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THE RESPONSE OF DIASPORA AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS: CASE STUDY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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Abstract

This article is dedicated to the multifaceted support that Ukrainian diaspora and Catholic organizations in the Republic of Croatia have been providing to Ukrainian refugees since the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022. The study details the systemic response of such key religious institutions as the Diocese of Križevci, Caritas, and the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Particular attention is paid to integration initiatives, like educational programs developed by the Catholic University of Croatia (HKS), and the provision of spiritual and pastoral care, which remains the unique prerogative of the Church. The study emphasizes coordination between ecclesiastical and state bodies, and international foundations, such as Renovabis. The authors conclude that the comprehensive church response, encompassing humanitarian assistance, psychological support, and cultural integration, have played an important role in the successful adaptation of Ukrainian displaced persons and significantly contributed to their mental health and a positive humanitarian image of the Republic of Croatia.

Keywords: Ukrainian refugees; Republic of Croatia; diaspora; Catholic Church; Eparchy of Križevci; Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS); pastoral care; Caritas.

Introduction

The Ukrainian diaspora worldwide spans over 150 years and is renowned due to the initiatives dedicated to the revival and consolidation of Ukrainian statehood as the primary objective of the global Ukrainian community. The history of Ukrainian resettlement abroad is categorized into four major waves of emigration: the first wave happened between the late 19th century and the outbreak of World War I, driven by socio-economic hardships that forced

thousands of Ukrainians to seek better life abroad. The second mass exodus took place during the interwar period between the two World Wars, precipitated by both socio-economic factors and political circumstances. The third wave of emigration was triggered by World War II and the subsequent Soviet regime, as deadly dangerous for the Ukrainians as the wars. The late 20th century witnessed the fourth migration wave which was primarily socio-economic in nature. We further argue that the full-scale invasion gave rise to the fifth wave of migration, completely distinctive in quantity and quality.

At present, there is no definitive consensus on the exact number of individuals constituting the Ukrainian diaspora. According to various sources, the figures range from 12 to 20 million. The Ukrainian World Congress, a prominent international organization, reports that it represents approximately 20 million Ukrainians across 133 countries.¹

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, was a profound turning point, creating unprecedented challenges for these global communities. In the Republic of Croatia, where the historical Ukrainian and Ruthenian diaspora has been living for over 120 years and had cultural and educational societies and events,² the reaction was immediate. The crisis required the rapid mobilization of both state institutions and religious organizations to facilitate the reception and integration of thousands of displaced persons. This article examines the church's response to the refugee crisis, analyzing the demographic dynamics of the displaced population, the mechanisms of spiritual and material support, and the innovative integration programs created to help Ukrainians in their transition to life in Croatia.

Integration and Solidarity: Diaspora, Church and State Institutions Response to the Beginning of the War

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, caused the diaspora's profound distress and presented a multitude of challenges for Ukrainian communities globally. Foremost, these diaspora groups initiated extensive organizational efforts to provide aid and facilitate the reception of refugees who were fleeing the country in massive numbers. A significant portion of this organizational workload was undertaken by Greek Catholic religious organizations in Croatia, which actively engaged in supporting refugees and coordinating the

¹ Web archive (2017, Aug, 27). *50 years of the UWC: Ukrainians around the world called to defeat the imperial aggressor and reclaim their territory.* (URL : <https://web.archive.org/web/20170827125748/https://uazmi.org/news/post/ba3ustePP9Dr8jVCZ074LK>)

² Galyna Sagan, Sviatoslav Rublyk, *Activities of the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Society "Kobzar" (Zagreb) in organizing diaspora life in Croatia.* (Kyiv, Kyiv Historical Studies. Collection of Scientific Papers. Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. 2022, № 2), 9-18.

delivery of humanitarian aid to Ukraine. These efforts were primarily spearheaded by communities comprising representatives of the long-established Ukrainian and Rusyn diasporas.

