



ISKCON RELIEF FOR UKRAINE

WEEK 12

ISKCON RELIEF – REPORTS

Important General Message:

The following centres have now reached full capacity and cannot receive any more refugee devotees until further notice:

1. ISKCON Germany
2. ISKCON Spain

Poland:

The confusion, uncertainty, anxiety and constant changing of plans is always present for our devotee refugees during this war which is now into its third long month. However in the last week, week 12, at least here in Warsaw those stresses and strains were certainly enhanced and very much visible in the behaviour of our transiting and indeed our resident guests.

We had families coming from Ukraine who stayed with us for a day or two then went to another country for a few days before returning. We also had families who seemed very settled in other countries and all of a sudden decided 'This is not the place for us, we need to go back! Not sure where we will go, maybe Ukraine or somewhere else...'

Our temporary house in Warsaw literally became the centre, the crossroad, with devotees coming out and then returning to Ukraine. They come back to our house because they find shelter and help, and they feel deep gratitude for our team's care.

Those devotees coming back tried their best to make a home aboard but simply couldn't. A lot of that is due to both language and cultural differences but also the fact that their husbands still can't leave Ukraine. It has just been announced that adult men will not be able to for at least another three months. They have to stay and can be recruited to fight at any point up to the end of August.

We also had a lot of babies, two to six months old, mothers traveling on their own with their tiny ones. If you ever had to deal with a baby you know even with the best facilities babies are both the cutest yet biggest challenge. Imagine tolerating such a journey while fleeing the war

zone, caring for your children throughout all the travel and then going back because you can't manage without your husband.

It has been three long months now, but those challenges are as fresh as they were on day one. So please keep us in your prayers so we can continue our service supporting these wonderful devotees. But most importantly, please pray for them so their horrors become only memories from the past.

UK:

Last week in the UK we welcomed eleven new Ukrainian devotees, four of them were children.

One family was Krishnavedi dd with her two daughters who arrived in South London where they are now staying with a devotee family. She commented that she feels very welcomed and that she is very happy to have the status of a resident, as opposed to a refugee in Europe. She and her daughters attended harinama in central London and participated in the FFL distribution program. Her family, as well as and many other Ukrainians, attended the regular Sunday Russian speaking program.

Another family of 3 applied for the "Scotland as Super Host" program and received their visa within four days. For more information see:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme#apply>

Furthermore, many interesting projects are beginning to develop in London, which will help Ukrainians to integrate into society by acquiring valuable skills and experience.

Ukrainians arriving in the UK under the "Homes for Ukraine" scheme will be granted 3 years "leave to remain", with entitlement to work, and access to benefits and public services.

All hosts are vetted and undergo security checks.

For more information contact;

ukrainecrisis@iskcon.london

Scotland:

Three refugees are living on the Karuna Bhavan eco-farm. The temple president Prabhupada Prana das, together with the refugees, have meetings with the local Council and Members of Parliament to help devotees secure government sponsored flats.

'Scheme opens for displaced Ukrainians'

Scotland's offer to provide refugee and sanctuary to displaced Ukrainians, as part of the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, is now open. Accessible through the UK

Acting as a 'super sponsor', the Scottish Government's route removes the need for applicants to be matched to a named individual before they are cleared to travel to the UK through the visa system. The Scottish programme is available as an option to Ukrainians when applying for a visa under the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, by opting for the organisational sponsor route, and selecting "The Scottish Government" from the drop-down box in response to the question "Which organisation is sponsoring you?"

Scottish people willing to volunteer and provide homes for Ukrainians arriving through the sponsorship scheme are encouraged to sign up at the 'Homes for Ukraine' portal. Their details will be shared with the Scottish Government so that appropriate matches can be arranged while immediate support is provided to those arriving.

Ukrainian refugees can apply at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme#apply>

The process for applying:

Read the guidance there, then click "apply online". After answering questions about whether you have a Ukrainian international passport, you will reach a page headed "Apply for the Ukraine Scheme".

Read the guidance there, then click "Apply now"

On the next screen, choose "Ukraine sponsorship scheme", then "I am being sponsored by an organisation"

Click "Save and continue"

On the next page, headed "Sponsoring Organisation", choose "The Scottish Government" from the dropdown box

Continue with your application

Ireland:

The devotees in Ireland have some accommodation in the temple for Ukrainian devotees.

