

Dear Members of JAFINA,

Like you, we are watching events in Ukraine closely with rising concern for its Jewish community and all other citizens. We are working to put together a briefing call for our leadership and I will share the call information as soon as it is available.

As many of you know, we have a significant presence in Ukraine to serve its Jewish population of over 200,000. We have 29 shlichim across the country and with them 65 members of their immediate families. There are an additional 90 local workers employed by The Jewish Agency. At the current time, the majority of the educational shlichim and their families have been evacuated to Israel. Our senior shlichim have remained there to take care of Aliyah operations and the community. 3,000 olim made Aliyah from Ukraine last year, but we know from experience that the number might double due to the crisis.

At this time, we are engaged in the following activities.

1. First and foremost, we are doing all that we can and must do to assure the safety and security of our shlichim, their families and our local employees
2. We are focused on helping those who would like to expedite their Aliyah due to the current emergency. As I mentioned, we expect the need and desire for Aliyah to significantly increase and therefore we are preparing for scenarios of assisting and allowing for large amounts of Aliyah very quickly. At the same time, we care about supporting the Jewish community who remain in Ukraine.
3. We are concerned with Ukrainians in Israel participating in our programs who have left a lot of family behind in Ukraine. There are currently 1,500 young olim in Israel who have left their families behind in Ukraine to participate in special Aliyah programs in Israel.
4. We are ready to assist all Israelis currently located in Ukraine to return safely to Israel and coordinating our efforts with the Israeli government to be of assistance.

Additionally, I want to share the following items.

1. Working with the Fellowship, we have opened an emergency hotline to provide Ukrainian Jews with guidance and information regarding the Aliyah process, as well as general assistance for members of the Jewish community in Ukraine. The hotline will operate in Hebrew, Ukrainian, and Russian. It will serve members of the Jewish community throughout Ukraine and their relatives in Israel.
2. We have prepared a “Needs document” that outlines our current and possible financial needs during this crisis. We are seeking to coordinate with JFNA. The document includes the costs of transferring and evacuating Aliyah candidates, absorption into Israel, emergency security support for local community organizations and other similar vital measures. We hope to be able to share more specific information shortly.

Thank you for all you do to support our work.

Dan

Daniel Elbaum

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