

VIDEO: Ukraine in panic over swine flu

By [Global Research](#)

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In-depth Report: [THE H1N1 SWINE FLU PANDEMIC](#)

Health Officials in Ukraine say the death toll from a suspected swine flu outbreak has reached 144. Almost a million people are thought to be infected, mostly in the west of the country.

As the death toll from respiratory diseases continues to rise, panic is spreading among the population. Although the country's capital remains so far untouched by the outbreak, it's impossible to find anti-flu drugs in Kiev's pharmacies.

Roughly every third citizen there wears a protective mask. At times home-made ones, as they're also a rare commodity in drug-stores. Angry people are pointing fingers at everyone – from drug store owners to authorities – for the lack of medication. However, officials say that it's the people who are responsible for the problem.

"The medication is ordered based on a calculation of adequate supply of treatment and preventive therapy drugs per person. If people buy ten times more than they require in a fit of panic, any forecast of this process becomes useless," says Denis Shevchenko, chairman of the Pharmaceuticals Distribution Association.

RT witnessed a supply of medication arriving at one of the pharmacies. But the stock was gone almost as quickly as it arrived.

On Sunday, the country's leadership called on other countries to help Ukraine in the fight against the epidemic, as it has now been classed as a threat to national security. A supply of 200,000 respirators was delivered from Slovakia. Last Monday morning, crates with 300,000 doses of the Tamiflu drug – crucial in tackling swine flu – arrived from Switzerland. Given that it could be the only remedy for those infected, Prime-Minister Timoshenko took a hard-line on its distribution.

"These medications have been imported at a wholesale price of \$8 per pack. And what I'm holding in my hand now is what our Foreign Minister purchased in a pharmacy the other day for almost \$750, and this package contains 10 packs. This means that 1 pack is sold at \$75. These swindlers in privately-owned pharmacies are selling it to people at ten times the price," she told journalists on Friday.

Over a hundred have died since the outbreak of the virus last week. But it's still unclear exactly what killed those Ukrainians. Only some are confirmed as a result of AH1N1, the rest are blamed on respiratory diseases. Even so, talks over imposing a state of emergency in

the country are surfacing from the highest levels. Should that happen, the upcoming presidential vote could be shifted from the middle of the next January to the end of May.

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