The Ukrainians and Rusyns of Croatia constitute a historic Ukrainian diaspora (Table 1). The Rusyns migrated to these territories in the late 18th century,³ while the segment of the diaspora identifying as Ukrainian has resided in Croatia for over 120 years.⁴ Currently, Croatia is home to 1,343 Ukrainians and 1,905 Rusyns.⁵ From the onset of the Russian Federation's full-scale assault, the Ukrainian community in Croatia, alongside Croatian citizens, began organizing anti-war protests and actively contributing to the support of Ukraine. On February 24 and 27, 2022, rallies were held in Zagreb, where participants expressed solidarity with Ukraine and called upon the international community to halt Putin's aggression. Demonstrators displayed Ukrainian national flags and placards with slogans such as "Stop war!", "Stop Putin!", "Close the sky over Ukraine!", "We want peace!", and "Hands off Ukraine! Stop the aggressor!".⁶

Table 1. Historical Ukrainian and Rusyn Diaspora in the Republic of Croatia

Ethnic Group	Population Size	Period of Settlement
Rusyns	1,905	Late 18th Century
Ukrainians	1,343	Late 19th / Early 20th Century (120+ years)
Total	3,248	

The initial influx of Ukrainian refugees arrived in Croatia as early as February 25, 2022. By July 1, 2022, a total of 20,456 individuals had entered the country, consisting of 10,258 women (50.1%), 3,292 men (16.1%), and 6,906 children (33.8%). Additionally, 113 of those arriving from Ukraine were third-country nationals.⁷ As of October 10, 2022, a total of 21,895

³ Oleksandr Levchenko, *The oldest Ukrainian diaspora lives in Croatia "Forum of National Minorities"*. (URL : <https://croatia.mfa.gov.ua/news/303-najbilysh-davnya-ukrajinsyka-diaspora-zhive-v-khorvatiji>)

⁴ Galyna Sagan, *History of formation and modern trends of religious life of Ukrainians in Croatia*. (Kyiv, Kyiv Historical Studies. Collection of scientific works. Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University. 2022, № 1 (14)), 56-62.

⁵ *Basic information on the integration of foreigners into Croatian society*. (URL : https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti//Vodi%C4%8D%20kroz%20integraciju_UKRAJINSK_I.pdf)

⁶ Andrii Iatsiv, *Diaspora for Ukraine. Croatia*. (URL : <https://miok.lviv.ua/?p=20560>)

⁷ *Report of the interdepartmental working group as of 30.06.2022*. (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 2), 31.

displaced persons from Ukraine had arrived in the Republic of Croatia, comprising 10,911 women (49.9%), 3,678 men (16.7%), and 7,306 children (33.4%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Ukrainian Refugees in Croatia (Jul - Oct, 2022)

Demographic Category	As of July 1, 2022	As of October 10,
Women	10,258 (50.1%)	10,911 (49.9%)
Men	3,292 (16.1%)	3,678 (16.7%)
Children	6,906 (33.8%)	7,306 (33.4%)
Total Ukrainian displaced persons	20,456	21,895
Third-country nationals	113	—

From February 25, 2022, the Directorate of Civil Protection commissioned 46 facilities dedicated to the assistance of displaced persons. Regarding accommodation, 1,581 individuals were housed in collective centers, while 20,314 were accommodated in private residences⁸ (Table 3).

Table 3: Accommodation and Infrastructure for Displaced Persons (Feb – Oct 2022)

Category	Data / Number
Total Service Facilities Commissioned	46 facilities
Individual / Private Residences	20,314 individuals
Collective Housing Centers	1,581 individuals
Commencement of Operations	February 25, 2022

Public institutions served as the primary coordinators for the resettlement of refugees in the Republic of Croatia. Notably, the Directorate of Civil Protection initiated extensive support measures for Ukrainian refugees starting February 25, 2022. From the earliest stages, the Directorate mobilized 40 service facilities (consisting of 3 individual and 37 collective units), alongside a catering enterprise for food preparation and delivery, a laundry service, and a logistics company. These facilities accommodated 1,734 individuals, with 9 persons placed in individual housing, and 1,725 in collective centers across Croatia. By July 1, 2022, 18,722

