

USAID Assistant Administrator Erin McKee Written Testimony
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
“U.S. Efforts to Support Ukraine Against Russian Aggression”
May 12, 2022

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about USAID’s work to support the people of Ukraine. We are now in the third month of the Kremlin’s senseless, brutal war on Ukraine. A war that has displaced approximately 13.1 million people – approximately 30 percent of Ukraine’s pre-war population – including more than 5.5 million people who have been forced to flee Ukraine, and over 8 million people who are displaced inside the country.

USAID has stood with the Ukrainian people for thirty years and Putin’s war has only deepened our commitment to an independent, democratic Ukraine. We began preparing for a potential crisis long before Russia’s troops initiated its full scale invasion. In the months leading up to the war, USAID, in concert with the interagency, activated a team of experts to develop contingency plans, convene European partners, and identify humanitarian resources for a war we hoped would never come. These early actions enabled us to act quickly as the Kremlin unleashed unthinkable violence on the Ukrainian people.

On day one of the Kremlin’s full scale invasion, USAID deployed a Disaster Assistance Response Team, known as a DART, to the region. The DART, which includes over 25 staff, is leading the U.S. Government’s humanitarian response to help address critical humanitarian needs caused by the invasion, including responding to the needs of those internally displaced. These efforts have achieved quick results, including emergency food assistance for more than 3.2 million people and access to safe drinking water for nearly 409,000 people in Ukraine.

USAID Administrator Samantha Power has taken multiple trips to the region, beginning as early as February 25 with a visit to Warsaw, Krakow, and Brussels, to reaffirm USAID’s commitment to the Ukrainian people as they courageously fight to safeguard Ukraine’s sovereignty and democratic future. Her visit to Brussels and her frequent and close collaboration with European Union allies over the past three months have further strengthened the agency’s partnership with the EU to meet the escalating needs of the Ukrainian people and the wider region. In April, Administrator Power visited Slovakia and Moldova to witness firsthand the tremendous generosity demonstrated by partner governments and citizens to support Ukrainians forced to flee their country. In Moldova, the Administrator announced an additional \$50 million of economic and development assistance to bolster Moldova’s resilience to the impact of Putin’s brutal war.

Our response is focused on helping to address the urgent humanitarian needs created by this war, while also supporting the Government of Ukraine and preserving their ability to govern on behalf of the Ukrainian people.

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USAID has acted quickly and decisively to utilize funding from the FY 2022 Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act to respond to emergency needs in Ukraine and the region. Our \$1 billion contribution to the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund, \$500 million of which has already been transferred, will enable the Ukrainian government to continue operating and responding to the critical needs of their people – keeping gas and electricity flowing to hospitals, schools, and other critical infrastructure; delivering essential services like healthcare, utilities, education, delivering relief supplies to citizens; and continuing to pay the salaries of government employees. Working with Congress, USAID also plans to use approximately \$230 million in supplemental funding to expand existing programming and respond to current and anticipated needs in Ukraine. These efforts include supporting agricultural production, helping businesses operate safely, and partnering with local and regional governments as they respond to immediate needs in their communities, and continuing to enable the Ministry of Health to provide lifesaving care to Ukrainians across the country.

Since February 24th, the U.S. Government has provided \$688 million in humanitarian assistance to respond to the needs of people in Ukraine and those who have fled to neighboring countries, including nearly \$477 million from USAID. This life-saving assistance includes food, shelter, clean water, and medical supplies. In coordination with our partners, USAID is adjusting our response to meet evolving needs on the ground. Thanks to these efforts, and with the support of Congress, we have reached approximately 3.9 million people with food assistance, more than 956,000 individuals with health services, approximately 377,000 people with cash assistance; and more than 305,000 people with protection services thus far. The DART also facilitates coordination between humanitarian organizations and the Government of Ukraine to maximize the effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

Russia’s brutal war is having a wide-reaching impact on Ukraine, the region, and the world. Through the President’s second supplemental budget request, the Administration is seeking additional direct budget support for the Government of Ukraine and funding to address the global food crisis instigated by the Kremlin and for anticipated humanitarian needs. Russia’s war is having a substantial impact on global food security and nutrition due to disruptions to food and fertilizer supplies and subsequent price increases in these commodities, along with fuel. Available estimates suggest that up to 40 million additional people could be pushed into poverty and food insecurity in 2022 by the war in Ukraine and its secondary effects. More broadly, the World Bank estimates that the combination of COVID, inflation, and Ukraine will result in 75-95 million more people in extreme poverty in 2022 than were expected pre-pandemic. If not mitigated, these price increases on food, commodities, and fertilizer will likely diminish crop production, reduce agricultural productivity and incomes, and further undermine families’ abilities in the poorest countries to access nutritious food, which could lead to significant increases in global poverty, hunger and malnutrition in many countries around the world. The

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emergency funding request will also provide additional support to vulnerable countries in the region at a critical time, support global food security, buffer the poorest households from inflationary impacts by scaling up social protection and safety nets, and support regional, national, and community responses to higher prices and supply disruptions.

Even as we step up our humanitarian efforts, we also remain steadfast in our commitment to Ukraine’s independent, democratic, and more prosperous future. Ukraine’s economy, infrastructure, and democratic institutions have all been targets of Putin’s brutal military assault. The Ukrainian government requires budgetary assistance to ensure it can continue operating, respond to critical needs, and deliver essential services to its citizens. USAID assistance in these areas is crucial to preventing Russia’s war of aggression from incapacitating Ukraine’s state and society.

With over 40 active programs and 700 implementing partner staff still in country, USAID programs continue to operate and evolve to respond to the emergency needs created by Russia’s full scale invasion. Our programs are helping Ukraine defend itself against other tools of Kremlin aggression such as cyberattacks and disinformation. USAID is also working to keep electricity and heat flowing to Ukrainian homes, sustain democratic reforms, and ensure essential medicines are available for people in need.

We plan to invest an additional \$5 million, of which \$4 million is from supplemental funding for Ukraine, into our human rights activity to further enable the government and civil society organizations to document human rights abuses, including atrocities. The additional funds will build on previous efforts USAID undertook with the Ukrainian government and two civil society coalitions to document human rights abuses in Crimea and Donbas since 2014 through 22 Legal Aid Centers and 70 lawyers on staff in Kyiv, eastern and southern Ukraine, ready to provide 24/7 legal assistance and information to conflict-affected civilians.

As we seek to address the short and medium term impacts of the war, we have already begun looking toward the future, planning support for Ukrainian-led efforts towards relief, recovery, and reconstruction. While we anticipate that the European Union, multilateral institutions, and international financial institutions will play a major role in reconstruction efforts, USAID will also provide critical support to rehabilitate and revitalize social institutions, such as schools, health clinics, and local administrative buildings that have been damaged during the war. Over the eight years before the war, USAID support has helped Ukraine improve both their democratic governance and market economy systems, two main criteria for EU membership. USAID is positioned to resume this important work. Our programs will facilitate combating corruption, strengthening health systems and services, diversifying the energy sector, and accelerating corporate governance reforms, clearing a path for the Ukrainian people to realize their vision of

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an independent, democratic, prosperous, and healthy Ukraine united around core European values.

The consequences of Putin’s unprovoked, unjustified war in Ukraine extend beyond the battlefield, beyond Ukraine, and beyond Europe. While Vladimir Putin is leaning on noxious lies and disinformation to justify a war of aggression, the United States, through the generosity of the American people, is defending the Ukrainian people in their courageous fight for basic human rights, democracy, and self-determination. USAID is proud to stand with the Ukrainian people and we are grateful for the support from Congress. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions.