

**ALLIANCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH:**  
**response to challenges caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine**  
***(situational report no. 4 of 23.03.2022, special issue: situation in Mariupol)***

**SUMMARY**

Mariupol, the beautiful industrial city with over 430 000 inhabitants, major Ukrainian Azov sea port has been completely war-ravaged by Russian army: 90% of all buildings were destroyed there. Russian army seized the city, constantly bombing for 20 days, blocking humanitarian convoys and evacuation of civilians from Mariupol.

Mariupol is the fifth city in Ukraine with the largest number of HIV+ people - 4700.

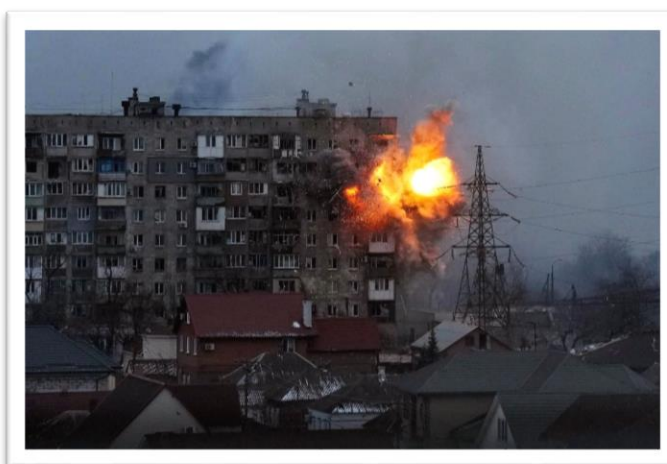
APH work on HIV and TB has been so essential there. Everything has been destroyed. Everyone is shocked with genocide by Russian army against Ukrainians, in days turned Mariupol to Ukrainian Aleppo.

There are about 100000 civilians still in the city. No services are currently provided in Mariupol. Our mobile clinic was destroyed by shelling. Offices of our partner organizations were destroyed and not functional anymore. Connections with most of the people in Mariupol has been lost.

Several of our colleagues are originally from Mariupol. Our hearts are with them and their families.

Alliance of Public Health (APH) is continuing serving people from Mariupol who managed to escape the city providing critical support and saving lives.

**SITUATION OVERVIEW**



*Photo: AP Photo / Evgeniy Maloletka*

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, Mariupol (population as of 2021: 431 859 people) has been blocked by the Russian occupation forces. According to the Mariupol City Council as of 14 March, more than three thousand civilians have perished in the city; accurate numbers are

impossible to obtain because of constant shelling of the city and its besieged status. According to the Minister for Temporary Occupied Territories, Iryna Vereshchuk, there are now more than 100 thousand citizens still in the city. There is a humanitarian disaster; there are no intact buildings in the city. Most people die because they are deprived of medical care, food and water. The fighting continues.



*Results of shelling of Mariupol maternity hospital, March 9, 2022*

*Photo: AP Photo / Evgeniy Maloletka*



*First responders and volunteers carry an injured pregnant woman from a maternity hospital that was damaged by shelling in Mariupol. The woman and her baby have since died.*

## ACCESS TO HIV PREVENTION SERVICES

### Activities before the war

According to the data of Mariupol City Center for AIDS Prevention and Control, as of 01.01.2022:

- Estimated number of PLWH: **4,673** people
- Official number of PLWH registered: **4,448**
- PLWH on ART: **4,140** people
- Number of new HIV cases in 2021: **341** people

**Before the war Mariupol was considered as one of the best examples of the response to the HIV and TB epidemic.**

The main partners of the APH in Mariupol are civil society organizations “Istok” and “Our Help”.

For 2022, the following activities had been planned with APH’s support under several projects: testing for HIV, mobile ambulatory operations, access to PrEP, social support of the clients, microelimination of HCV, and Fast-Track cities activities.

Since the beginning of 2022 until the start of warfare, at least 35 persons from vulnerable populations started taking PrEP, and 25 of them used transportation services; vulnerable population members made 3000 visits to the mobile ambulatory (MA), and PWID were provided with at least 200 vials of Naloxone – these were the quantitative targets for the current year

Testing for HIV was conducted at 14 healthcare facilities (HCFs), in the office of the organization and at MSM community center; all in all, **2863** persons were tested (including **2542** members of general population), and 39 new HIV+ cases were found.

In the period from January 1 until February 22, **712** clients were reached by at least one of the prevention services.

### Activities after the start of the war

From February 24 until March 21, the services have been provided to six persons. After March 1, there have been **no contacts** with any of implementers of the GF-funded project. **Service provision has been stopped completely.**

According to NGO Istok, some of the staff (at least five persons) have been able to leave the city, and two social workers were on a trip at the time when the war started. There is no information about other colleagues yet; the staff of the APH continues using all means to learn more about the situation. There is information that **the office of the NGO does not exist anymore, because there was a direct missile hit in the building.**

Employees who had been able to leave received support from the team of NGO "ALLIANCE.GLOBAL" in the city of Dnipro where community-based shelter for MSM operates; and project personnel provides aid. Other donors provided funding for renting accommodation for them.

### ***Quote from Kyrylo Maystrenko, MSM project coordinator:***

My native city now is burning ruins with heaps of bodies of innocent people lying everywhere. ***I was lucky to leave this hell alive.*** But many of my friends and relatives did not have that luck. I do not know where they are now or whether they are alive, but I still believe they can get out, and I will be able to hear their voices again, to see and hug them. I will never forget what the Russian 'liberators' did to my city; there will be no forgiveness too. Since March 4, there have been no contact, no way to learn something or pass information. The only source of information was our neighbor who had a working radio receiver, but it did not last long. On March 6, gas supply stopped, and the whole city turned into a field kitchen. It was impossible to buy food, all stores were either destroyed or looted.

In the first days of war, blood transfusion and the only blood bank in the city were destroyed. On February 28, together with Kseniya Isayenkova, an infection disease doctor, I used my car to **evacuate ART drugs from the AIDS center, and we organized the dispensing site at her home.** Next day, the hospital was bombed to dust.

Nobody extinguished fires, the houses burnt to the ground. Every time we went out could be our last one, but we had to go, we needed firewood and water. There was continuous fear that we could get hit, and there was only one hope that the hit is direct and we die without suffering long. Twice, I was extremely lucky to avoid being hit by shell splinters, but thousands of people were not that lucky. Ripped off arms, legs; death. There is not a single street not hit by a shell. It used to be a fast-developing city almost the size of Lviv, and now there is virtually nothing.

### ***Comment from the head of community center in Dnipro, NGO ALLIANCE.GLOBAL:***

*On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, our colleagues from Mariupol contacted us via Instagram. They told us they had been living in a basement for weeks, there was continuous shelling, and the only store was 15 km away. We helped them by transferring 3000 hryvnias. The guys told us they could not get out because the city was surrounded by Russian troops, and there were no corridors for refugees, and only on March 16 there came an opportunity to get to Kramatorsk by passing five checkpoints. In Kramatorsk, they found a transport to Dnipro; we proposed them to stay in our rented apartment for refugees. On March 17, they came to Dnipro and went to the apartment. We offered them a separate room to feel safe and have some sleep, have some rest. Now, the guys are recharging and making plans for the future. We have provided them with food packages and money.*

