

Ukraine Will Face Severe Hardship if Russia Targets Its Energy Grid This Winter, UN Warns

By [AFP](#)

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Trypil'ska thermal power plant in the Kyiv region after an attack. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

The United Nations warned Friday that renewed Russian strikes on Ukraine's battered energy infrastructure could bring severe hardship and trigger further mass displacement.

"If they were to target the energy sector again, this could be a tipping point," said Matthias Schmale, the UN's humanitarian coordinator in Ukraine. Such attacks, he added, could "tip the scale for further mass movement, both inside the country and outside."

Russia's invasion, now approaching its 1,000th day, has already displaced 3.7 million people within Ukraine and forced 6.7 million to flee as refugees, according to UN data. The war has killed over 12,000 people and left nearly 40% of the population in need of humanitarian aid.

Ukraine faces what could be its harshest winter yet, with 65% of its energy production

capacity destroyed by Russian attacks. While temperatures are not expected to drop as low as last year, the extensive damage to infrastructure could leave millions without power, heating and water.

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Schmale said the widespread destruction has made the situation “far worse than last winter.” He raised concerns about prolonged power outages in urban areas, particularly for those living in high-rise buildings.

“You can’t deliver solid fuel to people in high-rises if the power grid fails,” Schmale explained, highlighting the limitations of emergency shelters that provide warm meals and showers. “That, of course, is not enough.”

The UN is appealing for additional funding toward its \$500 million winter response plan, which is only 50% funded. So far, the organization has reached 7.2 million Ukrainians with some form of humanitarian aid this year, though overall funding has sharply declined compared to the war’s first year.

“This is a race against time,” Schmale said, urging international donors to step up support.

The UN has received \$1.8 billion of the \$3 billion requested for humanitarian aid in Ukraine this year. In 2022, funding surpassed \$4 billion, underscoring the declining trend in financial support as the war grinds on.

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