

MEDIA RELEASE: Aid agencies call for peace after Ukraine is devastated by deadly shelling attack

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Ukraine has been hit by a devastating new wave of missile attacks and other airstrikes across the country, leaving scores of civilians killed and injured.

Explosions were reported in the capital Kyiv, as well as Lviv, Ternopil and Zhytomyr in Ukraine's west, Dnipro and Kremenchuk in central Ukraine, Zaporizhzhia in the south and Kharkiv in the east. This is the worst shelling since February 24, when Ukraine was first invaded.

There was damage to civilian infrastructure including a playground, pedestrian bridge and several homes, as well as damage to water, communication and electricity supplies.

Caritas Ukraine is one of many aid agencies in Ukraine that have called for respecting international humanitarian law and protecting civilians and civilian objects from the ongoing hostilities.

"Those affected by these strikes were ordinary people trying to go about their everyday lives: parents taking children to school, people on their way to work," says Tetiana Stawnychy, Caritas Ukraine's President.

"The strikes have made an already difficult humanitarian situation more acute, as the country prepares for what promises to be a difficult winter in the coming months."

There are also concerns about the impacts on children, particularly children who have lost their families or become separated from their families in recent months. As the attacks worsen there are concerns about the impact that this will have on their psychological wellbeing.

Sébastien Dechamps, Caritas International Belgium's Emergency Aid Coordinator is in western Ukraine, close to the border with Slovakia.

He says: "There are thousands of Internally Displaced People in this area. The Caritas agencies have programs to take care of orphans and small children, to help heal the trauma that they have gone through. They are trying to implement psychosocial work, to help children to overcome what they have been carrying with them for six months. But now, with this recent shelling, schools and other services have been shut down, so there is a feeling of being back to square one."

As part of the Caritas network, Caritas Australia stands with civilians affected by these attacks and remains dedicated to supporting Caritas agencies on the ground to respond to the crisis.

Help Caritas partners on the ground deliver urgently needed humanitarian aid:
www.caritas.org.au/ukraine/

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