

Caritas under threat in Ukraine amid intensifying conflict.

Caritas Australia has expressed deep sorrow and concern following devastating updates from Caritas colleagues in Ukraine, where aid workers and their families are facing escalating danger as attacks intensify.

Recent reports from Caritas confederation member Caritas Spes-Ukraine reveal a rapidly deteriorating security situation, particularly in frontline areas including Nikopol, Sloviansk, Bilozerka, and Kherson.

In Nikopol, shelling has intensified dramatically in recent days, with enemy drones targeting civilian areas. Residents are largely confined to their homes, fearing that even brief trips outside could prove fatal. On the 4th of April, a daytime attack on a local market killed five people and injured more than 20 others. Access routes into and out of the city remain under constant fire, severely restricting the delivery of food and humanitarian supplies.

Faced with these conditions, Caritas Spes-Ukraine made the hard decision to evacuate staff from Nikopol to protect their lives and the lives of their children. A staff member said “It was very hard to decide to leave our home, our work, and the people we had grown used to. We hesitated for a long time because we did not want to leave the city and everything that was so dear to us.”

Tragically, Caritas Australia’s partner on the ground Caritas Ukraine has also confirmed the death of 11-year-old Maksym Veremchuk, the son of a staff member, following a Russian missile strike on Kyiv on the night of the 15th of April. Maksym was killed by shrapnel after the blast of the missile struck a residential complex. His death has been deeply felt across the Caritas family.

Caritas Australia CEO Kirsten Sayers said, “The courage shown by local Caritas teams, even as their own lives are under threat, is extraordinary. They should not have to suffer loss and displacement as they serve their own communities.”

Kirsten Sayers also warned that as new conflicts dominate global attention, the war in Ukraine risks becoming a forgotten crisis. “As violence escalates in other parts of the world, Ukraine is slipping from headlines, but for millions of people the suffering has not stopped,” she said.

“Caritas agencies remain on the ground because the need remains immense. We urge the international community not to turn away, and to continue supporting humanitarian assistance that saves lives and upholds human dignity.”

Caritas Australia continues to accompany communities across Ukraine by supporting local partners as they provide emergency shelter, water, food assistance, health and psychosocial support, as well as cash assistance

To support Caritas Australia’s Ukraine Crisis Appeal, visit www.caritas.org.au/ukraine or call 1800 024 413 toll free.

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