## **ACCESS TO TREATMENT**

### ***Access to ART***

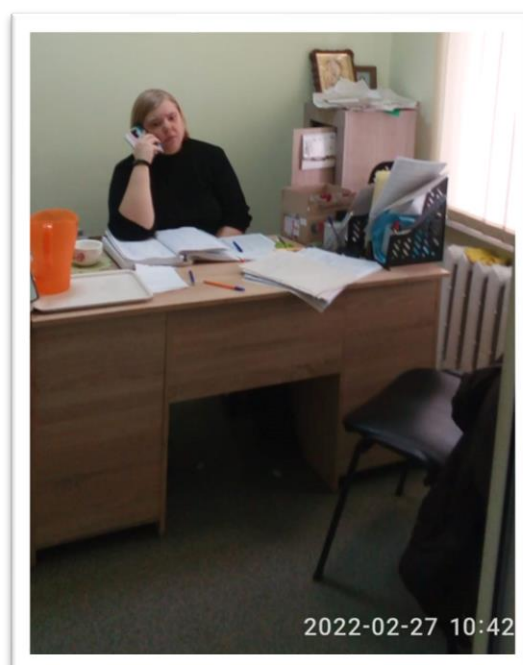
The contact has been established only with three out of seven of mobile team members (coordinator, social worker and driver). The driver of the mobile team has informed that the mobile ambulatory has been destroyed and cannot be operated anymore. Project activities have been terminated.

### ***Substitution maintenance therapy***

***Quote: Natalia Kaluzhska, PWID community member, paralegal, OAT patient:***

This photo shows **the last working day of the OAT office**. Thanks to this woman, hundreds of people have received life-saving drugs. No-one knows what has happened to her. But I believe that Katia and her family are alive. I am trying to find people from Mariupol. Now, I am sick and tired, but I have many friends and I appreciate them all.

I have got a notebook, and I am writing everything down from the beginning. I want people to know the truth. For three weeks, we have been in hell, where we did not have not just water and food, but even clean air or toilet. I remember the eyes of kids and adults in the line for food from 8 am to 2 pm, waiting to get a ladleful of soup. I will never forget explosions and the smell. That is horror and nightmare. I was giving away food, and I could not eat myself. Everything was cooked on open fire using horrendous groceries and non-potable water; it is a wonder no-one got sick. But when our windows were blasted, and it was -10 degrees, I got ill; also, I had to reduce my OAT dosage





from 100 mg to 25 mg a day. Now, that really brought me down. But me and my husband, we held on.

Tens of people approach me with different needs; in a day or two, I'll get my strength back and start working. Thank you very much, my friends. I wish you peace and good. God is with us, and we will of course win, and Ukraine will be a spiritual center and a bread basket. This is a promise we heard 10 years ago. So I have no doubts, Ukraine will prevail.

### Activities before the war

As of 01.02.2022, **289** people in Mariupol were receiving OAT at two sites:

- CNCC 'Mariupol City Center for Dependence Prevention and Treatment', **263** patients.
- CNCC of Mariupol City Council 'Primary Health Care Center no. 1 of the City of Mariupol' — **26** patients.

The APH was implementing the following projects at the City Center for Dependence Prevention and Treatment:

- 'Psychosocial support of OAT patients' (supported by the GF, through NGO 'Our Help', 100 patients were included).
- 'Improving OAT quality and sustainability' (supported by CDC, technical support (incentives for site personnel and OAT patients)).

### Activities after the start of the war

According to the director of the CNCC 'Mariupol City Center for Dependence Prevention and Treatment', chief narcology doctor of the region, **Oleksandr Piienko**, OAT sites in the city do not work anymore. Most of the patients were able to receive the drugs on February 26, 27 and 28, but only a 10-15-day supply. At the moment, there is information that the facility was hit by a bomb, and it is damaged or destroyed. Information about the staff is being updated: one of the nurses was contacted on March 20, she was evacuated to a refugee camp in Novoazovsk. There is no information about the second nurse. The last contact with the narcology doctor took place on February 28. Center's director has been able to move to Poltava.