⁸ *News in numbers*. (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 3), 23-24.

individuals were registered in private accommodations; furthermore, by June 30, 2022, the Croatian Red Cross had documented a total of 12,367 displaced persons from Ukraine. In addition to administrative support, Croatia provided substantial financial assistance to Ukraine: on March 2, 2022, aid totaling HRK 9,105,866 was dispatched, followed by a further HRK 1,339,090 on April 20, 2022.⁹

The Croatian Civil Protection Operational Forces implemented a comprehensive range of measures to assist Ukrainian displaced persons. Among these initiatives was the establishment of 24-hour communication with the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in Brussels. The Operational Center maintained continuous monitoring of global developments and the influx of displaced persons into Croatia, coordinating all actions based on reports from the emergency services and other relevant agencies. To facilitate the rapid collection and dissemination of information regarding refugee resettlement, an operational task force was established. In collaboration with the Directorate of Civil Protection, the operational forces of the civil protection system, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Labor, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia, and the General Police Directorate, this task force coordinated the entry of Ukrainians into Croatia. On March 20, 2022, an official web portal (<https://hrvatskazaukrajinu.gov.hr>)¹⁰ was launched to provide essential information and guidance on the legal rights and procedures for Ukrainian refugees within the Republic of Croatia.

The Eparchy of Križevci and Catholic Organizations in Aid of Ukrainian Refugees

Greek Catholic priests of the Eparchy of Križevci played a pivotal role in supporting refugees in Croatia. Beyond material assistance, the Ukrainian clergy recognized the profound psychological trauma experienced by refugees who had witnessed the horrors of war and were forced to flee their homes, often leaving family members behind in active combat zones. Consequently, the priests immediately initiated spiritual consolation and pastoral care. Given that the refugees were dispersed across various Croatian cities, the clergy conducted outreach missions to locations with high concentrations of displaced Ukrainians.

On Friday, April 1, 2022, Father Andriy Savyak, Father Ihor Sikora (Parish Priest of Piškorevci), Father Vladimir Simunović (Eparchial Chancellor), and Sister Veronika Galatan

⁹ *Report of the interdepartmental working group as of 30.06.2022.* (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 2), 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

of the Order of Saint Basil the Great visited refugees at the Višnjica Hotel near Slatina. They extended a welcome to the displaced persons, offering solace amidst the tragic circumstances of the war. The Ukrainian refugees expressed profound gratitude for the hospitality and sanctuary provided during these challenging times. It was arranged that Father Ihor Sikora, residing in closest proximity to Višnjica, would conduct regular visits to the site. During these sessions, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated, including the blessing of olive branches for Palm Sunday—an event of great significance to the community. Furthermore, on Sunday, April 3, 2022, Chancellor Vladimir Simunović celebrated the Holy Liturgy for approximately thirty Ukrainian believers in Đurđevac, where they gathered to pray for peace in Ukraine.

In Slavonski Brod, within the Greek Catholic Parish of the Holy Cross, the parish priest, Father Oleksandr Hmil, regularly convenes Ukrainians for worship and conducts outreach visits to refugees.¹¹ During Holy Week and Easter of the year 2022, numerous gatherings of the faithful were held across the Eparchy of Križevci. These ceremonies, characterized by prayers for peace in Ukraine and the world, saw high attendance from Ukrainian refugees, while eparchial clergy visited the primary resettlement sites.¹²

Since April 2022, the Eparchy of Križevci, in collaboration with Caritas, has extended its operations to provide aid directly to those remaining in Ukraine. One of the primary initiatives targeted hospitals in Lviv and Uzhhorod, conducted by Caritas in partnership with the "*Dobro-Dobrim*" (Do-Do) Association from Velika Gorica. The project was coordinated by the leadership of these institutions: Nenad Krajačić, Director of Caritas; Senad Palić, President of the "Do-Do" Association; and Radovan Zebec, Vice-President of the Association. Together, they facilitated the shipment of medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and equipment to healthcare facilities in Uzhhorod and Lviv. Financial and material contributions to the Caritas fund were provided by the faculty and staff of the Catholic Theological Faculty in Zagreb, alongside various corporate entities such as "Jasenska d.o.o." and numerous primary and secondary schools. Through these collective efforts, Caritas managed to dispatch weekly aid shipments via vans and trucks to the aforementioned hospitals and the Basilian Monastery in Lviv, which served as a major center for internally displaced persons from Eastern Ukraine.

