

## The Global Church stands in solidarity with Ukraine one year on

Nearly 15 months after Russian troops first invaded Ukraine, the war continues to rage on. From the very beginning, churches in Ukraine and bordering countries have been the first to respond during these times of desperate need. Supported by an outpouring of resources, compassion, and prayer from around the world, our courageous brothers and sisters in Christ on the front lines have served in numerous ways: opening churches as epicenters of response, providing humanitarian aid and medical assistance, offering trauma therapy and counseling, and expressing the truth of God's love to everyone. We have seen the power of unity when we come together as one body in Christ.

As we continue to stand with and care for the war-affected and those serving them, we remain steadfast in our call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from the whole territory of Ukraine as the quickest way to end this war and in our prayer for peace, healing, and restoration.

### Read more:

[Evangelicals Issue a Joint Statement on Ukraine One Year After the Full-Scale Russian Invasion](#)



Supporting  
**35 partner networks**  
**in 8 countries,**  
representing over 20,000  
local churches



Together, they have served  
**over 3 million**  
people and counting



## Urgent needs remain in an intensifying war

The war in Ukraine continues to intensify as fighting is building up in Eastern Ukraine. In the first year of the war, OHCHR reports that, tragically, there have been at least 22,000 confirmed civilian casualties, with verification of thousands of casualties still pending - the agency believes the actual number to be considerably higher.<sup>4</sup> Those who remain in Ukraine live under constant fear of attack and missile strikes regardless of their proximity to the front lines. The mental toll has been very alarming, especially for children. An estimated 15 million Ukrainians are in need of psycho-social support because of the war.<sup>5</sup> Over one hundred thousand Ukrainian troops have been estimated to be killed or wounded, with Russian losses of more than two hundred thousand soldiers killed and wounded.<sup>6</sup> The war has caused mass destruction of civilian and religious infrastructure and decimated essential services, including energy, water supply, and heating.

<sup>1,2,5</sup> UNOCHA, [accessed on April 24, 2023](#)

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Religious Freedom, <https://irf.in.ua/p/105>

<sup>4</sup> OHCHR, [accessed on April 24, 2023](#)

<sup>6</sup> Associated Press, [The Calculus of War: Tallying Ukraine toll an elusive task](#)



**13.4 million**  
refugees and internally  
displaced people<sup>2</sup>



**17.7 million**  
people in need of  
humanitarian aid  
and protection<sup>1</sup>



**At least 494**  
religious buildings, theological  
institutions, and sacred places  
were wholly destroyed, damaged,  
or looted by the Russian military<sup>3</sup>

# Strengthening the local church on the frontlines

## A Ukrainian Pastor's dilemma

Local pastors and the churches they lead on the frontlines are experiencing unprecedented challenges. They are courageously responding to the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of their communities while risking their own safety and living under constant threat. In a time of great need, this is also an opportunity to share the love of Jesus Christ so that many more will come to know Him.

*The invitation is open to our global Evangelical family to join them and support their efforts.*

