

Voices from the Ukraine Crisis



To be read before Maggid begins:

The Passover Haggadah asks us to imagine ourselves as having personally been delivered from Egypt — to quite literally see ourselves in the story. This year, as we recount the Israelites' journey from slavery to freedom, and from constriction to a moment of hope and new possibilities, let us lift up the voices of the Jews of Ukraine and those assisting them as they seek shelter in neighboring countries.

Natalia, JDC Client Odesa, Ukraine

What am I feeling right now? Fear's not the word. It's just that it's hard to wrap my mind around the fact that in 1941, I had to hide in the basement of this building, and that I'm going to have to hide in that same basement now. This shouldn't be happening again or ever.

I want to say to the people of the whole world, and Jews most importantly: My dears, we have to unite and use all of our strength. We cannot allow this violence to continue happening. The thing is, I feel like I'm dreaming — like I'm having a nightmare.

My homecare worker Sveta is my life — my eyes, my legs, my hands. I'm nothing without her. She cooks for me, she takes care of me, she cleans, she gives me moral support. She has a wonderful personality, as optimistic as mine. Thank you so much to JDC for my Sveta.

Without JDC, I don't know what would have happened to me by now. They help me with everything. I haven't left the apartment in a long time, I have a lot of problems with my spine, but still they treat me like a loved one or a family member. I'm so grateful.

Misha, Refugee Served by JDC

Kyiv, Ukraine

Before the war began, everyone warned us about what would happen, and we didn't want to accept it. Then when it started, we weren't mentally prepared. We were bombed and there was no means of protection, no shelter — that's how it was in Kyiv. Right after we crossed the border, we were met by volunteers who gave us food and brought us to Vadul Lui Voda. The volunteers did everything they could — they fed us, gave us accommodation, took care of us. And because of that, we don't feel abandoned.

We hope that somehow we'll find a way here. We aren't afraid. In Kyiv, we left behind our apartment, career, friends — a whole life. But we don't believe that all is lost: One stage of our life is over, and the second stage has begun.

Ecaterina, JDC Volunteer

Vadul lui Vodă, Moldova

What have I seen here? Well, basically what I was expecting — a huge number of people arriving, some of them confused, some of them sad, tired, some cold or hungry, and you try to express your support somehow, because you just don't know what to tell these people and how to help them after what's happened. No words can help them. Nothing you say.

At the same time, we worked, distributed food to people, faced their grief directly, and received gratitude with tears in their eyes.

You understand what a terrible misery this all is — that a huge number of people needed to leave their towns, leave their homes, leave their lives, their apartments, their homeland.

Right now, yes, I think that I want to believe that I will leave my mark, that there's someone who will have a more successful, better life than the one they were able to walk, ride, or run away from.

And obviously they won't remember me specifically, but they'll be fulfilled, everything will work out for them, and I'll be happy to know that I was a part of it in my small way, that I was able to do something for these people in their time of need.



JDC — the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee or “The Joint” — is the leading Jewish humanitarian organization, working in 70 countries to lift lives and strengthen communities. We rescue Jews in danger, provide aid to vulnerable Jews, develop innovative solutions to Israel's most complex social challenges, cultivate a Jewish future, and lead the Jewish community's response to crises. For over 100 years, our work has put the timeless Jewish value of mutual responsibility into action, making JDC essential to the survival of millions of people and the advancement of Jewish life across the globe. For more information, please visit www.JDC.org.