

Caritas Ukraine continues lifesaving support amid intensifying winter strikes

Caritas Australia is urging continued global attention and solidarity as Caritas Ukraine faces one of the most challenging months of the war, with repeated missile strikes leaving millions without power, heat, and water during subzero temperatures.

Throughout January, multiple large-scale attacks on civilian infrastructure across Kyiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and the Kherson region have triggered prolonged blackouts, water supply disruptions and heating failures during severe winter frosts that have dropped to -20°C .

In Kyiv alone, more than 5,600 high rise buildings lost heating following the January 20th attack, worsening conditions caused by earlier strikes. Across the capital, more than 417,000 families experienced power outages after a major assault on the night of January 12th.

In response Caritas Ukraine has deployed mobile field kitchens at 10 locations across Kyiv, providing hot meals to families sheltering from outages. In Dnipro, local teams have launched volunteer run canteens and plan to expand mobile kitchen services in February.

In Kharkiv, three specialised Caritas vehicles are transporting people with limited mobility to warming centres or temporary accommodation as power outages persist. Meanwhile, in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, families without electricity are receiving portable power stations to keep essential household devices running.

Caritas Ukraine continues to deliver these essential humanitarian services despite staff also going without electricity for days and resorting to setting up tents inside their homes to heat a small area and stay warm.

One staff member shared the following: *“For the second time this winter, the electricity and heating in my home have been cut off. This time, it has been four days. However, the situation is now more challenging because the average temperature outside is -12 degrees Celsius. In my apartment, I wear “double clothing,” that is, two sweaters, two pairs of warm socks, and so on.*

I am glad that 12 hours after the last massive shelling of the capital on the night of January 9, we were given water again in our apartment, because without water from the tap, I feel the worst. I am six months pregnant and have three cats, so it is difficult for me to move somewhere else, and I am not ready to do so yet.”

Caritas Australia’s Humanitarian Manager Sally Thomas said: “Caritas Ukraine is supporting communities through unimaginably harsh conditions, all while enduring these conditions themselves. Their resilience and commitment reflect the extraordinary spirit of the Caritas network. We stand firmly beside them and urge Australians to continue supporting the people of Ukraine.”

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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