On April 6, 2022, the mission was joined by volunteers from Zadar, the "Kantalice" singing group, and humanitarian actors from Istria and the "Istria Helps" (*Istra Pomaže*)

¹¹ *Greek Catholic priests take spiritual care of many Ukrainian refugees.* (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 2), 3.

¹² *Easter was solemnly celebrated throughout the Križevci diocese.* (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 2), 9.

Association. Furthermore, several Ukrainians resettled in Velika Gorica joined the project as volunteers. Father Nenad Krajačić, Director of Caritas of the Eparchy of Križevci, expressed profound gratitude to all contributors, particularly the "*Dobro-Dobrim*" Association, which is well-regarded by the Croatian public for its extensive humanitarian work. Both Caritas of the Eparchy of Križevci and the "*Dobro-Dobrim*" Association continue their ongoing commitment to providing aid to Ukraine. Specifically, on June 11, 2022, the 56th humanitarian aid shipment, containing food supplies, hygiene products, and medicines, arrived in Ukraine.¹³

Throughout the conflict, Croatian organizations consistently endeavored to respond to the evolving needs arising from continued Russian aggression. Following the targeted destruction of Ukrainian energy infrastructure by Russian missile strikes, which necessitated alternative power sources, the Caritas of the Eparchy of Križevci and the "*Dobro-Dobrim*" Association dispatched a humanitarian cargo on December 28, 2022, including 38 electrical generators. Volunteers in Slavonski Brod efficiently coordinated the loading of this aid into two Ukrainian transport vessels provided by Caritas Croatia.¹⁴

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Support to Ukrainian Refugees

Over the years of the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war, the support provided by Catholic organizations in Croatia to Ukrainian refugees has not stopped or slowed down; on the contrary, its scale and scope continue to expand. By early 2026, the number of Ukrainian refugees in Croatia has increased to approximately 30,000. In addition to the previously mentioned religious organizations, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Zagreb has launched extensive support initiatives. The Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic humanitarian organization operating in over 50 countries. It has been active in Croatia since the Homeland War of the 1990s. The core mission of JRS is to accompany, serve, and advocate for the needs and rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, facilitating their integration and empowering them to determine their own futures.

The organization strives to foster a society characterized by hospitality, dialogue, and mutual support for both refugees and their host communities. JRS identifies the accompaniment of refugees through the integration process as the most vital expression of solidarity and concern for their well-being. In a global climate where refugees increasingly face

¹³ *Caritas of the Križevatsk Diocese organized assistance to doctors in Lviv and Uzhgorod.* (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 2), 5.

¹⁴ *Two tugboats with power plants were sent to Ukraine.* (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2022, № 4), 27.

rejection, ostracism, and violations of fundamental human rights, it is imperative to provide them with the opportunity to become active and equal members of society. Consequently, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) offers not only practical assistance but also accompaniment as a symbol of hope and a pathway to healing. It is essential to emphasize that the organization's religious foundation does not constitute a barrier to accessing its services. Refugees and individuals under temporary protection are not required to convert, participate in religious practices, or fulfill any such obligations. JRS staff and volunteers strictly adhere to the principles of non-discrimination—regardless of religious, national, or racial background—and strive to provide maximum assistance to every individual within their capacity and mandate.

