

UKRAINE UPDATE #10: "UKRAINE ENDS A NIGHTMARE YEAR" ANALYSIS & OUTLOOK

As most of the world enjoys the festive holidays there are others who are not blessed with peace and goodwill. This definitely applies to those in Ukraine. During this holiday season there are still briefings and updates that continue to be received. These briefings describe the most difficult trials for over one million in Ukraine who are displaced and trying to survive winter's cruelties. Media reports reveal the horrible conditions that most readers cannot comprehend. A FTP report, copied at the end of this update, details comments of residents in a village on the front lines of combat: "People cannot digest what horrors have happened here." "My home has burnt down...What have I lived for? In one day you can just lose everything."

The cause of this suffering is the invasion and occupation of Russian forces (its military troops, anarchists, and mercenaries). And the Russian savage evil presence continues. Some try to explain this evil away, but it is a certain fact. Some try to shift the blame away from Russia, but it is a laughable naiveté that betrays one's eagerness to accept Putin's propaganda that Russia has acted for "the best interests of Ukraine."

There is indisputable evidence that Russia has invaded, supplied, murdered, and destroyed eastern Ukraine. Although most information is not available to the public there are media reports that are being published that reveal what is actually happening in Russia's evil machinations in Ukraine. A report by Maxim Shemetov (REUTERS) shows how Russia is leading the evil forces in destroying the peace and security of Ukraine.



Pro-Russian separatists from the Chechen "Death" battalion walk during a training exercise in the territory controlled by the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, eastern Ukraine, December 8, 2014. Chanting "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest), dozens of armed men in camouflage uniforms from Russia's republic of Chechnya train in snow in a camp in the rebel-held east Ukraine. They say their "Death" unit fighting Ukrainian forces has 300 people, mostly former state

security troops in the mainly-Muslim region where Moscow waged two wars against Islamic insurgents and which is now run by a Kremlin-backed strongman.



See this link for more information:

https://search.yahoo.com/search;_ylt=AtQQDiLOcRSeMYhMYc.m7qibvZx4?p=Chechen+%22Death%22+battalion&toggl=1&cop=mss&ei=UTF-8&fr=yfp-t-580&fp=1

Against a horde of the most evil characters and in spite of ruthless terrorism and inhumane directives, Ukraine has withstood eight months of occupation and stopped the invasion of Russia. I have talked face-to-face with those who have saved Ukraine (among which are Battalions Donbas, Azov, Dniper). The stories of their heroism will be chronicled and stand in stark contrast to the evil actions that mark the Russia invaders.

This sets the background for our actions. In the midst of these horrific developments are a number of congregations of the Lord's Church. Many in the eastern Oblasts of Donetsk and Lugansk have ceased assembling or the majority of members have move into displaced people's locations in other parts of Ukraine. The end result is that the presence of the churches of Christ in eastern Ukraine has greatly diminished. In the non-rebel/terrorist/anarchist controlled areas the government of Ukraine is able to maintain civility. However, as I reported in the last update, even though these locations in the Oblasts of Donetsk and Lugansk are free from the terror of the Russian anarchists, the region is considered a "war zone" and transportation, banking, and security are all severely restricted. No transportation company is willing to schedule shipments into these regions. Absolutely no banking is permitted. Money wires through the secure SWIFT code system are not allowed—if you send money into these areas you risk it being stolen by the Russian savages or your recipient being killed.

Throughout Ukraine you will find cities, towns and villages living in a "normal" state (as much as "normal" can be in a time when the nation is being attacked and occupied). The Russian invasion has united Ukraine and developed opportunities which are solidifying the national character and pride of Ukraine. These evil times have offered some "good" to result.

A great part of the “good” has been the opportunity of the Lord’s Church to touch those suffering and display a loving compassion to the displaced, orphaned, and wounded. Incalculable good has been accomplished by our efforts in 2014. And, with God’s help, these will continue in 2015.

Thanks to God, our efforts in 2014 have successfully shipped in and distributed FORTY-TWO containers of benevolent items to locations in Ukraine where God’s People have joined with local authorities to insure the integrity of the distribution. I recently sent out documentation showing how God has accomplished these totals through His Church...

- ✓ Hundreds of thousands have been helped through the efforts of the Lord’s Church!
- ✓ \$5,755,106.00 total value of the DONATED supplies shipped!
- ✓ 942,923 pounds is the total weight of the supplies shipped!
- ✓ \$96,831.80 is the total cost we paid for shipping these supplies!

Thanks to the respect and reputation of the Lord’s Church in previous shipments and the cooperation from contacts within Ukraine’s structure, we have had no problem in getting these supplies into Ukraine.

