

Caritas-Spes impacted by attacks in Sumy region of Ukraine.

Russian forces attacked the Sumy region, including the city of Konotop, overnight on the 12th of September. Energy facilities and civilian infrastructure were targeted by “shahed drones,” an unmanned aerial vehicle designed to attack ground targets from a distance.

Following the attacks large parts of Konotop are without electricity, gas, and water, essentially losing all vital utilities. Seven apartment buildings, a private residential house, medical and educational institutions, cars, a garage cooperative, a store, and a bank, were also damaged.

One of the damaged buildings is home to Julia, an employee of Caritas-Spes Konotop, who lives there with her children. Miraculously, they survived and were not injured by the drone strike, but they remain in a state of severe shock. Caritas-Spes has made assistance available to Julia and her family.

The Caritas-Spes team in Konotop informed Caritas Australia that they were able to respond very quickly and professionally. A report stated that, “In coordination with local authorities, Caritas-Spes were among the first charitable organisations to set up a table in the city centre to register people for Rapid Multipurpose Cash Assistance. Our team is also providing drinking water to the affected residents.” The team is also working to identify those requiring ongoing support following the destruction of their homes.

Melville Fernandez, Humanitarian Emergencies Associate Director at Caritas Australia, said of the attack, “Deliberate targeting of infrastructure, as well as ongoing damage to homes, is devastating communities across Ukraine. Families are very suddenly left with no shelter or possessions, while their town or city might also be without power, heat or water. That is a very sudden and total loss of resources.”

“Providing cash assistance and drinking water gives affected people immediate relief as they can procure necessities. Meanwhile, our longer-term planning in the region is focused on helping displaced people find homes and get their children back to school, coupled with psychosocial support for traumatised adults and children.”

Caritas Australia’s Ukraine Crisis Appeal supports those displaced in Ukraine and has supported those displaced to bordering countries such as Moldova. Stories of those supported can be found [here](#).

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

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