### Quote:

*'On March 1, mass shelling started. The shells hit a park and ice-sport complex near the healthcare facility. That is why the personnel had to stay in air-raid shelters all the time. On the first day, a nurse tried to go to the site to do the routine drug dispensing, but shooting started and she returned home. On March 3, there was another attempt to get to the healthcare facility, but the building had been hit by a shell, and steps between the ground floor and the first floor were damaged, the building is in a critical condition. On March 4, a junior nurse was passing the hospital by, and the entrance door and the glass had been blasted out; she tried to enter the building, but she saw it had already been looted: the equipment from the ground floor was not there already, and the first floor was unreachable.'*

*Talking about me, we tried first to get evacuated to another district. On March 4, I came to my apartment and saw the windows had been blown out, window frames badly damaged; in the apartment of my son, balcony caught fire and we extinguished it. But our apartments were*

*actually relatively intact. On March 8, a missile hit the ground near our house, and all the windows were blasted. Approximately in five days, I came to my house and could not get into my apartment, as the door was melted; the same was in my son's apartment — even the metal inside the refrigerator was melted.*

*On March 17, I took the risk to drive from the city taking a mined road through Melekine to Nikolske, and then to Rozivka and Polohy, but there was a bombed out checkpoint, and we had to take a mud road. Between Oriekhovo and Polohy, we were shot at, but everyone is still alive — the shots only damaged the car. Then we reached Zaporizhzhia and got registered. And then we took the route through Dnipro to Tsarychanka to Poltava. Now, I am starting working as a psychiatrist at CNCC 'Poltava Oblast Center for Dependence Therapy of Poltava Oblast Council', there are many differences compared to Mariupol, but I can deal with it...'*

The patients were provided with the drugs that should have been sufficient approximately to March 9. The remains of drugs were evacuated to the town of Manhush, but now this town is controlled by Russians. The situation in the city is critical, but the positive thing is that most OAT patients have joined the Territorial Defence Force and are defending the city.

Employees of NGO '**Our Help**' who work in the city of Mariupol, have not been in touch since February 26. But on March 16, Vitaliy, an OAT patient and staff member from Mariupol, contacted senior social worker of the NGO and informed that he and his family had been able to get out to Melekino. Despite the difficult situation in the town, it is a positive news. The organization replenished Vitaliy's mobile phone account to be able to keep in touch; they are willing to provide any necessary help and support.

## **TUBERCULOSIS**

### **Activities before the war**

In Mariupol, MPSS-TB support activities were implemented by Donetsk Oblast Organization of the Red Cross of Ukraine. The services in the region were provided on the whole of the controlled territory, including in the southern direction — in Mariupol, Manhush, Vuhledar, as well as Volnovakha, Maryinka and Velykonovoselka rayons. As of 1 March 2022, there were **222** clients served in Mariupol area, including 122 with TB and 100 with DR-TB.

### **Activities after the start of the war**

Because of the war, there is no connection with Mariupol area, the roads are blocked, bridges are destroyed, and the settlements where the project is implemented have no mobile connection. The building of the Mariupol City Organization of the URC where the inter-regional coordinator and two case managers used to work is now destroyed. Nothing is known about the personnel: they cannot be reached since March 1, including 23 DOT providers, accountant and driver. The fate of the interregional coordinator, Iryna Yevsikova, is now of great concern, as she takes insulin that cannot be obtained now.

The towns of Mariupol, Maryinka, Nikolske, Manhush, Vuhledar, Volnovakha and nearby villages have been destroyed. Unfortunately, project personnel is not mentioned in the lists of evacuees...

**Quote: Liubov Berezhna, Director of Donetsk Oblast Organization of URC:**

*It is yet unknown whether these people have been able to get out of that hell. In the first days of the war, all clients were informed via phone that during the war all displaced people are to get registered at the new place of stay and continue the treatment. However, considering the present situation, we understand that not everyone can do it. God give them strength to recover after this horror! We are ready to help them, but only after they contact us and we know where they are. For us it is very important that every patient could get consultation from a specialist and TB drugs at any of HCFs in Ukraine regardless of their place of stay during the war.*

*Currently, all the territory of Donetsk oblast is being shelled. We are in despair! We understand that people with tuberculosis need proper nutrition and be in a good emotional condition. In the time of peace, the psychologist conducted many consultations to help people believe in themselves, in their future, to find a sense in life and avoid interrupting treatment. But now the picture is different. The war has come to our land. People suffer from pain, from losing relatives, from the lack of food and medicines. Unfortunately, our clients are forced to stay a lot of time in basements and air-raid shelters, which is dangerous for them. The goal of the project was to reach 100% for indicators of treatment effectiveness. We all did a lot of work to achieve this goal and treat as many people as possible. But today this goal is at risk. We understand that clients who use alcohol may interrupt the TB drug administration scheme, which may lead to unpredictable consequences and poor results. But the most important thing right now is for everyone to stay alive...*

**TARGETED EMERGENCY SUPPORT**



*The Mariupol city theatre was bombed by Russia. This building had been designated as a shelter for civilians. According to the city's mayor there had been up to 1,200 people there. Human Rights Watch, citing interviews with evacuees, put the number between 500 and 800. The exact number of victims is unknown.*



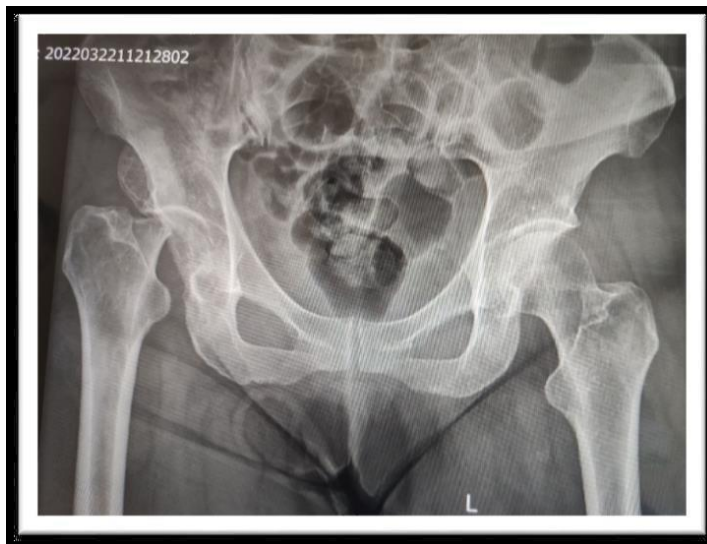
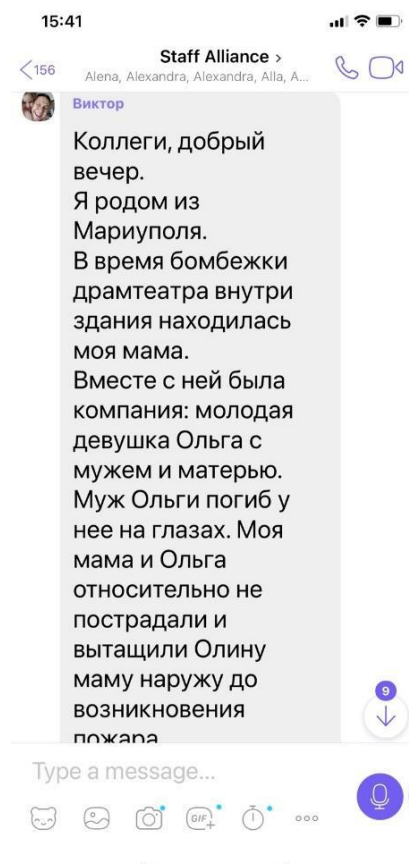
The story of **Olga** was shared in the APH staff chat by native Mariupol staff member Viktor, with alarming request for help. Escaped from Mariupol to Berdyansk with her severely injured mom, she needed help for evacuation to Zaporizhzhya for urgent medical assistance to save her mother.

Here is the story:

*Good evening, dear colleagues!*

*I come from Mariupol. When the Drama Theater in Mariupol was bombed, my mother was inside. She was there with a young woman, Olha, and her husband and mother. They saw Olha's husband perish right there. My mother and Olha came out relatively unharmed, and they were able to help Olha's mother out of the ruins before the fire started. The old lady was severely injured: her legs and pelvic bones were broken (please see X-ray images below). Now, Olha and her mother are in Berdiansk, staying at some local residents. Olha's mother is in urgent need of three surgeries. They are impossible to do in Berdiansk, only X-ray imaging was made there. Volunteers have registered Olha for a bus evacuation to Zaporizhzhia only for March 24 (as seats in the buses are very limited), despite the fact that her mother had those severe injuries. But that would be too late. Olha has agreed with a local man that he would take them to Zaporizhzhia tomorrow. The driver has demanded a very high price of \$500. Dear colleagues, if you can please help Olha and her mother (please see card no. below). Also, if you know some people in Berdiansk capable of taking two people (including one who is bed-bound) in Zaporizhzhia on paid basis, please advise.*

