

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FOR UKRAINE
HUNGARIAN REFORMED CHURCH AID AND REFUGEE MINISTRY
REFORMED CHURCH IN HUNGARY



On February 24 Russia attacked Ukraine and invaded the country. Due to the military operations and actual war in our neighbouring country, human lives are at risk, people lack basic supplies and have been forced to leave their homes. Internally displaced people have reached the Western part of Ukraine, (called also Transcarpathia) and refugees are arriving to Hungary in growing numbers. The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid (HRCA) and the Refugee Ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary have been providing emergency response from the first day.

At present, around 50 colleagues and over 1000 volunteers are working in coordination of HRCA. Congregations have been actively involved, offering in-kind and financial donation and shelter for Refugees.

The Bishop of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (RCT), in [a circular to the hundred congregations](#) of RCT, with love and respect, asked Pastors, Elders and Chief Elders to stay in their place, and remain where they are. "There is a need for the Gospel, for gathering praying communities, and for the ministry we owe to those left behind. Let us care for one another, remain humane, helpful and patient," he said. Taking care of the elderly, those left behind, and the refugees arriving in the region in growing numbers, are the two main responsibilities of our Christian duty in these days.

The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid (HRCA), a long time partner organisation of the Hungarian community in Ukraine, has been answering this call from the very beginning and has started an emergency response operation providing humanitarian aid to the victims of the war in Ukraine by offering food donations, hygiene equipment, information, spiritual assistance and accommodation. Staff members and volunteers are receiving refugees at the border stations and train stations.

Since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the HRCA has been helping those in need both inside and outside the borders. Many congregations have chosen to provide support through the HRCA or directly to their sister congregations and communities.

HRCA provides food donations, hygiene equipment, information, spiritual support and accommodation for people affected by the war.

In recent days, the Bethesda Hospital has complemented HRCA's ministry by providing health care and the Schweitzer Albert Reformed Charity Home with hot drinks. Our work has been supported by volunteers from day one, with 1200 people connected in less than 24 hours.

Záhony, a city near the Ukrainian border, has become the hub for the intervention of the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, with thousands of people crossing the border from Ukraine each day. In Budapest, Aid organisations, NGO's and civilians work together in receiving refugees from the morning hours until midnight at the railway stations. The shortage of shelters represents the biggest challenge at the moment

Day by day, from the early hours on, staff and volunteers of HRCA are present in Záhony, where a centre for intervention and reception has been dedicated to HRCA which closely works together with congregations of RCH who organized themselves since the first day of the war and has been offering shelters and in-kind donations on the spot. They distribute water, tea and sandwiches to those arriving. There has been a growing need for transportation of individuals, families and groups entering Hungary.

Though local churches, whose majority belongs to the Reformed Church in the region, and local governments continue offering shelters, the capacities are quickly exhausted. HRCA transformed some of its own premises into shelters also in Budapest. HRCA created a countrywide database of available shelters offered by congregations, church institutions and members of local churches.

HRCA has been blessed with a growing number of volunteers who kept working faithfully and restlessly at the railway stations in the past days. They not only dedicate their time, energy and expertise, like medical doctors, but bring fruits, medicines, toiletries, soft drinks, toys and so much more. In the meantime, HRCA is preparing food packages around the clock, delivers non-perishable food to its central warehouses in Budapest, Debrecen and Gelenes, a hub for the distribution of humanitarian aid, near the border. To coordinate offerings, delivery and distribution, HRCA set up a hotline.

Facts and stats as of 03.03.2022

- The HRCA is now present in a total of **8 supply hubs**.
- Total **financial donation of congregations and individuals exceeded 200 000 EUR**
- To date, HRCA have **provided 32,400 people** with some form of assistance (information, meals, hygiene products, and ongoing help with transport and accommodation).
- More than **17 tonnes of in-kind donations**, mainly durable food and hygiene products were delivered to Transcarpathia, Ukraine.
- More than **1800 volunteers** have already volunteered (including 80 interpreters and 12 medical doctors), and HRCA's complete staff (ca. 50 persons) have been involved in the Emergency Response and continues to do so.
- In Budapest **HRCA is present** at the Western Railway Station, the Eastern Railway Station, the Reformed Mission Centre (shelter), the so called 'Transylvanian church' (shalter) and the St Columba Church of Scotland in Budapest (the international congregation of the Reformed Church in Hungary); in the countryside HRCA is present at the Debrecen Central Station, the Záhony railway station and border crossing, Beregsurány, Tiszabecs and Lónya border crossing as needed.

- HRCA **three warehouses** (daily from 8 am to 8 pm) in Budapest, Ebes and Gelénes, and several smaller capacities at each location thanks to the local authorities and the MÁV (hungarian railway).
- HRCA receives on average **5-10 press enquiries** a day from national and international media (Reformátusok Lapja, Telex, Index, M1, TV2, RTL Klub, HírTv, county news papers, Reuters, etc.).

HRCA's national fundraising campaign is ongoing: non-perishing food, hygiene supplies, children's care items etc. are handled by the warehouses.

National and international

National and international donation campaign - financial assistance:

HRCA has started a donation campaign and is ready for cooperation with international partners of the Hungarian Reformed Church. Donations from abroad can be transferred to the HRCA's bank account as follows:

**Beneficiary: Magyar Református Szeretetszolgálat Közhasznú Alapítvány
(Hungarian Reformed Church Aid Public Foundation)
IBAN: HU67 1070 2019 8500 8898 5110 0005
SWIFT: CIBHHUHBXXX
Name of the Bank: CIB BANK Ltd.
Address of the Bank: Medve u. 4-14., 1027 Budapest, Hungary
Payment Remark: Ukraine**

Communication and information

The Reformed Church in Hungary, the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, with their limited capacities, are dedicated to keep partners and the international community informed about the Emergency Aid by publishing **daily updates, articles and reports.**

For updated information, visit the English website of the Reformed Church in Hungary (<https://reformatus.hu/english/>) and the dedicated continuously updated web page:

<https://reformatus.hu/english/news/emergency-response-for-ukraine/>

Contact

We kindly ask our international partners to address with questions and requests the Ecumenical Officer of the Reformed Church in Hungary (Balázs Ódor, odor.balazs@reformatus.hu) and the international officer of the Diaconia/HRCA (Ms. Anna Derencsényi, derencsenyi.anna@ diakonia.hu) .

About

Hungarian Reformed Church Aid

The Hungarian Reformed Church Aid was founded in 2006 by the Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary. In the spirit of the Christian responsibility and the Unity if the Hungarian speaking reformed Churches in the region across national borders, the organization considers

the Carpathian Basin as its primary area of activity. HRCA is an aid organization with a Protestant background that is engaged with relief and development based on Christian values also internationally. It believes that human life represents the highest value. It helps with its humanitarian relief regardless of race, gender, religion and political affiliation.

<https://jobbadni.hu/en/>

Refugee Ministry of the Reformed Church in Hungary

The Refugee Ministry was founded in 2006. The refugee integration work is coordinated under the HRCA's Unit for Refugee Ministry. The General Implementing Partner is Kalunba Social Services Nonprofit Ltd. Our overall vision and strategy is to assist Hungarian society in "welcoming the stranger" and accepting "newcomers" as brothers and sisters. We aim not only to help with material goods but also to provide helpers who see to spiritual and psycho-social needs, welcoming the newcomers into a supportive community.

The three main activities of the Refugee Ministry are assisting refugees to access safe housing, helping refugees to further their education and gain employment, and teaching Hungarian in a professional and practical manner to facilitate integration.

<https://reformatus.hu/english/church-and-society/mission-people/refugee-ministry/>