A CONTAINER FOR KRAMATORSK, UKRAINE

The next container we will ship into Ukraine will be loaded from the Searcy, AR location on January 7 and will go into Kramatorsk, Ukraine. This is challenging because Kramatorsk is inside the Donetsk Oblast but it is in a rebel-free area. The request was received a number of weeks ago but the challenge was how to get the container securely to our brethren. The transportation companies will not touch such a move because of the war-zone status. Vladimir Pazyi is the preacher at the Kramatorsk church of Christ. Many of you know Vlad from my monthly reports. I have visited and spoken often at the Kramatorsk and Konstantinovka congregations where Vlad preaches. In previous years we have successfully shipped a number of containers into Kramatorsk. So we began operations on how to arrange the transport so that the supplies will reach the intended areas and be secure in the distribution we direct. We have been able to cobble together a strategy that incorporates a number of reliable facets and feel good about the shipment.

Vlad has worked diligently on this problem and has secured the assistance and cooperation of a businessman that has previously been a great help to us. His name is Valery Ivanovich and I have written about him and his assistance (for those who recall previous reports, this is the man whose sons were kidnapped by the Russian mafia and murdered).

Last week I received two letters from Kramatorsk that contained this greeting and points of request that I have summarized...

Greetings John! I am very happy to resume our partnership and to hear about your sincere sympathetic to Ukrainian people in terms of the Russian aggression. Many people are looking forward to help and thanks to God and help from Church of Christ we have such great possibility to increase this help especially for the orphans. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Best wishes for you and all those in Church of Christ who feel Christian sympathetic to very needy people.

- ✓ *Thank you very much for your Christian charity to the needy people in Ukraine.*
- ✓ *In 2014 we restarted our work through the new charity organization “Barnabas Project.”*
- ✓ *Today as never before Ukrainian hospitals, poor people and orphans in Donbass urgently need help.*
- ✓ *We help an orphanage “Emerald City” which, in addition to its usual numbers, has accepted more than 400 orphans from the cities occupied by Russian troops and mercenaries.*
- ✓ *About 25,000 refugees have registered in Kramatorsk, and all need help very much.*
- ✓ *In this winter period they desperately need warm clothes, shoes, linen, hygienic means and many other items of practical life.*
- ✓ *We have followed your directives and have established transportation across the very difficult territory of Ukraine. We have asked vice-governor of the Donetsk Region Klimenko Alexander to help us and to guarantee help in transportation from Odessa to Kramatorsk.*
- ✓ *We ask you very much to help needy people in Donbass and Ukraine.*

Anyone in the Searcy, AR area is welcome to come and help us prepare and load this container. We will prep the load (labeling, wipe down/clean up items, stage the loading area) on Monday January 5 (9:00 a.m.). We will begin loading the container on Wednesday January 7 (8:00 a.m.). Your assistance in these preparations is critical! We need HELP!

OUR EFFORTS ARE CONTINUING IN 2015!

Our efforts in Ukraine, as well as in other nations, are continuing in 2015. These efforts are all voluntary and all items shipped are donated. Items are distributed freely. We strive to practice the apostolic injunction “*So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith*” (Galatians 6:10).

PLEAS FOR PARTNERSHIP CONTINUE!

Will you help?

How easy it is to “pass by on the other side” when an opportunity comes for alleviating the suffering that has fallen upon another— especially if it is far away.

He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor...He who oppresses the poor to make more for himself or who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty (Proverbs 22:9, 16).

PLEASE HELP US CONTINUE SENDING...

We have NINE approvals by the government of Ukraine to ship in more commodities. We have TEN more shipments that should be approved by the government of Ukraine.

BUT we do not have funds to pay to ship containers. So, the urgent request is for donations to help us pay for shipping containers of relief commodities into Ukraine where our brothers and sisters can distribute the commodities. Extra funds will also allow us to pay for more containers to be shipped from Western Europe into Ukraine where they arrive and are distributed in less than two weeks!

WE NEED HELP TO HELP THOSE IN UKRAINE. PLEASE SEND A DONATION TO:

**College Church of Christ/UKRAINE MISSIONS
2934 East Moore Street
Searcy, Arkansas 72143**

Thank you to all who have responded. Please think of congregations and individuals who are like-minded and willing to help us ship more containers to assist those struggling against devilish evils! Forward this report to others who are able to join with us and fulfill Galatians 6:10!

The Agence France-Presse (AFP) report below will give you documented insight of the great need in Ukraine that we are trying to address through congregations of the Lord's Church.

Little hope for future as east Ukraine ends nightmare year



By Max DELANY 23 hours ago

Marinivka (Ukraine) (AFP) - Larissa Pogorelka began the year looking forward to seeing her son graduate college and planning for the future with cautious optimism.

Now she will end 2014 homeless, after her house was destroyed in the fighting that swept through this region of east Ukraine, and counts herself lucky just to be alive.

"Nobody ever expected any of this to happen," the shopkeeper, 42, told AFP. "My home has burnt down and I am living with my parents."

"What have I lived for? In one day you can just lose everything."

Just a few kilometres from the Russian border, Marinivka in Ukraine's restive Donetsk region, used to be a pleasant, if poor and totally unremarkable, hamlet of 600 inhabitants.