The JRS operations in Croatia, Kosovo, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are led by the Regional Director, Father Stanko Perica. The Croatian branch, based in Zagreb, is managed by Ms. Ana Marčinko, born in Dubrovnik. The organization employs a diverse group of mediators and interpreters, including Ms. Natalya Lumezi, originally from Kaniv, Ukraine, who coordinates support for refugees from Ukraine and post-Soviet states, and Mr. Tony Tomeh, who comes from Syria, who works with refugees from the Middle East and other regions. Legal counsel is provided by Sister Mary, an expert in European and Croatian law, while financial and administrative matters are managed by Nikolina Barišić.

JRS provides comprehensive support to refugees and migrants, including:

- Housing assistance (through inter-agency cooperation);
- Interpretation services during registration and at medical or governmental institutions;
- Legal consultations (covering residential leases and the validation of academic credentials);
- Psychological support and Croatian language courses (levels A1-B1);
- Integration initiatives, such as the "Coffee in Croatian" social meetings.

Particular attention is devoted to the psychological well-being of Ukrainians. The service employs Ukrainian psychologists who operate under the supervision of Croatian specialists. Currently, four Ukrainian psychologists serve within JRS: Kateryna Sakharova, Ksenia Fisun, Liliia Ostryzhna, and Valeriia Movenko. JRS also systematically organizes educational and cultural events. Special recognition is due to the Croatian language instructors, including Lesia Petrovska, Martina Barišić-Tinči, and Martina Plješćić. A significant contribution was also made by Ms. Daria Pavlyshyn through her online course which remains a unique free resource for Ukrainians in Croatia. In addition to educational programs, JRS organizes excursions,

workshops, artistic gatherings, and dance classes aimed at socialization and psychological recovery.¹⁵

The Eparchy of Križevci remains the leading institution in providing aid, a fact recognized far beyond the borders of Croatia. In early October 2025, Bishop Milan Stipić of the Eparchy of Križevci was granted an audience with Pope Leo XIV in the Vatican.¹⁶ Following his visit to the Holy See, Bishop Milan Stipić, accompanied by the faithful of the Eparchy, visited the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of Saint Sophia (Holy Wisdom) in Rome, where he celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom. The Church of Saint Sophia, commissioned by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Cardinal Josyf Slipyj (1892-1984) in the 1960s, serves as a vital gathering place for Ukrainians and other Greek Catholics in Rome today. In recognition of the Eparchy of Križevci's dedicated care for Ukrainian refugees, the parish priest presented Bishop Milan with a commemorative medal featuring the image of Cardinal Slipyj.¹⁷ Subsequently, in late October 2025, Bishop Milan Stipić personally traveled to Ukraine to deliver humanitarian aid to a kindergarten at the Basilian Monastery in Ivano-Frankivsk. Accompanied by Father Ante Jurković, theologian Ivan Delmate Bilić, and others, the Bishop delivered educational equipment and interactive tables for the kindergarten and the orphanage at the Monastery of Saint Joseph, run by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Basil the Great under the leadership of Sister Veronika Galatan. This aid was a gift from the Caritas of the Eparchy of Križevci and the "Dobro-Dobrim" Association from Velika Gorica. During his visit, Bishop Stipić also celebrated the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on the occasion of the titular feast at the Greek Catholic Church of Christ the King.¹⁸

Educational Integration for Displaced Ukrainians

Another significant form of support is provided through fee waving and cost-free enrollment in an educational integration course for persons under temporary protection from Ukraine. This project was initiated by the Catholic University of Croatia (Hrvatsko katoličko

¹⁵ *The role of the organization "Jesuit Service for Refugees" in the life of Ukrainians in Zagreb.* (Zagreb. Slovo Kobzara tromjesečnik UKPD Kobzar (Zagreb). 2025. № 16), 12-13.

¹⁶ *Bishop Milan Stipić and pilgrims from the Križevci diocese greeted the Holy Father on St. Peter's Square.* Ibid., 15.

¹⁷ *Bishop of the Kryzhevets Diocese, Milan Stipich with pilgrims visited the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of St. Sophia in Rome.* Ibid., 15.

