



ISKCON RELIEF FOR UKRAINE

WEEK 10

ISKCON RELIEF – FIGURES

Devotees from Europe, as well as other parts of the world, have tirelessly continued their sincere endeavour to help devotees from Ukraine to find shelter, care and support. The following figures are for week 10 of this devotee care / relief effort.

ISKCON Relief – Food Distribution, Week 10	Quantity (FFL and/or in temples and houses)
Czech Republic	2.510
Hungary	450
Poland	4.100
Slovakia	390
Spain	450

Country	Refugees being Hosted
Bulgaria	42 (incl. 20 children)
Czech Republic	74 (incl. 34 children)
Denmark	31 (incl. 12 children)
France (New Mayapur)	7 (incl. 3 children)
Germany	180
Hungary	50 (incl. 14 children)
Ireland	15 (incl. 4 children)
Poland	123 (31 came from Mariupol during last week)
Britain (excluding Northern Ireland)	7 (9 have received Visas)
Slovakia	18 (incl. 8 children)
Spain	19 (incl. 4 children)
Sweden	32



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
3. ISKCON Hungary

VFS Global Services Sends Letter of Appreciation to ISKCON Relief Team

Last week our ISKCON Relief Team got the following appreciative letter from Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global for their outstanding relief work for Ukraine, including help given to their own employees in Ukraine. VFS Global has also sent a generous donation to help ISKCON with their important work.

Hare Krishna

On behalf of the VFS Global Leadership team and all our staff in Ukraine, I would like to thank you for your relentless support and help provided to our staff in Ukraine. We cannot express in words the respect and gratitude felt towards the ISKCON leadership team, all devotees, coordinators and ground staff giving their all through the trying times of war. It's not an easy task, but that's even more reason for you to be appreciated and acknowledged for everything you do.

The war has come at a huge cost with thousands of innocent lives lost, millions displaced from their homes and has destroyed so many cities. The socio-economic impact will be felt for many years to come. Your dedication and human kindness are making a huge difference in the world. You are amazing super humans that deserve to go down as the true heroes of this dark time in our history. We pray to Lord Krishna to abundantly bless all of you who are working through these challenging times. Thank you once again for giving your strength to so many, for your commitment to caring for the community.

Regards

Sumanta Rudra (VFS Global)

Poland:

Last week more than 30 devotees came through, some stayed and some travelled on. Also, a big group came from Mariupol. There were a few men among them so they had to travel via Russia, Estonia and other places, trying to find somewhere safe to cross into Poland. When devotees approached one checkpoint in Russia, one of the soldiers unlocked his huge machine gun ready to shoot. The devotees started to pray and miraculously, by the Lord's mercy, they got through. Having being saved from that danger, they are now resting in Warsaw, with full faith in Lord Krsna's protection and shelter.

Slovakia:

The historical Bojnice castle in Slovakia built in the 12th century has become the shelter and home for 12 refugee devotees. The castle, castle park and "Garden house" are administered by the Slovak National Museum, SNM-Museum, Bojnice, whose Director is Sarvasukha das, a devotee of the ISKCON Slovak yatra. As the government of the Slovak republic decided to help Ukrainian refugees with accommodation, Sarvasukha decided to utilize the castle to help Ukrainian devotees. The employees at the castle have worked hard for two weeks to prepare the accommodation for the refugees. Today 12 devotees are staying at the castle and all their food is kindly sponsored by the government. The devotees arrived in three groups, two families with children from Charkov, and one young couple from Mariupol. See below some pictures of the beautiful castle and the devotees staying there.

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 and thus visas are unfortunately required.

Scotland:

Local authorities have been very helpful and the Scottish people in general are delighted to welcome Ukrainian refugees. The Scottish government is offering a super sponsor scheme where people can become sponsors and help find suitable accommodation for those arriving from Ukraine. At present the devotees in Scotland are exploring possibilities with the local MP to host more Ukrainian devotees.

Last week one Vaishnavi arrived at Karuna Bhavan (the ISKCON eco-farm in Scotland) after transiting through Hungary. During the coming week another refugee, Veronika, transiting through Czech Republic, is expected at Karuna Bhavan too.

UK:

Last week ISKCON UK welcomed their first refugee to the UK!

These refugee devotees contacted ISKCON UK's Ukrainian Crisis program who then matched them with a UK host (a devotee family who has a spare room). This enables the refugees to receive visas to the UK. In turn, a visa grants them a 3-year residency with rights to work and claim benefits.

