On the morning of February 24, 2022 Russian forces invaded Ukraine in an extreme escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict which began in 2014. Almost instantly after Russian President Vladimir Putin’s announcement of a ‘special operation’ in Ukraine, explosions were reported in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa, and the Donbas. Russian troops were reported to have landed in Mariupol and Odessa, crossed into Ukraine from Crimea, and launched attacks on prominent airfields, military headquarters, and supply depots in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Dnipro. Russian armored vehicles entered Ukraine through Senkivka, in northern Ukraine, on the border with Belarus and Russia. In the first few months of the invasion over 8 million refugees were estimated to be displaced within Ukraine (now estimated to be 5.4 million as of 21/02/23). A further 8.1 million refugees were recorded crossing into Europe.

In response The Salvation Army mobilized services for refugees crossing from Ukraine into Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland. Services were also provided in Georgia. The Salvation Army also had an existing presence in Ukraine which was best placed to assist Ukrainians in need within the first few weeks of the war. Main service locations included Dnipro, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kropyvnytskyi, the capital city Kyiv, Lviv, Noviï, Pisochn, and Vinnytsia. The Salvation Army also responded in Crimea and Russia. In the first one-hundred days The Salvation Army provided 25,701 cooked meals, 40,621 food parcels and vouchers, 14,275 hygiene kits, and 25,701 teaching/anti-human trafficking awareness sessions, and distributions of educational materials to refugees. By April 2022, the UN estimated that two thirds of Ukraine’s children had been displaced by the war, with 90% of Ukrainian refugees being women and children. Throughout this phase of the war The Salvation Army served in the spirit of love beyond conflict.
IN THE FIRST 100 DAYS THE SALVATION ARMY PROVIDED

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- 40,621 FOOD PARCELS AND VOUCHERS
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- 25,701 ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS SESSIONS, AND DISTRIBUTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO REFUGEES.

INVASION FOCUSES ON SOUTH & EAST

On April 8, a Russian missile strike hit the train station in Kramatorsk. At least 50 Civilians including women and children died, and over 100 were wounded in the attack as they were evacuating Ukraine. This catastrophe kicked off Moscow’s pivot toward more focused action in the east of Ukraine. Shortly after this tragedy, the Russian offensive to seize Donetsk and Luhansk began. On May 12 the UN launched an enquiry into Russian war crimes. By May 20, Russia captured the strategic port town of Mariupol. The challenges faced by Ukrainians started to spread by June. UN projections indicated that up to 181 million people in 41 countries could face acute food insecurity and outright famine due to millions of tons of Ukrainian grain languishing in silos from the start to the war.
Although a deal was struck by July 22, 2022 between Ukraine and Russia for grain exports to resume, the world’s food supply chain had already been showing signs of stress due to Pandemic supply chain breakdown. During this time, The Salvation Army continued to offer food and shelter throughout the region, further recruiting volunteers to assist Salvation Army staff, and continuing to set up more border welcoming stations to provide refugees with a meal, water, and spiritual support. A refugee housing block was constructed in Latvia, and new water filtration was provided to areas now populated with refugees. In Slovakia, a program to specifically help disabled Ukrainian refugees was created. The Salvation Army set up children’s programs as well as care and recreational activities within its centers of service in order to assist families as mothers and children were separated from fathers that were sent to the front lines of the war.

The Salvation Army refugee response was mobilized even as far west as France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. In the Netherlands, The Salvation Army received large government grants to create housing, feeding and clothing programs for an average of 5,000 refugees per month. In Rotterdam and Arnhem cruise ships were prepared in order to give shelter to two thousand Ukrainian refugees. Surge capacity was further increased through the coordination of one thousand five hundred refugee host families.

CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE TARGETED

By fall, the Russian advance had stalled. Having failed to capture the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Russian forces moved to secured large parts of eastern and southern Ukraine. In the first few months of the war, the Russian Ministry of Defense had claimed the threat to civilian populations was minimal, that Russia was limiting actions to surgical strikes on Ukrainian military targets and infrastructure alone, or civilian infrastructure transporting munitions to the frontlines. From October 2022 however, Russia strategically ramped up attacks on civilian energy infrastructure. The attack on infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia city on October 9, 2022 was an opening barrage that escalated, leading to a wave of energy infrastructure bombardment in multiple key cities across Ukraine including Kyiv.

By November, 2022, nearly half of Ukraine’s energy infrastructure was destroyed leaving over half the population without heating or electricity. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated the health risk of no heating or electricity during the harsh Eastern European winter to be the greatest health risk faced by any country since World War II. The strikes were aimed at demoralizing the population and forcing Ukrainian leadership into negotiations entirely on Russian terms. The Ukrainian population however stood firm.
Generous donors in the USA and beyond responded with support for Ukrainian winterization. The Salvation Army provided vital supplies of basic hygiene, warm meals, Christmas toys, bedding, blankets, cozy clothing, assistance with heating, and emotional and spiritual care. The spirit of love beyond conflict continues to be mobilized to do the most good.

On the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine The Salvation Army has provided a total of over 64,257 hygiene items, 93,009 food parcels, 682,719 cooked meals, provided shelter to 138,000 people, provided 105,044 items of NFI, 130,926 vouchers, and 15,201 instances of mental and physical healthcare.

As we enter another year of conflict, the war in Ukraine shows no sign of abating. It’s essential not to underestimate the level of humanitarian aid needed in Ukraine. With your continued support The Salvation Army plans to sustain the levels of life-saving aid in Ukraine and bordering countries, support refugees in long-term recovery across Europe, expand after school programs, psycho-social support, camp programs for the children of Ukraine, language lessons, and care programs for careers, improve operational/staffing support for programs, and build capacity in Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia and Romania. As we enter a new phase of this war, there is a pressing question that only you can answer. Will you continue to do the most good for the people of Ukraine? To support the ongoing response visit: www.SAWSO.org, or scan the QR Code Below.