

THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL
HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO
RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
REFORM

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C O N T E N T S

Hearing held on June 10, 2022 Page 1

WITNESSES

PANEL 1

José Andrés, Founder and Chief Feeding Officer, World Central Kitchen
Oral Statement 5

PANEL 2

Christopher Stokes, Emergency Coordinator for Ukraine, Médecins Sans
Frontiers/Doctors Without Borders
Oral Statement 17

Amanda Catanzano, Acting Vice President for Global Policy and Advocacy,
International Rescue Committee
Oral Statement 19

Pete Walsh, Country Director for Ukraine, Save the Children
Oral Statement 21

* *Written opening statements and statements for the witnesses are available
at: docs.house.gov.*

INDEX OF DOCUMENTS

No additional documents were entered into the record for this hearing.

THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

Friday, June 10, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:10 a.m., via Zoom, Hon. Stephen F. Lynch (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Lynch, Welch, Johnson, DeSaulnier, Grothman, and Foxx.

Mr. LYNCH. The subcommittee will now come to order.

Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the subcommittee at any time.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

Good morning, everyone.

Good morning, Chef Andrés. Good to see you.

Now in its fourth month, Russian President Vladimir Putin's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine has taken a devastating toll on the Ukraine people. This unjust war of aggression has resulted in the tragic loss of thousands of innocent lives and precipitated a grave humanitarian crisis that is already having cascading effects in areas of the world far beyond Ukraine's borders, such as Syria, Yemen, and Somalia.

Nearly 14 million people, roughly one-third of Ukraine's entire population, have been forcibly displaced from their homes during more than 100 days of war. The United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Refugees reports that we are witnessing, quote, "the largest displacement crisis in the world today," with over 7 million people displaced within Ukraine and more than 6.5 million refugees fleeing to Poland, Romania, and Moldova and other neighboring countries.

Within Ukraine, UNHCR estimates that 15.7 million people urgently require humanitarian assistance, including food, water, medicine, and hygienic supplies. An estimated one in three Ukrainian households is currently food-insecure. And thanks to the extraordinary work of international humanitarian organizations such as World Central Kitchen, Doctors Without Borders, Save the Children, the International Rescue Committee, and Samaritan's Purse, aid is fortunately making its way into Ukraine.

That task is complicated, however, and made more dangerous by indiscriminate violence and shelling of civilian areas and key infrastructure nodes. As Russia shifts its military objectives toward eastern Ukraine, the international humanitarian community may only be beginning to understand the full extent of destruction and suffering the Russian military has left in their wake.

The deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Ukraine have also had a compounding impact on Ukrainian women and girls, who face the heightened risk of sexual exploitation and conflict related to sexual and gender-based violence.

In March, I had the honor to lead a bipartisan delegation to Poland, Romania, and Moldova and multiple Ukrainian border points to conduct oversight of the delivery of U.S. and international security and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. And we had the opportunity to observe firsthand the generosity of the Polish, Romanian, and Moldovan people, who have welcomed Ukrainian refugees into their homes.

Our meeting with Ukrainian and other Eastern European officials and civil-society organization repeatedly underscored that, absent continued assistance from the international community, our ability to provide relief and support services for the people of Ukraine may soon reach capacity.

Our delegation also visited a World Central Kitchen relief site located near Przemyśl border crossing on the Polish-Ukraine border, where Chef José Andrés and his colleagues are preparing and distributing as many as 100,000 meals per day to Ukrainian families in need.

In steadfast and continued support of the Ukrainian people, the U.S. Congress recently enacted a bipartisan aid package to provide \$40 billion in security and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. I'm grateful that the legislation included \$9 billion in direct economic assistance for Ukraine as well as additional funding for refugee support programs and global emergency food relief.

I also commend President Biden and his administration for leading the world in near-unanimous solidarity with the people of Ukraine and mobilizing an unprecedented humanitarian response to the conflict.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about their experience and of their organizations' experience on the ground in Ukraine and Eastern Europe and whether there are ways the international humanitarian response can be improved.

Before I conclude, I'd like to personally thank our witnesses for their testimony today and, more importantly, for the truly heroic work they and their organizations are doing, not only in Ukraine but around the world.

With that, I will now yield to the distinguished ranking member of our subcommittee, Mr. Grothman of Wisconsin.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you.

First of all, Chairman Lynch, I'd like to thank you for holding this hearing, and I'd like to thank our witnesses for showing up today—virtually, anyway. They're virtually with us today.

I know that each of you has devoted a significant amount of your time to assisting not only the Ukrainians impacted by Russia's aggression but also the Poles, Romanians, Moldovans, and others that

have stepped up to help those fleeing the war. And if I'm not mistaken, each one of you has visited Ukraine since the war began. You have our utmost gratitude for this tireless and sometimes thankless work.

We've surpassed 100 days of Russia's war on Ukraine, a war that was predicted to last 72 hours. Weapons and military equipment are essential, but without food, clean drinking water, and medical supplies, Ukrainians would be in a much worse position than they are today. The will and fight of Ukrainians is bolstered by much of the work that we will discuss here today.

Congress has appropriated billions of dollars toward humanitarian assistance, but groups like those here today fill the gaps. You know where the assistance is needed, you know the delivery routes, and you know the local people. This knowledge is essential.

You all are not only fighting to get aid where it is needed, but you are truly on the front lines of the fight. Russia is afraid of you because of what you stand for: freedom.

Russia has attacked humanitarian corridors and used cease-fire negotiations as a tool to kill civilians. They have attacked fleeing refugees. They have attacked hospitals and medical centers. And they have deliberately targeted humanitarian sites, including one of Chef Andrés' World Central Kitchen restaurants in Kharkiv.