## How you can help

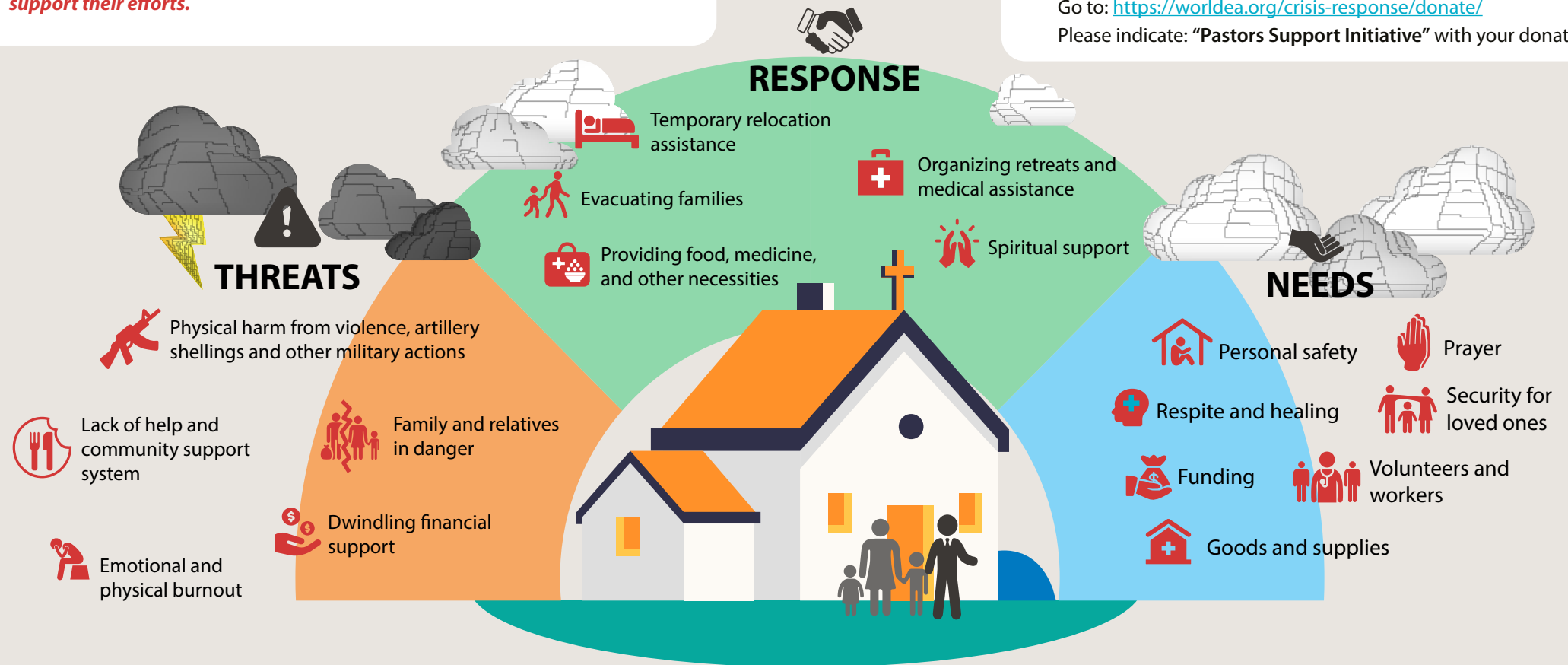
### Prayer

- For strength, wisdom, and rest for pastors, workers, and volunteers.
- For protection for their family, relatives, and their communities.
- For the war-affected to know and experience the love of Jesus Christ.

### Financial support

Go to: <https://worlddea.org/crisis-response/donate/>

Please indicate: "Pastors Support Initiative" with your donation.



## Bringing respite and support to vulnerable pastors and local churches



The Council of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Ukraine is providing ongoing support for Ukrainian pastors who are serving under extremely vulnerable circumstances, which includes those in close proximity to the front lines, in de-occupied territories, or who were directly impacted by the war and suffered loss.

The Council is an interdenominational network that brings together 12 denominations, uniting 10,000 Ukrainian churches. The Council aims to stand with pastors as they lead their congregations through difficult times and strengthen the capacity of the local church to help affected people in their communities.

Recently, together with the Council, TRUST launched a new initiative to provide support for Ukrainian pastors who serve in vulnerable situations - close to the front lines, in the de-occupied territories, or were severely affected by the war, and thus strengthen the capacity of local churches to help people in their communities. We are providing support through two major initiatives: 1) Provide respite for pastors so they can have a period of rest and restoration away from their day-to-day duties, and 2) Assist the local church with urgent and practical needs such as the provision of funding and resources. The initiative's first phase includes support for 322 pastors from 13 Evangelical denominations in Ukraine.

## Profiles of faithfulness and service

### Stepan Kozodoy



Stepan Kozodoy is a deacon of the "Grace" Church in Lysychansk, Luhansk region. For almost a year now, his city has been occupied by Russian soldiers. His beloved streets and houses have been destroyed by hostilities. His House of Prayer and his native home have been looted.

When Russian troops invaded Ukraine last year, the "Grace" Church was prepared. For several months people gathered daily near the House of Prayer. They were tirelessly reminded of the Gospel and supported their community in many ways, including providing food, medicine, and evacuation. On May 1, several shells fell near the church. Stepan left the city, though he continued to bring aid there and take people out almost until the end of June. On the 28th of June, Russians completely occupied the city.

*"Because of these circumstances, God strengthened me a lot and forced me to rely more on His hand. People wonder, how can one endure such grief and loss as we have had in the last year? And I answer: without hope in God – no way. He gave, He took and is preparing something better."*

Now Stepan, together with his wife and youngest son, live in Svalyava, Zakarpattia Oblast, though they, like so many others, were not immune to loss. His son-in-law tragically died while evacuating people from Irpin to Kyiv.