¹⁸ *Bishop Milan Stipich delivered humanitarian aid and led the celebration of Christ the King in Ivano-Frankivsk.* Ibid., 20

sveučilište, HKS) in Zagreb and is funded by Renovabis, the solidarity initiative of the German Catholic Church.

The demand for Croatian language studies has increased significantly. This trend is attributed not only to the arrival of new displaced persons but also to the fact that many who initially anticipated a swift return to their homeland are increasingly considering long-term residency in their host country. Successful integration into Croatian society necessitates proficiency in the state language, as well as an understanding of the nation's culture, mentality, and history.

To address this, in 2022, HKS – at the request of the Ukrainian Community of the City of Zagreb (UCCZ) – developed a unique accelerated Integration and Educational Program (IEP). Launched as a pilot project in February 2023, the initiative was formalized through a tripartite agreement between UCCZ, HKS, and the Renovabis foundation for a three-year term. Upon the project's summary, the university intends to extend this program to migrants of all nationalities, international students, and labor migrants. A pivotal development occurred in 2025: HKS received official accreditation and licensing to issue state-recognized certificates of Croatian language proficiency directly through the university.¹⁹

Conclusion

The case study of the Republic of Croatia and its multilevel approach towards relocated Ukrainians since 2022 demonstrates a comprehensive and systematic response to the war in Ukraine and the refugee crisis. The findings lead to several key conclusions: first, the synergy between the historical and contemporary diaspora has served a vital foundation for the current humanitarian efforts; and second, the established parishes of the Križevci Diocese have become the primary centers for the reception and spiritual support giving possibility for social adaptation and resilience for the Ukrainian war refugees.

The support mechanisms are multidimensional and have not been limited to material assistance. While Caritas and the *Dobro-Dobrim* Association effectively managed the massive logistics, the Church played a unique role in providing pastoral care and psychological rehabilitation. This spiritual accompaniment proved essential for refugees who had experienced the trauma of war, occupation, torture, and displacement.

Furthermore, the institutional leadership in integration is also worth noting and has been disclosed in the given case study. The proactive stance of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and

¹⁹ *Croatian Catholic University and Ukrainians of the City of Zagreb*. Ibid., 19.

the Catholic University of Croatia (HKS) shifted the focus from short-term assistance to long-term integration. The development of accredited language programs and socio-cultural workshops facilitated the transition of refugees into active members of Croatian society, and it, among other things, led to the fact that a quick return to in-war Ukraine diminished for many.

Moreover, the article has revealed an overall positive impact on the image of the country of Croatia. The coordinated efforts of church bodies in cooperation with state authorities and international foundations such as Renovabis have contributed to the formation of a very positive humanitarian profile of the Republic of Croatia which has got a convincing image of a strong democracy. Such an enabling environment is also a major factor in the constant increase in the number of Ukrainian refugees in the country, which reached approximately 30,000 by the beginning of 2026.

One of the main conclusions is that exactly the Catholic community in Croatia has proven its key role in mitigating the consequences of the humanitarian catastrophe. Through a combination of material resources, educational innovations and spiritual leadership, these institutions have provided a holistic framework for the protection and preservation of the dignity of Ukrainians living far from their homeland.

For five consecutive years, the contributions of the Catholic Church and its affiliated organizations are of paramount importance, as certain forms of aid, especially pastoral care, spiritual accompaniment, and engagement in religious practices, can be uniquely provided by ecclesiastical institutions and are vital for people affected and traumatized by war. The Eparchy of Križevci, its clergy, and the eparchial Caritas foundation remain the primary leaders in this mission in Croatia, providing essential spiritual and material aid for the Ukrainian refugees, and enabling them to better navigate their personal tragedies and losses, facilitating their adaptation to the host country and the restoration of a dignified and full life.

Statement on the Use of AI

We confirm that this manuscript is our personal responsible authorship, although AI and AI-assisted technologies were situationally used to improve the readability and language of the work under the strict control and supervision of the authors.

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