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## **UKRAINE: Christian mission center blown up, hundreds of Bibles destroyed**

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By Ryan Foley

The Christian Post (25.04.2022) – <https://bit.ly/30Cxtht> – The head of a nonprofit organization working to minister to Ukrainian refugees has expressed devastation after one of the ministry's buildings was destroyed in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, with hundreds of Bibles demolished in the

process.

Mission Eurasia, a church-planting organization that “trains, equips, and mobilizes national Christian leaders throughout the former Soviet Union and Israel,” is one of several charities working to provide relief to Ukrainians displaced after Russia began its invasion of the Eastern European country two months ago.

Mission Eurasia operates 17 Schools Without Walls in Ukraine, which are designed for “training the next generation” to get to the front line of the crisis ... as volunteers ... in their communities.”

In an interview with The Christian Post, Mission Eurasia President Sergey Rakhuba said that his organization’s Field Ministries Training Center in Irpin, Ukraine, was destroyed by Russian troops late last month.

“Russians took it over, they used that for whatever purposes,” he said. “We’ve heard reported they used it for their headquarters for their special forces.”

Additionally, he asserted that Russian troops used burned Scripture piles as shields during their shooting battles.

“We’re very saddened by the loss,” he added. “Buildings can be replaced but we are reprinting hundreds and hundreds of copies of new Scriptures available into the hands of these young

evangelists we train, these young volunteers we equip that continue reaching out to people who are in need.”

While no one who worked with Mission Eurasia was hurt in the blast because staff evacuated at the beginning of the invasion, Rakhuba lamented that “some of the neighbors” lost their lives due to the explosion.

“Dead bodies are right by the premises,” he said.

Rakhuba said the Field Ministries Training Center was a “nerve center for new innovations, mission, strategic planning, [and] training” where “thousands and thousands of young leaders went through training.”

Rakhuba said “there were lots of tears shed after we got the news” of the building’s destruction but remains confident that “God will continue providing.” He vowed to continue bringing the Gospel to “tens of thousands of devastated refugee families.”

Part of Mission Eurasia’s response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict has been to provide “spiritual comfort.” The group launched the Ukraine Crisis Prayer Initiative, which consists of a network of people who pray about the situation in Ukraine daily.

“Once a week, we have a Zoom meeting,” Rakhuba stated.

“On a weekly basis, we present a number of prayer requests related to this ongoing war and related to our ministry,” he continued. “Through this prayer initiative, we’re encouraging people to get connected, to continue praying, praying for all the needs related to ... hardships due to this continued invasion, continued war.”

Mission Eurasia is also working to provide humanitarian relief to those displaced by the war. The charity organization has established refugee assistance centers in Warsaw, Krakow and Moldova in addition to “four large food distribution hubs in four major locations in western Ukraine.”

Rakhuba recently spent nearly two weeks in Ukraine and Poland, returning to the United States ahead of Easter weekend.

As a native of Ukraine who now lives in the U.S., Rakhuba has family members who’ve evacuated the country. He mentioned that his nieces, who are in their mid-to-late 30s, are “abroad now” after he “helped to evacuate” them and their families.

However, the men in his extended family are still staying in Ukraine because they are “heavily involved in this humanitarian relief.”

Rakhuba said food is the greatest need facing Ukrainian refugees at this time because “food supply is totally blocked or paralyzed by the war activity.” Rakhuba has a team

delivering a large semi-truck with 20 tons of food to “one of the northern Ukrainian cities close to the Russian border.”

“We obtained food in large quantities from neighboring countries like Poland, Hungary, Romania and bring them to these large food packaging centers where volunteers mobilized by Mission Eurasia ... put them in family-sized food packages,” he announced. It costs Mission Eurasia \$50 to “purchase food, to sort it, to put it packaged in this food package and also include a copy of the Scripture.”

Rakhuba estimated one family food package sustains a family of four or five at least for one week, or even longer. He rejoiced that his organization was able to place 20,000 food packages into the hands of needy families. He expressed a desire to compile an additional 50,000 packages in the next three months.

Rakhuba attributed the efforts to provide food to Ukrainian refugees to support from “organizations here in the [U.S.], Canada [and] other countries that share resources.”

Rakhuba praised churches for working to accommodate evacuees in need of shelter. He said church sanctuaries on the weekdays turn into shelters but on Sunday, continue to serve as places of worship.

Rakhuba said medical assistance is another need facing Ukrainian refugees. He mentioned that Mission Eurasia has raised \$4.8 million as part of its relief efforts.

*Photo: Mission Eurasia's Field Ministries Training Center in Irpin, Ukraine after it was blown up by Russian forces in April 2022. | Sergey Rakhuba*

**Further reading about FORB in Ukraine on HRWF website**

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