To this day, Stepan continues to care for his church members. He regularly drives a truck with humanitarian aid to cities with the most internally displaced persons. The need is acute. He describes the need as a "bottomless pit." It is difficult to share the Gospel when people are in extreme grief and need. Many of them were left without a home, and many more lost relatives.

Yet, despite all the challenges, Stepan says, "because of these circumstances, God strengthened me a lot and forced me to rely more on His hand. People wonder, how can one endure such grief and loss as we have had in the last year? And I answer: without hope in God – no way. He gave, He took, and is preparing something better."

He continues to share: "During the war, we became more confident in God, increased trust in Him, increased reliance on Him. These blessings are greater than anything material. I currently have two T-shirts, three pairs of pants and a jacket in my wardrobe. This is enough."







## Volodymyr Semenov



*"This time will pass like a thief in the night. And we, as believers, cannot miss this moment – to show God's goodness in the contrast with evil. Such a great contrast!"*

Currently, about 200 people regularly attend Volodymyr's church to worship. Volodymyr will also travel to the outskirts of Selydove to preach the Word to communities where deadly spiritual darkness has been reigning for many years.

*"This time will pass like a thief in the night. And we, as believers, cannot miss this moment – to show God's goodness in contrast with evil. Such a great contrast!", proclaims Volodymyr.*



For 25 years, Volodymyr Semenov has been a missionary and minister for the people of Selydove, a city located 40 km from Donetsk. He has been living on the front lines with his wife for nine years - since the very beginning of the war in Donbas and continues to sow the Living Word in the hearts of those around him. At 70 years old, there is little sign that Volodymyr is slowing down even as challenges mount.

Since the Russian invasion, life and ministry have become very difficult. Fighting had taken place very close to his home, causing massive disruptions to essential services like water and electricity. A large reservoir has been installed at Volodymyr's church where community members can access drinking water. During the freezing winter, when the power went out, the church, by God's grace, was also equipped with small heating stoves that people could gather around to warm themselves.



## Olexandr Usatyuk



On February 24, 2022, Olexandr Usatyuk, a pastor of the "Salvation" church in Irpin, went to Vorzel, near Bucha, where his church members were hiding in a basement. Together with his wife and son, they went there to bring food but could not return because the district came under massive shelling. Four buildings around them were hit by Russian missiles and burned to the ground. Miraculously, the house where they hid remained untouched.

On the eighth day, Olexandr and his church members decided to leave the basement, but after they got into their cars and drove just 50 meters, Russian soldiers opened fire on them. Bullets damaged the cars, and they were forced to hide underground again. This time they found shelter in another basement, where 42 people lived with minimal food and water.

Olexandr and those he was with were in the most danger during the so-called "mop up" - when Russians swept the streets and shot everyone they saw, while also throwing grenades into places where they thought civilians were hiding. "I can't explain how it happened, but in those days, we felt a special presence of God," -Olexandr recalls. "I believed everyone would survive."

*"I can't explain how it happened, but in those days, we felt a special presence of God. I believed everyone would survive."*

The miraculous salvation came on the 14th day. Several church ministers managed to get through the city, full of enemy forces, to find and evacuate Olexandr and his family. Today, Irpin, Vorzel, and Bucha are all liberated. You'll find Olexandr there, continuing to serve people who, like him, survived the horrors of occupation.





## TRUST partners and how we work

WEA is partnering with **35** alliances, denominations, and networks in 8 countries, which represent more than **20,000 Evangelical congregations**, to support the church as it serves people affected by the war.



### Partner Spotlight

## Children's Mission: Helping to overcome trauma

Soon after the Russian Invasion, Children's Mission (CM) - a Ukrainian NGO - lept into action. While they had little experience working in conflict contexts, they knew they could lean on their expertise in serving children. The staff of CM quickly found avenues to support overwhelmed ministers by supplying Bible lessons that could be taught to children. As this was ongoing, CM also realized they could do more, especially with a growing need for trauma care.

CM eventually partnered with OpSAFE and were trained to conduct OpSAFE camps, which are organized similarly to vacation Bible schools. OpSAFE camps provide space and activities for children to express their emotions and learn how to cope with stressful situations in healthy ways.

Now, CM is training independent teams all over Ukraine to organize OpSAFE camps so more children can begin to heal and recover from trauma caused by the war.

