

Fact Sheet on Ukraine and Eastern Europe Relief

May 2, 2022

BACKGROUND

On Feb. 24, Russia invaded Ukraine, spurring a war that has claimed thousands of lives and sparked a humanitarian disaster. The overall situation continues to deteriorate across Ukraine, driving a significant need for humanitarian aid. The war continues to result in civilian deaths and generate mass population displacement and damage to infrastructure.

Shelter. According to the United Nations:

- The war has displaced more than 1 in 4 Ukrainians, including more than 5.5 million refugees and 7.7 million internally displaced within Ukraine.
- Nearly two-thirds of Ukraine's children fled their homes within the first six weeks of the invasion.
- More than half of internally displaced families include children, 57% have elderly members and 30% include people with chronic illnesses.

Food Insecurity. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) warns of a looming increase in food insecurity with the strong likelihood of emergency levels of hunger and malnutrition due to disruptions in supply chains. Global estimates show higher food prices could push as many as 10 million more people worldwide into poverty.

Catholic Sites. The war has also impacted many Catholic sites within Ukraine. In March, a tank fired on a Caritas office in Mariupol, killing seven people. In Vorzel, on the outskirts of Kyiv, a seminary was bombed and looted. Among the items stolen was a silver chalice used by St. John Paul II during his 2001 visit to Ukraine. According to the Holy See press office: "There is great need for coordination, good organization, and shared strategy, in order to embrace people's sufferings and provide effective relief."

OUR RESPONSE

Cross Catholic Outreach is empowering a network of Catholic partners in Ukraine and Eastern Europe who have a strong understanding of the needs and challenges arising from this humanitarian disaster.

Cross Catholic Outreach is collaborating with **Cardinal Konrad Krajewski** from the **Office of Papal Charities**, and in the name of the Holy Father, to provide food, clothing, generators, ambulances and other relief to internally displaced families and refugees.



We are also working with **Caritas in Veritate** to provide displaced families with food, water, baby formula, blankets, and sanitary kits at three centers in Ukraine in the communities of Lutsk, Struga and Nowa Uszyca. In addition, we have contacted other Catholic charities focusing on the care and resettlement of refugees, and we intend to make those needs a priority.

POPE FRANCIS' BLESSING FOR CROSS CATHOLIC OUTREACH

In April, Pope Francis imparted a special Apostolic Blessing for Cross Catholic Outreach, recognizing the ministry's support of Ukraine's children and families. In a letter, Cardinal Krajewski wrote: **"I carry with this venerable gift the thanks of Pope Francis himself for this concrete support of his pastoral initiative and [the Holy Father] imparts to your ministry a special Apostolic Blessing for grace and divine consolation that from his heart he imparts to you and all the staff of Cross Catholic Outreach."**

OUR HISTORY OF SERVICE

Cross Catholic Outreach is an official Catholic ministry that partners with bishops, priests, and religious and lay workers, mobilizing the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ. Since 2001, Cross Catholic Outreach has helped transform communities and lives in more than 85 countries with \$3.3 billion in total aid.

Cross Catholic Outreach has a long history of standing with the Church to defend the world's most vulnerable people during times of turmoil. Disaster relief responses have included building safe homes following devastating earthquakes in Haiti in 2010 and 2021, hurricane relief in places such as Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, and emergency food and medical supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CALL TO ACTION

Visit CrossCatholic.org to support Cross Catholic Outreach's humanitarian outreach in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. Please continue to pray for the people of Ukraine and our ministry partners who boldly serve those in need in the name of Christ.

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