7 refugees have arrived so far, including one family with a 7-year-old son. One Vaishnavi is looking for options to relocate to the south of England.

A Russian speaking Sunday program was held with Dhirasanta dasa Goswami in Holborn with kirtan, lecture and delicious prasadam with some of the newly arrived refugees in attendance.

The following video gives important information for devotee refugees who want to come to the UK. It gives information about the government humanitarian program, as well as the help offered by ISKCON in the UK.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EEdzfQji9Ck>

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ISKCON RELIEF WEBSITE

Please visit our newly created website at:

<http://iskconrelief.org/>

ISKCON RELIEF TEAM



MEET THE TEAM - Members of the ISKCON Relief Team

With the second part of our ‘*Meet The Team*’ series we would like to introduce you to the Refugee Aid Coordinator for Poland – Rasikendra das

Rasikendra das – Refugee Aid Coordinator for Poland

Rasikendra das met the devotees in 1991 and dedicated the next few years to book distribution.

In 1998 he joined the Polish festival preaching tour. Soon his organisational skills and exemplary service attitude as well as his ‘doing the needful mood’ were quickly recognized and thus he was invited to become part of their managing team.

At the Pol and Rock (former Woodstock) festival, he serves as the main cook and as the coordinator for prasadam distribution. At that festival each year, for over 25 years

now, devotees in ‘Krsna’s Village of Peace’ have been distributing 150,000 plates of prasadam annually.



Furthermore, Rasikendra das helps coordinating the devotees who are engaged on the Polish festival tour. There he also runs the onsite restaurant that is visited by hundreds of guests during each event. A lot of devotees serving on the tour used to come from Russia and Ukraine. With this experience Rasikendra das was the best person to help with the present Ukraine crisis. He is also fluent in Russian, which is certainly a great asset when communicating with the Ukrainian refugees.

ISKCON RELIEF – PHOTOS



Beautiful Bojnice Castle in Slovakia, residence for 12 devotee refugees



Sarasuka das, Director of Bojnice Castle, (to the left) sings bhajans with the refugees



Valentyn and Anna with their 6 month old baby Rasayatra, at Bojnice Castle



Mukunda Charan das and Margaryta with their daughter from Mariupol chanting japa with Kirtida devi dasi at the Bojnice Castle



Prasadam distribution at the West Railway Station in Warsaw, Poland



A young couple from Mariupol stayed for a few days in the temporary house in Warsaw and then travelled safely to Copenhagen



Ukrainian devotees participating at the Sunday program in the Nama Hatta center Chakra in the Czech Republic. At the moment 5 Vaishnavis from Ukraine are living there.



Devotees happily arriving in the UK



GBC and ISKCON Relief Team member Praghosa das meeting refugees at the Dublin Sunday program. To his left is Sofia Birun from Kyiv whose parents are devotees. To his right are Yeygeny Raidalenko with his daughter Luiba and wife Albina coming from Krivoy Rog in Ukraine

ISKCON RELIEF – RESOURCES

The Four Stages of Relationships

Dealing with emotional issues while caring for refugees.

A very helpful analyses given by Rambhoru devi dasi at one of her weekly meetings.

Stage 1: “The Honeymoon”

We can do this; we can help them all; welcome everyone; we are here to serve you; all wonderful devotees coming from a country of family values but where all men have to fight for their country, sending their women and children away to be safe; and such an amazing yatra; 20,000 devotees wow!

Stage 2: “The disillusionment”

We start to see some cracks! They are just people! They have been through major trauma, but also they have their baggage, their way of doing things we don't always like; they certainly can't stay in my house for too long... I mean they are nice, but I just can't do it... Because it's so different to what I like and know

Stage 3: “Tolerance”

We learn skills to communicate; we understand we are not as emphatic as we thought we were, but we committed to this, so how do we coexist in this situation?

Stage 4: “Appreciation”

We start to appreciate strengths and weaknesses, learn how to be, see the good in the people and also the reality of the people. We make it work!

Please join the weekly sessions by Rambhoru dd:

Crisis Management Support

Compassionate Listening Circles with Rambhoru Devi Dasi.

Every Sunday 8:00 – 9:30 pm CET on Zoom.

Contact and registration: Rambhoru@gmail.com

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://eurorgb.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://eurorgb.org/ukraine-crisis-structure/>



Want to help?

iskconeuclisis@gmail.com

Taking care of Srila Prabhupada's devotees

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