

Aliyah from Ukraine Interim Update 2017



On behalf of the Jewish new immigrants who made Aliyah to Israel from countries in distress, we would like to express our gratitude for your ongoing support. Thanks to your generosity, Keren Hayesod – United Israel Appeal was able to continue to support the Aliyah and Klita of Jewish new immigrants from Ukraine. Together, we can continue to ensure that Jews from all over the world have the opportunity to come home safely, to their promised land – Israel.

Report on Aliyah from Ukraine 2016

INTRODUCTION

Today, Keren Hayesod – United Israel Appeal, in cooperation with The Jewish Agency for Israel, is responding to the increased needs on behalf of Ukrainian Jewry to brave the current crisis in Ukraine and make their way safely home to Israel. Crisis and the uncertainty it has brought has made our work exponentially more expensive in the region. In order to accommodate the significant increase in need for Aliyah services we have had to increase our infrastructure and personnel costs. This has translated into sending more Aliyah emissaries to the field, providing more security to ensure their and the local community's welfare, and ensure greater availability of absorption frameworks in Israel to address the increased flow of new immigrants. Thanks to the generosity and solidarity of our friends and supporters worldwide, we have been able to bring home to date a total of 22,783 Jewish immigrants from Ukraine since the beginning of the crisis! Yet our work has yet to be completed as there are many Ukrainian Jews who are still waiting to come home: In 2017 a total of 1,614 Ukrainian new immigrants have made Aliyah to Israel with an estimated 5,400 still waiting to come.

CURRENT CONDITIONS IN UKRAINE

Over the last year the conflict in Ukraine, in the area of Donetsk and Lugansk, has remained more or less the same. There are a reported 10 – 20 people who are killed each week along the Ukrainian – Russian border as a result of fighting between Russian backed Ukrainian Separatists and the Ukrainian military.

Even though life has continued on with people going to work and children to school, most people are afraid to go outside after 6 pm. The ironic reality is that Cafés are still open, however, it is only individuals from the Russian backed Militias who can spend money. Most of the members of these Militias are unknown as nothing is known about their pasts and the majority are criminals.

Infrastructure in the region continues to suffer as a result of the conflict. Since last week, the telephone connection between Donetsk and Lugansk was cutoff. There are also problems with the internet and electricity.

The conflict has also affected the region's employment as a result of the closed border between Ukraine and Russia, a source of major trade between both countries. With diminished trade, three major factories have had to close down.

The Mayak Refugee Center still receives between 30 – 50 people who come each month. The Jewish Agency for Israel only works with people who have started the process to make Aliyah. The situation in Ukraine is still uncertain as tensions between separatists and the Ukrainian military are renewed as Separatists celebrate their proclaimed independence day, the 9th of May.



KEREN HAYESOD קרן היסוד
UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL

Project Proposal

PERSONAL STORIES OF COURAGE – THE OLMELCHENKO BROTHERS

Alexei (19) and Rodion (21) are two orphaned brothers from both parents who are from the city of Lugansk in Ukraine. Ever since the breakout of the conflict three years ago, both brothers have sought to make “Aliyah” or immigrate to the promised land – Israel. Rodion was able to make Aliyah through the Jewish Agency operated program Selah. He is now serving in the Israeli Army in the border police. The youngest brother, Alexei, since the outbreak of the conflict and violence has developed emotional disorders which has left him to be treated in a psychiatric hospital. Due to their young ages, and due to the fact that Alexei is still considered a minor, the authorities would not let him leave the country unaccompanied. Rodion could not leave Israel and come back to get his brother as he would have been arrested by Ukrainian authorities for avoiding the mandatory draft into the Ukrainian army.

With the help of Christian volunteers from the Eben Ezer organization in Germany from Hamburg, we were able to get an approval for Alexei to leave Ukraine and immigrate to Israel where then his brother could meet him. Finally during the Jewish holiday of Passover, was Alexei, like his Hebrew ancestors, able to escape the bondage of Pharaoh and Egypt and make his way home to Israel. Now Alexei is safely home, in an absorption framework learning Hebrew.