For example, in Mykolayiv, a city near Kherson in the south of Ukraine, a small team of volunteers led by Dymtro Son is bringing smiles back to children who have endured the horrors of war through OpSAFE camps. In February 2023, Dymtro heard about the OpSAFE Trauma Care Program and how it helps people express their emotions and cope with constant stress. As the situation in Mykolayiv has become safer, Dymtro's team wanted to start a 10-day OpSAFE Curriculum for their Sunday Schools. However, when they reached out to the OpSAFE project coordinator, it was clear that Dymtro and his team first needed to receive trauma care themselves before implementing the program for others. They joined an express course on understanding trauma from CM, where CM trainers listened to Dymtro and his team's stories of survival. After sharing and experiencing such care, Dymtro noticed he could smile again, as did the team. They realized how impactful trauma care can be for their community, especially children.

So far, Dymtro and his team have led two OpSAFE meetings with 15 children. They are already noticing changes - the children are starting to smile more. Praise the Lord!

The same is also happening in the city of Dnipro, where missile alerts still sound 3-5 times a day. At OpSAFE camps, children find their way back to childhood through activities such as doing arts and crafts, learning Bible verses, or role-playing stories from the Bible. Hope is being restored as God is moving and touching hearts.

### **Read more about Children's Mission and OpSAFE:**

<https://worldia.org/news/20299/trauma-care-ministry-brings-healing-and-hope-to-children-in-ukraine/>





## WEA Networks in action

### Peace and Reconciliation Network

#### *Seeding counseling centers and trauma-care for those displaced by war*

As the war in Ukraine moves into its second year, the Peace and Reconciliation Network (PRN) continues to collaborate with other WEA Public Engagement ministries to assess what is needed to strengthen Evangelical Alliances and their leadership.

PRN has established and financially seeded counseling centers in Europe and North America that provide trauma care for those displaced by the war, resourcing local churches and community leaders in being trauma-responsive and becoming hubs for the ongoing development of peace and reconciliation in their context. The desire is to see more centers formed over the next months.

In addition, PRN coordinators are involved in convening collaborative conversations among leaders, and PRN-related leadership in Ukraine is beginning to dream of long-term strategies for healing their people and land.

To learn more about PRN:

<https://www.reconciledworld.net/>

---

### European Freedom Network

#### *Producing webinars for Ukrainian church leaders serving refugees*

The European Freedom Network (EFN), in collaboration with the World Freedom Network, has continued to serve Ukraine throughout this period. They have produced two specialized webinars to equip Ukrainian church leaders as well as volunteers and churches responding to refugees:

- Supporting Victims of Conflict Related Sexual Violence
- Supporting People Experiencing Moral Injury, Guilt and Shame

These webinars can be found at <https://www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org/ukraine-church-resources/> and are available in multiple languages, including Ukrainian.

EFN has continued monthly Ukraine Emergency meetings focused on monitoring the human trafficking situation targeting Ukrainian citizens.

EFN has also completed needs assessments of the long-term trauma needs of Ukraine, with strong results showing the need for respite for pastors and church leaders serving on the front lines.

## Funding

To date, WEA has distributed over **US\$2.1 million** to partner networks in Ukraine and neighboring countries to provide greatly needed aid, support, and care for children, families, and communities affected by the war.

Our goal is to continue raising funds to strengthen Evangelical churches and ministries in the region and their capacity to provide short- and long-term support so that the people of Ukraine can rebuild their lives and their country.

## Get involved



### Give

Your donation matters. Financial support is coordinated by TRUST and distributed to churches and partners who are on the front lines, directly helping affected Ukrainians.

To give, go to: <https://worlddea.org/ukrainecrisis>



### Pray

- For the immediate end of the war
- For the care and protection of the people of Ukraine.
- For long-lasting peace.

## Contact

Ruslan Muliata - TRUST Lead  
[RuslanMaliuta@onehope.net](mailto:RuslanMaliuta@onehope.net)

For latest news and stories:  
<https://worlddea.org/ukrainecrisis>



## About the World Evangelical Alliance

Over two billion Christians in the world today are represented by three world church bodies. The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) is one of those, serving more than 600 million evangelicals belonging to churches that are part of 143 national Evangelical Alliances in 9 regions. Launched in London in 1846, the WEA unites evangelicals across denominations for prayer, evangelism, mission, theological education, religious freedom, human rights advocacy and engagement in a wide range of social issues. It speaks with one voice to the United Nations, governments and media in public or through behind-the-scenes diplomacy on issues of common concern to the Church.

To learn more: <https://worlddea.org/>

## The Response - Ukraine Special Task Force (TRUST)

Established by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), TRUST is coordinating efforts with evangelical churches in Ukraine and neighbouring countries to serve the immediate and long-term needs of those affected by the war.