Life was sometimes tough but it was at least predictable and people here had a sense of sleepy stability.

That, though, has been turned upside down as a conflict that no one saw coming between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed rebels turned the village into a front line.

Over the past eight months, the strategic location has swapped hands several times between government forces and the insurgents. Since the end of the summer it has been under separatist control.

As a handful of local residents trudge through the snow and brave the icy wind along the main Seleverstova street, no house they pass seems to have escaped undamaged.

Here a roof is missing, there a family home is little more than charred remains.

The two-storey school, once the pride of the community, is an empty shell pockmarked by gaping holes caused by tank shells.

- 'It is just madness' -

"You can see what a nightmarish year it has been for us," said Valentina Fyodorova, pointing to the shrapnel scars in the wall of her modest grocery store.

"We were peaceful people. Things were good, but now they are bad."

Although the situation has been more or less calm here for several months, people are still struggling to work out how the ouster of former president Viktor Yanukovych in February could have ended up with war coming to their doorsteps.

"They are in shock. People cannot digest what horrors have happened here," says Valentina's husband Alexander Fyodorov. "We were not prepared for this."

Ukraine and the West blame Russia for artificially stirring the rebellion and even sending its own troops over the border, while Moscow paints the uprising in the east as a legitimate reaction to an illegal coup in Kiev.



A woman walks past a building destroyed by fighting between pro-Russia and Ukrainian forces in the village of Stepanivka, eastern Ukraine, on December 30, 2014 (AFP Photo/Vasily Maximov)

But for those caught up in the violence, there is little reasonable explanation for what has happened.

"The only thing you can put it down to is human insanity," Fyodorov said.

"To use howitzer cannons to shoot at peaceful houses—it is just madness."

In the neighbouring village of Stepanivka, former tractor driver Vladimir Samolenko glances at the burned-out wreckage of a Ukrainian tank as he opens his front gate.

Inside his cramped living room, his wife Zinaida is boiling some water for potatoes as their granddaughter Katya builds a house out of Lego bricks.

"Before the war, we at least received pensions and wages," says Samolenko, 76. "It was possible to live."

Now electricity is a constant problem and money is running short after the central authorities in Kiev stopped making welfare payments to the rebel-held areas.

"We hope that the war won't return but we feel that it is not over yet," he said.

"As for the future, it is impossible to say," he sighed, tracing a large question mark in the air with his finger.

<http://news.yahoo.com/little-hope-future-east-ukraine-ends-nightmare-141835389.html>

As is the case in any invasion of a nation by an aggressor there will arise an underground resistance movement. Such has developed in Ukraine and below are some stories of those displaced. These are the faces and families that we are helping...

UKRAINIAN RESISTANCE STORIES

Personal stories of people affected by Russian invasion in Crimea and Donbas (South and East Ukraine). Key Ukrainian news about Russia's war against Ukraine.

<https://ukrainianresistance.wordpress.com/>

WHY UKRAINE'S INTERNALLY DISPLACED HAVE GIVEN UP HOPE OF RETURNING HOME

With armed men roaming the streets and war closing in, Lena Nagiba decided to escape from rebel-held Donetsk in eastern Ukraine. She took her six children with her. That was in June. "How could I raise my kids there?" she said. "Who would guarantee their safety?" Ever since, she has been living in a sanatorium, a dozen miles outside Kiev, set in a bucolic wood. Home is a single room up on the fourth floor. From the window you see snow. The sanatorium, once used by holidaymakers taking a break from city life, now houses 250 people, most from Donetsk and Luhansk, in the Donbas region. Some 120 are children...Someone appears not to want the current residents there: last month, a grenade was thrown at the front door in the early hours.

Nagiba went back to Donetsk last week to visit her elderly parents, whose home in the Petrovsky district is next to the frontline. "At the end of their street is a Grad rocket launcher. You can see the rebels firing not far from their house. It's terrorist tactics." She added: "My parents are afraid of the militias. They want everything to finish so they can live peacefully."

She sees little prospect that her family will ever be able to go back. Crossing into Donetsk – now run by the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) – was a terrifying experience, she said. "I was on a bus. Armed soldiers dragged all the young men out. I thought they were going to shoot them. I left by train. At the station I saw a Russian tank. There were 20 militants, happy, sitting on it."

Most of the internally displaced are camped out in regions next to the conflict zone, either living with relatives, in flats, or in collective centres. The UNHCR speaks of a "deepening humanitarian crisis".

Some have fled because they support a unified Ukraine. In June, Oksana Kolyada, 35, a businesswoman, fled from Luhansk with her daughters Nastia, five, and Masha, two. The previous month she had refused to take part in a separatist "referendum". "All my neighbours said I was a traitor. They watch Russian TV. It's turned them into zombies," she said, adding: "I don't want to go back. Bandits have taken over."

Click on this link to read the entire report:

<https://ukrainianresistance.wordpress.com/2014/12/28/why-ukraines-internally-displaced-have-given-up-hope-of-returning-home/>