

Hands of Hope



A humanitarian appeal of Seventh Day Adventist church/Inter-European Division, Trans-European Division and ADRA Europe for people affected by Ukraine Crisis

Brussels, 11th March 2022.

ADRA and the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Europe express their profound concern for the people affected by the armed conflict in Ukraine. These are circumstances where our mission invites an immediate and focussed response.

ADRA Europe's constituents, supported by their respective national authorities, charitable agencies, churches, and individual donors, are deeply moved by the flight of fear-filled people. These are mainly women and children who were forced to leave their homes and families, depending on the mercy and goodwill of others. Beyond question, they are our neighbours.

Together with other agencies, we will continue to respond to their needs, supporting those fleeing from war. At the same time, we call upon the global community to ensure that core humanitarian principles are respected in Ukraine and the surrounding countries.

Call to ensure humanitarian principles in Ukraine

According to the United Nations (UN), more than two million people have already fled Ukraine. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has called it an *exodus*, the **fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War Two**. In addition, there are an estimated 6.7 million people displaced within the country. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 18 million people are likely to be affected by this emergency.

Before the latest developments, 2.9 million people in eastern Ukraine were dependent on humanitarian aid. The current escalation led to mass migration towards the neighbouring countries of Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, and Moldova. It is the civilian population who are bearing the consequences of this war, as infrastructure and public services are collapsing.

It has proven difficult to ensure the protection of civilians under humanitarian principles due to limited access and distribution. It is vital to have unrestricted access in compliance with international humanitarian law to those in need in order to protect them from violence and provide neutral and non-political assistance without distinction, enabling them to live with dignity. We call for a peaceful end to the war to prevent further suffering.

Humanitarian principles, such as humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, do not allow us to choose or prioritise the recipients of aid. It is our moral duty to help all those in need. International humanitarian law applies in Ukraine and similar situations in our world, which should not be forgotten at this challenging time. Our plea is to ensure a principled response in Ukraine and other humanitarian crises around the world.

ADRA teams on the front lines

We have and will continue to respond to the needs of displaced people. With the involvement of hundreds of Adventist volunteers, ADRA's teams currently provide humanitarian support in Ukraine, neighbouring countries, and host communities.

Our activities include:

- humanitarian aid transport and distribution (food and non-food items)
- cash support
- distribution of welcome packages on the borders and in host communities
- accommodation for the refugees and internally displaced people
- transporting refugees to their final destination
- basic medical support
- health checks
- small children and baby care
- education in emergencies
- protection activities like safe places for women and children
- care for the elderly and disabled,
- mental health support (in-person and online)
- charging communication devices, power banks
- legal advice
- support for host families
- food trucks

ADRA Europe, ADRA International networks and Seventh-day Adventist communities from around the world will continue to support those on the front line through the financial and material resources they collect. In time, it is our hope and prayer that those we assist will be reunited with their loved ones and able to return to their homeland.

ADRA Europe is inspired by the biblical promises to exiles, including:

**For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand,
Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'**

(Isaiah 41:13)