”, which have contributed to a chaotic and uncoordinated response by the government.[5]

For many women activists, the situation is challenging, since they do not have the necessary skills or equipment to be able to work online. The computers and software they use is often old and does not support online conferences. Many of them do not have skills to use the new platforms.

Response by women peacebuilders:

- GNWP's partner, Democracy Development Center, and Zhiva Ya, a local civil society organization and GNWP partner in Kherson is providing emotional support and information online, using its network developed through the work on promoting women's participation, combatting violence against women, and localizing WPS to target vulnerable women, who may be in need of it.
- Local women living in rural areas are now organizing to share cars to deliver food and medications to older women and people with disabilities, who have no way to get into towns.

[1] Worldometer, „COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC”, 16 April 2020, Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>, accessed 16 April 2020.

[2] Yuriy Vakhel, “The First Days of COVID-19 in Ukraine”, Wilson Center, March 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/first-days-covid-19-ukraine>. Accessed on 1 April 2020.

[3] EUvsDisinfo, “EEAS Special Report on Disinformation on Coronavirus”, March 19, 2020. Available at: <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/eeas-special-report-disinformation-on-the-coronavirus-short-assessment-of-the-information-environment/>. Accessed on 1 April 2020.

[4] Liga.net, “80% are ready to continue to work. A big poll is what Ukrainians think about the coronavirus”, 20 March 2020. Available at: [https://www.liga.net/society/articles/80-gotovy-i-dalshe-hodit-na-rabotu-bolshoy-opros-cto-dumayu-ukraintsy-o-koronaviruse?fbclid=IwAR2TX7eSj7q3saj\\_0g\\_laW1rQTWFOKwwDODqOGj2ZjHiZPaqdXm3FEF6gw](https://www.liga.net/society/articles/80-gotovy-i-dalshe-hodit-na-rabotu-bolshoy-opros-cto-dumayu-ukraintsy-o-koronaviruse?fbclid=IwAR2TX7eSj7q3saj_0g_laW1rQTWFOKwwDODqOGj2ZjHiZPaqdXm3FEF6gw). Accessed on 1 April 2020.

[5] Yuriy Vakhel, “The First Days of COVID-19 in Ukraine”, Wilson Center, March 23, 2020. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/first-days-covid-19-ukraine>. Accessed on 1 April 2020.