

MARCH 21, 2023

CARE Ukraine Crisis Update

Observing a solemn anniversary

Preceded by a visit from President Biden, the one-year mark of the Ukraine conflict did not pass unnoticed by the world. Writing in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, columnist William Lambers said: “President Biden’s recent surprise visit to Ukraine must be backed up by robust humanitarian aid.”

Writing *The Independent* (UK), Bianca Jagger noted “86 per cent of those forced to flee Ukraine to other parts of Europe are women and children,” while one of those women, CARE’s Daria Khrystenko (see story pg. 2) made an appearance on CNN International’s “First Move with Julia Chatterly.”

“[I want to] talk about how thankful we are for all the support that has been given to us,” she said, “and how important it has been, and how important it is still now for all the support – for the refugees in foreign countries, and for internally displaced people in Ukraine.”



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Daria's story: "I left everything."

By Daria Khrystenko, as told to Raegan Hodge

That morning. I remember. I remember what I did, how I packed, how I woke my son up, how we went out, step-by-step. I think I will always remember it. I'll never forget it.

My friend called me. She lived in the same neighborhood as I did, and she heard explosions, too. She told me that the war had started.

I didn't know what to expect, but I was afraid to stay in Kyiv. I just wanted to get out of the city as soon as possible, so I just took whatever I found first in my wardrobe and packed everything in the suitcase, not even thinking what. We only had 20 minutes.

I grabbed my son. We grabbed one suitcase. I left everything else.

"We left Kyiv"



Everyone was trying to get out, but everyone was on the road at the same time. A few hours later, my friend got stuck in traffic for seven hours. They couldn't move at all. The whole city was just blocked.

Luckily, we managed to leave earlier. People who left just 20 minutes later, who were 20 minutes further away from the border, they didn't survive.

As soon as we crossed the border, we had to think where we'd go next. It was so strange. We were on the road, and we were discussing what country to go to, where to stay. We had no idea. We didn't have relatives, no friends or family members who could host us in another country, so we were just driving and talking.

We ended up in Romania. My mother has a heart issue, and, unfortunately, in Romania her health got worse. She had to be in the hospital for several days, and the hospital was in the mountains. There was no Internet, there was no Google Translate, the doctors didn't speak English. We would just use sign language.

It was at that moment, when I was talking to the doctors, I realized that we need to go to a country where I could speak the language. So that was our choice. We would go to Poland.

Poland is home now

I don't see Kyiv as my home anymore, at least not at this moment. It is so unsafe. It is so dangerous there that just no matter how much I want to go back home, no matter how much I want to be in my apartment, it's not the apartment I was in before. It is not the place it was.

This year, every time we celebrated a birthday — my birthday and my son's birthday and Christmas — every time we would blow candles out, there was only one dream. Only one wish. For the war to end.



Driven into the basement, then across the border: Natalia's story

By Natalia, as told to Daria Khrystenko

At 5 a.m., we heard the explosions. At 5:11, my sister called me. She saw an explosion from her balcony, and she asked me what to do.

My husband and I bought our house in October, and we had a very good basement, so I told her to take her son and come to my house. Eventually, there were eight people in the house — me, my husband, my mother-in-law, my sister with her son, my daughter, my son, and my daughter's friend.

On the fifth day, we decided to go out to buy some bread. We didn't find bread, but we bought some grains, sugar, salt, all the necessary things.

"That was the day when the city hall was blown up"

We didn't know where to go or what to do, but my sister talked to her boss and found out that there would be an evacuation train in Kharkiv leaving in 40 minutes. We took only our backpacks. My daughter was still in her pajamas. My mother didn't want to go, so she stayed behind.

When we got there, the train was already closed. My husband asked the national guard to open the door, but the train was full, so they didn't.



But my husband asked again, one more time, and they opened the door. Six of us got in.

My husband didn't come with us, though. He went back to stay with my mother.

We arrived in Warsaw on March 2. I want to go home, but Kharkiv is still heavily bombarded. My son's school was destroyed. The shelling doesn't stop. My neighbor's son is staying in our house, because they don't have a house anymore.

I have worked as a teacher for almost 20 years. For the past four years I had been working as a teacher at the National Technical University, Kharkiv Polytechnical Institute. Now, I have a post not really close to what I've trained for, but I'm lucky to have it.

“In Warsaw, there aren't jobs for women, especially if you don't know the language.”

In the school where I work now, there are two classes with Ukrainian children. One class is children from 10th and 11th grades, and the other class is ninth grade. So I am with these children and I help them.

I think it's good that these children have someone who can help them, someone who is on their side. I understand. You realize that your life was taken from you. Beautiful life. Happy life. You have to start it all over.

You can find longer versions of this issue's stories, along with videos of Daria's return to Kyiv, at CARE.org.

BY THE NUMBERS

19,505,596

refugees fleeing Ukraine since Feb. 24¹
(Up 4.92% from Feb. 14 update)

5.4 million

internally displaced²
(Down 8.69% from Dec. 20 update)

Neighboring countries receiving refugee influx:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Poland: 10.17M ¹ | 4. Romania: 2.09M ⁴ |
| 2. Russian Federation: 2.85M ³ | 5. Slovakia: 1.24M ⁵ |
| 3. Hungary: 2.35M ¹ | 6. Moldova: 788K ⁴ |
| | 7. Belarus: 17K ⁶ |

13,734

civilians injured⁷
(Up 16.83% from Jan. 13 update)

859

healthcare facilities damaged or destroyed⁸ (Up 11.7% from Feb. 16 update)

2,528

education facilities damaged or destroyed⁹ (No new reporting since Sept. 2022)

SOURCES

¹UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Mar. 14, 2023; ²International Organization for Migration (IOM), Jan. 23, 2023; ³UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Oct. 3, 2022; ⁴UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Mar. 12; ⁵UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Mar. 13; ⁶UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), Mar. 7; ⁷UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), Feb. 16; ⁸World Health Organization (WHO), Feb.16; ⁹Multiple Sources, Sept. 21, 2022.

