
Amidst the rubble of Kyiv's Children's Hospital. The head of intensive care: "We will not surrender to death"



(from Kyiv) Stuffed animals lying on the ground, covered by the rubble. Dolls, toys and toy cars placed in white bags and left on the pavements, amidst the rubble, the dust and the iron bars. The rubble is everywhere. Even the colourful murals that had been painted to welcome the little patients to the hospital have been wrecked by shrapnel. The stench of burnt material still lingers in the hospital compound. Smoke billows from the blackened pine trees at the entrance. City workers are busy clearing the site. Digging continues. They clean the rubble. Big yellow trucks remove the heaviest pieces of debris. But the damage is enormous. A whole ward has been rendered completely unusable and will have to be torn down and rebuilt from scratch. **Serhiy Chernyshuk**, head of the intensive care unit at the Okhmatdyt Hospital, the largest children's hospital in Ukraine, assesses the damage and describes the hellish events of Monday 8 July when a Russian missile hit the building. It is he who welcomes the delegation representing MEAN, the European Nonviolence Movement. The Italian volunteers - representing various civil society organisations, associations and movements - had wished, as the first leg of their mission to Kyiv, to pay homage to the victims and to the tremendous effort of resilience made by the hospital's medical and healthcare staff. The missile was aimed at and hit the dialysis unit and the intensive care unit," says the intensive care medicine head. At the risk of their own lives, the doctors were able to move the young patients hooked up to the machines to safety. The surgical ward, where the doctors were operating at the time of the attack, was also struck. But the medical staff shielded the young patients with their bodies. Then, having rescued them all, even though they were injured, they went on to rescue those under the rubble". One of the victims was a very young doctor. Five doctors were seriously wounded. The hospital was a beacon of Ukrainian health care, a high-level health facility with state-of-the-art equipment and medical care for the entire population. Some 600 children were receiving treatment there before the attack. Following Monday's attack, 80% of the hospital complex is currently inoperable. Those patients who were able to return home were discharged. The remaining patients have been transferred to other medical facilities. It is now imperative to reopen the hospital to young patients as soon as possible. "Thanks to the dedication of the medical staff, the efforts of the health workers, and the assistance we are receiving from abroad, we are working towards restoring the hospital's full functionality. This will be done as quickly as possible."

"Some treatments are exclusively available at this facility for the whole of Ukraine. It is therefore vital to restore the hospital's functionality."



The barrage of missiles fired by Russian forces on Monday morning was one of the deadliest in

[many months. A total of 41 fatalities were reported in three cities, including the capital Kyiv, with over 170 people sustaining injuries across the country. Two civilian hospitals in Kyiv were struck: the Okhmatdyt Hospital and a privately owned maternity clinic on the opposite bank of the Dnipro River. The attack resulted in five dead and eight wounded. "The targeting of hospitals is an attack on the most vulnerable areas of society," states the head of intensive care. "Nevertheless, we are resolved not to capitulate. We are engaged in the defence of our homeland and have no choice but to remain here. We must either annihilate our enemy or we ourselves will perish. We have no alternative."](#)

