More than one week after the escalation of conflict in Ukraine by Russian armed forces, attacks and bombings continue to cause civilian deaths and force 1.2 million women and children to flee the country. This is generating and exacerbating humanitarian needs in the country, according to USAID.\(^1\)

More than half of the refugees—nearly 650,000 individuals—had fled into Poland, while Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia, and Romania are also receiving large numbers of new arrivals. If the occupation of Ukraine continues, the next wave of refugees will not have the same means and will be forced to rely on the host countries for food, lodging, healthcare, etc. This is now the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the second world war, according to the head of the UN's refugee agency\(^2\).

Filippo Grandi, the UN's high commissioner for refugees says it is a "logistical nightmare", with many more people expected to cross the border. The Romanian government is expected to fund housing costs of 70,000 for 30 days. Moldova has by far the largest concentration of refugees per capita, with almost 4,000 per 100,000 residents. Its president has appealed for international help in dealing with the numbers arriving.\(^3\)

Heart to Heart International's Advance/Assessment Team arrived safely in Bucharest, Romania, on Sunday, March 6, 2022. The team has been meeting with multiple current partners and potential partners to determine their needs and how HHI can best help in this unfolding crisis. The team will be traveling tomorrow to Isaccea and Tulcea, towns on the border where refugees have been crossing from Ukraine into Romania. The team will be meeting with additional partners there and potentially traveling into Moldova to discern needs of groups working in that country. HHI has also been fielding requests from eight different organizations requesting medicines, medical supplies, and hygiene kits. These organizations include nonprofits and departments in the Moldovan and Ukrainian governments. HHI is evaluating and working to fulfill these requests.

“It is a hard situation,” said Wes Comfort, Disaster Response Lead on the Advance/Assessment team in Romania. “People who are crossing over the border are just exhausted in every single meaning of the word—mentally, physically and spiritually.”

“Our mission is to bring help and health access to people in crisis, and that is what we are going to do,” Heart to Heart International CEO Kim Carroll said. “Our hearts are with the people of Ukraine.”

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\(^2\) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/06/ukraine-fastest-growing-refugee-crisis-since-second-world-war
\(^3\) https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60555472