*Thank you. Glory to Ukraine!*



When speaking to Olga last night we heard the story of hell entering her life during last month. She with her family was preparing to be evacuated and came to the Mariupol theatre for half a day; as no evacuation happened and severe shelling started instead they spent 14 days in the theatre. Then it was bombed by Russians. Out of 1300 people hiding in shelter only some 50 managed to escape. Olga recollects



terrible memories of dead bodies and body parts lying all around in the theatre and in the streets. Olga's husband was killed, her mother severely injured. Doctors in Mariupol were held as hostages by Russian soldiers, not allowed to leave the city – to provide medical assistance to Russian soldiers. Olga's house was destroyed. She paid all the money she had to get transported with her injured mom from Mariupol to Berdiansk. She lost everything, her apartment was destroyed and burned with everything left there.



*Photos: Olga's mother:  
before, now and her injuries*

APH used emergency fund kindly provided by Frontline AIDS (UK) to make immediate money transfer to Olga, some APH staff members also made individual donations, so early morning she was able to arrange the transport and already reached the Oblast hospital in Zaporizhzhya. She was crying on the phone, repeating again and again "we are alive, we are in Zaporizhzhya, we escaped from hell". We linked Olga to our implementing partners in Zaporizhzhya to provide further care and support to her and her mom.

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To support our emergency efforts, please donate any amount of money to the following accounts:

Beneficiary: **International Charitable Foundation "Alliance for Public Health"**  
EDRPOU Code: 26333816

**UAH:**

**Name of the bank: JSC "CREDIT AGRICOLE BANK"**

**Current account: UA713006140000026009500198916, Payment purpose: Charity.**

**Details for foreign currency transfers**

Beneficiary: ICF "Alliance for Public Health"

Address: 24 Bulvarno-Kudriavska St., 01601 Kyiv, Ukraine

Bank name: JSC "Credit Agricole Bank"

SWIFT code: AGRUAUKXXX, Bank address: 42/4, Pushkinska St., Kyiv – 01004, Ukraine

**USD (bank correspondent is compulsory):**

Account number: UA073006140000026009500299105

Correspondent bank name: Credit Agricole SA (France)

SWIFT code: AGRIFRPP, Account Number: 20586620000

Correspondent bank address: 12, place des Etats-Unis 92127 Montrouge Cedex, France

**EUR (bank correspondent is not compulsory):**

Account number: UA063006140000026000500198937

Correspondent bank name: Credit Agricole S.A.

SWIFT code: AGRIFRPP, Acc. No.: 20586612000

Correspondent bank address: Paris, France

**GBP (bank correspondent is preferable):**

Account number: UA773006140000026008500198939

Correspondent bank name: Credit Agricole SA (France)

SWIFT code: AGRIFRPP, Acc. No.: 21185549000

Correspondent bank address: 12, place des Etats-Unis 92127 Montrouge Cedex, France

Purpose of Payment: Donation.

**Together we are strong!**

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**CONTACTS**

**ICF “Alliance for Public Health”**

***Andriy Klepikov, Executive Director***

*Cell: +38 050 334 8899 (also Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram)*

*klepikov@aph.org.ua*

***Myroslava Andruschenko, Program Manager: Policy and Advocacy***

*e-mail: [andrushchenko@aph.org.ua](mailto:andrushchenko@aph.org.ua)*

*Cell: +38 067 232 4982 (also Viber, WhatsApp, Telegram)*

[www.aph.org.ua](http://www.aph.org.ua) FB: AlliancePublicHealth