



Weekly Dispatch No. 1

March 17, 2022

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In light of current events, our team at COIL wanted to provide you with real time impressions from countries across the region as they react to the ongoing crisis. As you know, alumni of the Open World Program are spread across Eastern Europe, and beyond. While these are their stories, they are also the stories of ordinary citizens living in a very different world than they knew just weeks ago. They are stories of bravery, sacrifice, and loss. We hope these snapshots inform, and even inspire. Thank you for your continued support of what we do and those that we have the privilege to call our friends. ~Jane Sargus, Executive Director



"Alumnus **Ivan Fedorov**, Mayor of Melitopol, has been abducted by the Russian military personnel while performing humanitarian duties in the city on March 11, 2022. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the President of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Parliament have called upon the international community to help free Fedorov. The United States Conference of Mayors has released a statement on the Kidnapping of a Ukrainian Mayor by Russian Forces."

Read more [here](#)

- Alum from Melitopol, Ukraine hosted by Springfield Commission on International Visitors, Springfield, IL 2018

"Packing a suitcase for my baby. Heart, my heart, how much longer can you take?"

- Alumna in Ukraine hosted by Global Ties Alabama, Huntsville, AL 2019



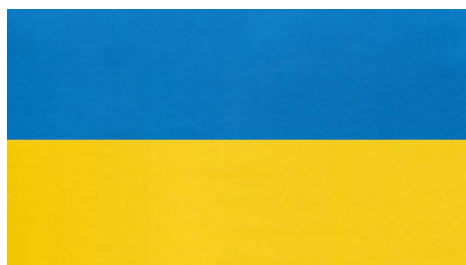
"A psychologist also needs a psychologist."

Today I broke the rule, working as a volunteer psychologist at the humanitarian aid center for immigrants. Going home in a

taxi this evening I cried all the way for the people of Ukraine...

People arrive from all over our region. People are bloody, they have seen their loved ones killed in front of their eyes. People are in Acute Stress Disorder. We must help them."

- Alumna from Dnipro, Ukraine hosted by World Affairs Council of Kentucky and S. Indiana 2017



"I am with my wife and two children, ages 6 and 16, in the city of Chernihiv near the Russian border. We have been living in a damp and cold basement for two weeks... there is no light, gas, or water. The communications are jammed: there is no television, Wi-Fi is not working well, food is running out. I have been suffering from the flu for several days now. It is impossible to leave the city under siege. As I write, I hear machine-gun fire and shells exploding. I hope it will end as soon as possible, I hope to survive with my family. God help us!!! God, save Ukraine!!! If possible, talk about Ukraine to officials around the world to help Ukraine and the Ukrainian people." - **Alum from Chernihiv, Ukraine hosted by Rotary Club of Sheboygan, WI 2019**



"It's been a long, hard day. There are many more to come... Constant memories from 2014 (*Revolution of Dignity*.)

Tens of thousands of Ukrainians, both here and abroad, are rejecting Russian troops and have mobilized for a common goal - the preservation of Ukraine and its global choice.

Today, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the national guard, the SBU, the border guards, volunteers and thousands of citizens repelled the aggressor, unfortunately, at the cost of their lives...Tough night ahead of us. But tens of thousands of Ukrainians are organized, armed, and prepared to fight!"

- Alum from Ukraine hosted by Friendship Force of

"Our **Independent Life Center of Batumi** had a Zoom teleconference with Ukrainian people with disabilities and their parents. They were talking to us from the basements where they don't even have elementary household conditions. They also don't have medications, hygiene products, food supplies, etc.

We've found that sending parcels is often pointless because it may not reach the address, so the best way to help them is to collect and transfer money to a vetted organization to distribute."



- **Alum in Batumi, Georgia**
hosted by Tulsa Global Alliance
in Tulsa, OK 2022



"Four years have passed since the occupation regime abducted and brutally assaulted **Archil Tatunashvili**. They waited almost a month to transfer the body back to Georgian authorities. Our country has to fight the harsh consequences of occupation on a daily basis. Russia, with the recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk, once again, have brutally violated the principles of international law.

I hope the international community will be united and in principle.

My support to the Ukrainian people!"

-**Alum from Georgia hosted by**
International Visitor's Center of
Jackson, Jackson MS, 2018

"...we have planned a large-scale rally in Kutaisi. So we have a lot to do all week and need volunteers ... these two are first to come and register. One of them is a 71-year-old grandfather.



Everyone has a role in this protest."

**- Alum from Kutaisi,
Georgia hosted by League
of Women Voters of
Hendersonville County,
Henderson, NC 2016**

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