Please get in contact with them for more information. The temple is though part of the UK, even though it's located in Ireland, thus visas are unfortunately required.

ISKCON RELIEF WEBSITE

Please visit our newly created website at:

<http://iskconrelief.org/>

New, New, New

ISKCON RELIEF SOCIAL MEDIA

Please follow us on our newly established Facebook and Instagram:

Facebook @iskconrelief

Instagram @iskconrelief

ISKCON RELIEF TEAM



Core Committee

Praghosa dasa - Chair

Sukanti Radha devi dasi - Project Coordinator

Kamala Priya devi dasi - Secretary

Mahaprabhu dasa - Finance

Parabhakti dasa - Communications

Krishna Premarupa dāsa - EURO RGB Representative

MEET THE TEAM - Members of the ISKCON Relief Team

With the fourth part of our ‘*Meet The Team*’ series we would like to introduce you to the Coordinator of Sweden – Sarasvati Gopi devi dasi

Sarasvati Gopi devi dasi – Coordinator for Sweden

Sarasvati Gopi dd is the coordinator for Ukrainian devotee refugees coming to Sweden.

She is personally taking care for refugees transiting through or staying at the ISKCON Almvik Farm community close to Stockholm.

Sarasvati Gopi dd has been living in Almvik since 2003 together with her husband and children. She is a disciple of His Holiness Jayapataka Swami since 2007. Professionally, she has a bachelor degree with honours in Primary school education since 1999. She has also studied Swedish as a second language methodology at Swedish universities and is now working as a Swedish language teacher for Swedish schools, volunteers and refugees. Sarasvati Gopi dd is furthermore a member of the Almvik board, a member of the local Child Protection Team and she is an assisting coordinator for international volunteers staying at the farm. Sarasvati Gopi wholeheartedly supports self-sufficiency and has been growing her own organic vegetables since 2004.

Since the beginning of March, she has been coordinating, receiving and taking care of 32 devotee refugees from Ukraine. 19 of them, including 8 children, are staying at the Almvik Farm community today; ten are residing in Gothenburg, including a couple serving at the Govindas restaurant. For refugees living at the Almvik Farm, Sarasvati Gopi provides government-funded Swedish language lessons. Knowledge of Swedish can help the refugees to broaden job opportunities. Furthermore, the refugees at Almvik get help and guidance in contacting migration services, getting medical advice or medical help, etc.



ISKCON RELIEF – PHOTOS



Devotee refugees together with Jara Mara Hari das in Spain



Refugee children in Spain



Devotee refugees singing the Holy Names in a church in Barcelona where they also distributed samosas





A couple from Mariupol who stayed for two weeks in the temporary house in Poland and then went to Belgium



At the Russian speaking Sunday program with Ukrainian devotees and Tribhangananda Prabhu (ACBSP)



Krishnavedi dd and her daughters distributing prasadam at Food For Life

ISKCON RELIEF – VIDEOS

Help for Ukraine – ISKCON Poland Yatra

<https://youtu.be/tw6ce5QJ3Lo>

A Well-being-day out in Poland – ISKCON Relief supports mental health care

<https://youtu.be/e31RERZhngA>

ISKCON Food Relief – ISKCON Czech Ukraine Crisis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRYWwsAjEck>

Ukraine devotees at Villa Vrindavana – ISKCON Italy

<https://youtu.be/z8LqLmNowyo>

Refugee Devotees singing the Holy Names in a church in Barcelona where they also distributed samosas

https://youtu.be/vBEgkK9_jo

ISKCON RELIEF – RESOURCES

Relocation Services

The ISKCON Relocation Services is run by Loka Pavani Devi Dasi and three of her Vaishnavi colleagues. They work tirelessly to put together useful and updated information about available help which can be accessed in different European countries. Such information includes government benefits, government accommodations, relocation in temples and devotee's homes, or a list of ISKCON centres especially equipped in helping women and children to get safe facilities. Refugees can find different options, and make informed decisions on where to go. You can find all this information at the 'Country Specific Fact Sheets for Ukrainian Devotees' at:

<http://iskconrelief.org/ukraine-crisis-resources/>

Crisis Management Team

The Crisis Management Team has appointed local coordinators for several countries. These local coordinators offer help to refugees and the assisting devotees. Don't hesitate to contact them.

A list of the national coordinators for several countries can be found at:

<http://iskconrelief.org/ukraine-crisis-structure/>



The International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada