



Children's Freedom for Future Report

***Living conditions of Ukrainian orphans
during the war***

Montréal Canada
June 2023
www.childfff.org

Everyone decides for himself how he will react when he sees with his own eyes the grief of others.

We decided to get up and go help the weakest and most vulnerable - the orphans.

Children's Freedom for Future

This report is the final document after a year of work by our humanitarian organization Children's Freedom for Future providing direct on-the-ground assistance to Ukrainian orphans in both Ukraine and Russia.

First of all, we want to clarify that our organization has a fundamental principle of absolute apoliticism, that is, we reject any engagement with any part of the armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia. Our most important goal is the welfare of orphans, their right to life and a happy future!

Our humanitarian organization Children's Freedom for Future was created to protect the rights and freedoms of children (Annex 1, Registration documents of our organization at the federal level in Canada). We want to protect children not just in Canada, but around the world. Thus, we began to collect information about the dramatic situation of orphanages in Ukraine in May 2022. Our organization sent its vice-president, Mr. Kim Tsoj to the territory of Ukraine. In May last year before traveling to Ukraine, Mr. Tsoj was mandated (Annex 2, Mandate of Authority) by our organization to communicate with various international and governmental organizations such as the Government of Canada, European Parliament, Caritas International as well as the International Red Cross, on the level of humanitarian assistance that these organizations can or already provide to the people and the children of Ukraine since the beginning of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Thus, from negotiations with Ms. Fanny Lafourcade, director of humanitarian aid at the European Commission, Mr. Tsoj learned that the European Parliament had created a crisis committee for humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Head of this emergency committee, Ms. Christina Martinez, described to Mr. Tsoj the enormous complexity and the great difficulties in bringing aid to Ukraine. With all the great desire of all European countries to help Ukraine, this goal was difficult to achieve, mainly because nobody was ready for military action in Europe and the lack of human resources also explained the additional delays in the delivery of humanitarian aid. It should be noted that at the very beginning of the armed conflict, the whole humanitarian aid to Ukraine was poorly organized and sometimes even chaotic. As a result of this, the situation of the most vulnerable segments of the population such as orphans was catastrophic to say the least, we received calls from directors of Ukrainian orphanages with information that even young children eat black bread soaked in the water, this applied even to children aged three or four weeks from birth. To our questions why there is no coordination in the distribution of humanitarian aid on the territory of Ukraine, we were informed that the main problem is the impossibility of transporting humanitarian cargo due to a great danger, as well as the reluctance of Ukrainian men to cross the border, since once they appeared on the territory of Ukraine, they could no longer leave due to the full mobilization of all men under the age of 60.

At the end of June 2022, Mr. Tsoj from Children's Freedom for Future crossed the Ukrainian border towards the city of Lviv. Within a few days he managed to visit several orphanages in the Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv regions. The main result of these trips was the confirmation of a humanitarian disaster due to the lack of coordination in the work of state structures responsible for protecting and ensuring the lives of children in orphanages. One of the days when we were supposed to visit an orphanage in the Ternopil region, but since every 10 km there were checkpoints on the road between Lviv and Ternopil, which significantly increased the travel time, we arrived quite late and the children were already put to rest at lunchtime. The director of this orphanage told me that many children had been brought from eastern Ukraine and that some were in a very bad psychological state. He said they have a daughter who was very traumatized because she saw how her parents died, she had been in this orphanage for several weeks but she never spoke to anyone, ate very little and constantly looked out the door window how the other children were playing. When Mr. Tsoj entered the dorm where the children were lying one of the children got up and walked towards him, the staff who were in the dorm were numb with surprise as it was the same little girl who did not speak to anyone and did not communicate. Approaching Mr. Tsoj, she held out her hands to him and, kissing him by the neck, whispered thanks in Russian. At that moment, Mr. Tsoj realized that this mission was changing from a humanitarian mission to a mission of God.

The main result of this trip was to understand that we can feed the children if they are hungry, give clothes to the children if they are cold, but what we cannot give to orphans during the war, is a sense of security. We must do all we can to provide a sense of security for the most vulnerable member of our society, the orphans.

Understanding the seriousness of the situation of children in orphanages during armed conflict, our organization Children's Freedom for Future has developed a plan for the safety of orphanages during any armed conflict. In the month of July 2022, a draft plan dubbed Divine Shield was proposed at the Elysée Palace for the attention of President Emmanuel Macron, at that time French President Emmanuel Macron was practically the only European leader with a position sufficiently pragmatic and open-minded for discussions between the warring parties to the armed conflict in Ukraine. Then we sent the Divine Shield proposal to the United Nations Secretary General Mr. António Guterres, the Vatican and other international organizations and governments.

During the fall and early winter of 2022, we have been in constant contact with orphanages in Ukraine and have constantly tried to provide all possible assistance to orphans. Also during this period, our organization Children's Freedom for Future continued to work to promote our peace plan to secure spaces around orphanages with orphans during the armed conflict, so we were in regular communication with the Vatican through Cardinal Michael Czerny S.J.

In mid-November 2022, we were very concerned about the situation in all orphanages in Ukraine, related to living conditions in the cold season. Following the bombardment of Ukraine's critical infrastructure by the Russian Federation, including the electrical system, the lack of electricity for water supply and heating could lead to the death of orphans. We contacted the Government of Canada, including the Federal Humanitarian Aid Agency, calling International Affairs. When we asked for help from this organization for the purchase of much needed electric generators to warm children in orphanages in Ukraine, we received a response from the Minister of International Development of Canada Mr. Harjits S. Sajjan (Annex 3) and the Director General of the Global Affairs Agency Mr. Stephen Salewicz that Canada has already sent 1,200 for humanitarian needs in Ukraine. In mid-January 2023, Mr. Tsoj made a second humanitarian trip to Ukraine. One of the purposes of this trip was to organize an international conference on the protection of orphanages during armed conflicts called Divine Shield, which was to be held in Kyiv. On January 15, Mr. Tsoj brought documents with a proposal to organize an international conference on the protection of orphanages during armed conflicts to the office of the President of Ukraine, Mr. Zelensky. But that day, Mr. Tsoj did not meet with any of the representatives of President Zelensky's office. All day in the office of President Zelensky there was complete chaos. Returning home in the evening, Mr. Tsoj learned from television programs that during the day several key employees of President Zelensky's office, as well as several deputy ministers of the Ukrainian government and a number of governors of Ukrainian regions, had been sacked on corruption charges.

While waiting for a response from the office of the President of Ukraine to the proposal to organize an international conference in Kiev on child safety, Mr. Tsoj continued to work on direct humanitarian aid to orphanages and also continued to work on the organization of an international conference. To that end, Mr. Tsoj was negotiating with several diplomatic missions in Kyiv to invite European and North American representatives to attend a peace conference to ensure the safety of the orphans. Negotiations have also taken place with representatives of Kyiv City Hall for the participation of the City of Kyiv in the form of providing premises for this conference.

During several trips to orphanages, Mr. Tsoj witnessed the most difficult situation for orphans: lack of food, poor quality clothes and constant stress had a very bad effect on the health of orphans. Mr. Tsoj witnessed that in several orphanages, in the absence of electricity, there was no heating. The truly heroic efforts of the orphanage staff saved the lives of the orphans, since in the dormitories the temperature did not exceed 3° Celsius, the weakest of the orphans could not survive such cold nights. In such a situation, the wives of the staff of the orphanages did not even leave for the night at home and stayed and went to bed, taking with them the weakest children, in order to warm them with the heat of their bodies until in the morning. ***If there are any real heroes in this war on the part of Ukraine, it is, in our deep conviction, all the staff of the orphanages.***

On several occasions, Mr. Tsoj asked these women and men why they would not leave for Europe, where they would be guaranteed a safe life, to which all these people replied that they would leave the children poor, because one of the obvious things was that the state did not care at all for the most vulnerable members of society, the orphans of Ukraine. Another strange aspect is that our organization was the only international humanitarian fund that worked to help orphans in Ukraine, in most cases the last time orphanages received humanitarian aid from international organizations was at best in May 2022 in this case, it was the international red cross that provided aid in the form of basic necessities, baby food and some clothing. In one of the orphanages in the Kyiv region, an explosion near this building broke the glass of several windows in early November 2022. After several unsuccessful requests for help from local and central authorities, the management of this orphanage has been forced to close the broken windows with panels, which in turn it has a bad effect on the temperature in the rooms for children.

Many directors of orphanages in Ukraine have shared with Mr. Tsoj that the Ukrainian government is constantly cutting budget funds and practically cutting orphanages from international humanitarian aid.

We believe that the presence of martial law and the fact that Ukraine is in a state of war cannot justify the total inaction of the Ukrainian government and President Zelensky personally, the total lack of interest in Ukrainian children who found in orphanages on the territory of Ukraine. All our questions, where the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars transferred by Western countries for humanitarian aid to children go, remain unanswered. Moreover, our initiative to provide safe zones around orphanages was torpedoed by a bribery attempt by representatives of President Zelensky's office, so on February 8, 2023, Oleksiy Titarenko, a representative of President Zelensky's office, proposed Mr. Tsoj to participate in a corruption scheme in which the Director of the President's Office Andriy Yarmak and President Zelensky personally wanted to receive 400,000 euros in cash for the organization of an international conference called Divine Shield. Following Mr. Tsoj's refusal to participate in corrupt activities, Mr. Tsoj urgently left the territory of Ukraine on February 9, 2023.

A few weeks later, our organization received an official response from the Ukrainian government, a document signed by the Deputy Director of the Social Security Department of Ukraine, Mr. Volodymyr Vovk (Annex 4), which stated that the Ukrainian government did not was not interested in international involvement to ensure the safety of orphans during the war and that all children in Ukraine are safe, which in itself is a completely absurd statement, because not a single person and not a single building on the territory of Ukraine cannot be safe.

Upon Mr. Tsoj's return to Canada, our organization took steps to ensure the eventual safety of Ukrainian orphans in the Russian Federation, for this we contacted the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Ottawa and suggested that the government Russian considers our Divine Shield project. The Russian side was very interested in the possibility of ensuring the safety of orphans in orphanages on the territory of Ukraine.

For further discussion, the participation of the Russian Federation in the process of peace and security of children during this conflict and also with the main aim of seeing with our own eyes the conditions in which orphans from Ukraine live in orphanages Mr. Tsoj from Children' Freedom for Future went on a humanitarian trip to Russia in May 2023. The first thing that is very surprising in Russia is everyone's deep desire to sincerely help orphans, which in our opinion is the opposite in Ukraine.

At the very beginning of Mr. Tsoj's visit to Moscow, he was received by the representative of the ambootsman for children's issues, Mrs. Maria Lvova-Belova. During negotiations with the legal assistant of the children's ambootsman, Mr. Mikhail Dmitriev, the reasons for the transfer of Ukrainian orphans to the territory of the Russian Federation were clarified, because in order to protect the life and health of children in the territories controlled by Russia, there was no other way out than to withdraw its children from the line of military contact. To the question of our vice-president, Mr. Tsoj, concerning the living conditions of Ukrainian children compared to Russian children in orphanages, Mr. Dmitriev replied that most often Ukrainian orphans are treated better, since everyone understands the difficulties they had to go through.

We received support also at the level of the offices of the governors of the Krasnodar Territory (Annex 5) and the Rostov region. Most orphans in Ukraine are found on the territory of these regions.

During visits to orphanages with Ukrainian children, Mr. Tsoj was able to verify the veracity of the officials' statements on the good living conditions of the orphans (as far as possible), all the children are fed, well dressed and housed in good conditions. During the period of visiting orphanages, some children have already started going to summer rest homes, this also applies to orphans with disabilities.

The most important thing that all representatives of the press and Western international analysts forget to mention is that these children live in safety, in our opinion the State of the Russian Federation offers good living conditions and a secure future for orphans Ukrainians. Of all the conversations with the children and the staff of the orphanage, the main leitmotif is the feeling of security and, in our opinion, this is the main thing in the educational process of children.

We would not like to give our own opinion on the situation of Ukrainian orphans displaced from the territory of Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation, but we can provide the opinion of one of the leaders of the orphanage "Teremok" in the city of Donetsk. Ms. Raisa Andreevna Prilipko described the situation with orphans in the Donetsk People's Republic (Ms. Prilipko gave us permission to quote her in this report):

If the Russian government had not made a decision to evacuate children from areas not controlled by Kyiv, then there would have been many orphans who died because of the Ukrainian bombing. We had the feeling that the Ukrainian army was purposefully shooting at the neighborhoods where the children were. It was terrible and I am sure that Putin saved these unfortunate children from certain death.

We may have different attitudes towards politicians, but one thing is certain for all people - this is that there is no place for children where there is a war!

Moreover, Ukrainian orphans find themselves in a cultural and linguistic environment very close to Ukrainian. In the event of a future end to the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Ukrainian children currently in the Russian Federation will be able to reintegrate into Ukraine without great difficulty. What can not be said about children who were taken to European countries. Mr. Tsoj repeatedly witnessed the conversations of Ukrainian orphanage educators with orphans taken to Germany at the start of the conflict. Despite all the goodwill and true love for Ukrainian children, the organizers of orphanages in Germany are forced to raise Ukrainian children in the German language and in a culture foreign to Ukrainian children, which, in our opinion, will create a very negative effect on Ukrainian children in the event of their return to Ukraine.

An important part of Mr. Tsoj's humanitarian visit to Russia was also negotiations with the Russian Orthodox Church about possible support for our Divine Shield project from the Russian Orthodox Church. We are currently awaiting written support for our peace plan.

Also, Mr. Tsoj has entered into negotiations with the Embassy of the People's Republic of China so that Mr. Li Hui conveys our desire that China act as guarantor of strict compliance with the conditions of the security zones within the framework of our Divine Shield's peace plan around orphanages in the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

By way of conclusion, we would like to call on all people of good will to cross the barrier of hatred and start a common dialogue for the benefit of safeguarding orphans. The quarrels of adults or the geopolitical interests of countries must not give us the right to cause irreparable damage to children.

God is not the only one to protect orphans, we must all be with God in this work - we will protect orphans together!

Presidency and Founders Committee
Children's Freedom for Future