The United Nations now estimates the civilian death toll to have surpassed 4,000, but there is no doubt this is an undercount. Russia and President Putin have and continue to commit war crimes.

I applaud your hard work and urge you to continue supporting Ukraine and its neighboring nations. Whenever this war finally ends—and we all hope it is soon—the fight will not be over. Ukraine will need all of our help to rebuild and restore.

I look forward to hearing your stories and how we can further facilitate your efforts.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentleman.

Now I'd like to recognize the full committee chairwoman, the gentlelady from New York, Mrs. Maloney, for a brief opening statement. Thank you.

Chairwoman MALONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, for your continued focus on the humanitarian crisis in Eastern Europe that Vladimir Putin has caused with his illegal and brutal war against Ukraine.

For more than three months, Russian forces have carried out a campaign of terror against the Ukrainian people. They have indiscriminately targeted and killed thousands of innocent civilians, destroyed Ukrainian schools and hospitals, brought Ukraine's farmlands to ruin, and decimated entire cities.

Throughout it all, the Ukrainian people, led by President Zelenskyy, and with the support of the United States and our allies, have stood strong against Putin's aggression. Even so, the war has had devastating humanitarian impacts and left many Ukrainians without access to food, water, fuel, shelter, and medical care.

Suffering most acutely are the innocent families, women and children, of Ukraine, who have become targets in Putin's war. Already, the United Nations has confirmed that thousands of women

and children have been killed or wounded during the Russian assault. Tragically, the true number is likely significantly higher.

Credible reports have also found that Russian troops in Ukraine have engaged in serious war crimes, including revenge killings, mass murders, and sexual violence against women.

Five months ago, the people of Ukraine were going about their daily lives—working, going to cafes and restaurants, and coming home at night to tuck their children into bed. Today, those same families are living through a much harsher reality, one they likely will never fully recover from, and many may not survive.

Those are the life-and-death stakes of Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine and why I am grateful that we have a chance today to hear from some of the heroes who are literally on the front lines providing vulnerable communities with the critical lifesaving support that they so desperately need.

Recent reports indicate that, although Vladimir Putin has shifted his military objective to eastern and southern Ukraine, there is still no end to this war in sight. Given everything that the Ukrainian people will need to defend their homeland, I was pleased that Congress was able to come together recently on a bipartisan basis to pass a bill that would provide \$40 billion in additional security, economic, and humanitarian aid to respond to the conflict.

Moving forward, it will be critical for Congress to work with the Biden administration to efficiently distribute humanitarian aid and continue to unite our allies in support of the Ukrainian people. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how best to use U.S. taxpayer dollars to address Ukraine's most urgent humanitarian needs.

Thank you again for your leadership, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. I thank the gentlelady, and we deeply appreciate her leadership on this issue.

Now I'd like to introduce our first witnesses.

Our first witness today is Mr. José Andrés, the founder and chief feeding officer of World Central Kitchen. Chef Andrés is a renowned chef who founded World Central Kitchen in 2010 to provide food relief to areas that have experienced natural disasters and other crises. Since then, World Central Kitchen has responded around the world to feed communities in need, including Haiti, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, several cities in the United States, and now Ukraine.

The witness will be unmuted so that we can now swear in Mr. Andrés.

Mr. Andrés, please raise your right hand.

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. ANDRÉS. I swear.

Mr. LYNCH. Let the record reflect that the witness has answered in the affirmative.

Thank you. And, without objection, your written statement will be made part of the record.

With that, Chef Andrés, you are now recognized for your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF JOSÉ ANDRÉS, FOUNDER AND CHIEF
FEEDING OFFICER, WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN**

Mr. ANDRÉS. So, Chairman Lynch, Ranking Member Grothman, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me here today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for visiting the commercial kitchen we built from scratch near the Polish border during the early days of the war.

World Central Kitchen, the nonprofit I founded more than a decade ago, specializes in feeding communities after natural and man-made disasters. We are unique in how we work and the aid we provide. We work with the fierce urgency of now, because when you are hungry or thirsty, you are hungry or thirsty today, not tomorrow.

We believe in the power of food to rebuild lives, communities, and jobs. A plate of food is a plate of hope. A dollar spent locally on feeding is a dollar that multiplies throughout the local economy. Unlike other aid organizations, we buy local food. And we trust local people to feed local people, with their real-time intelligence, passion, and expertise.

That's how Ukrainians are feeding Ukraine, with the support of World Central Kitchen. We started serving hot meals one day after the war began at Poland-Ukraine border, where refugees on foot were fleeing with whatever they could carry. We rapidly extended into Ukraine and across all border crossings not controlled by Russia.

At the peak of the refugee flows across the borders, there was not real presence from the U.N. system. We assumed the big guys would show up in a couple of days, but it took weeks for them to establish any presence.

And then I saw empty UNHCR or UNICEF tents, with nothing or nobody inside, as children were walking alone across the border, with the phone of their mothers printed in the palm of their hands. These children were just left alone at the mercy of good Samaritans.

Today, a week after the 100-day mark of this war, we have distributed more than 40 million meals to more than 475 cities in the region. We are working with almost 500 restaurants, food trucks, and catering companies in 8 countries.

We have 42 warehouses. In many of them, we make food bags, where more than 30,000 bags a day are distributed on top of the hot meals. Some situations require hot, already-cooked meals, while others need ingredients. Some people can cook and feed themselves.

When you consider all the meals being cooked by World Central Kitchen teams, our partners, and people at home, I believe we are almost doing a million meals a day right now.

The U.S. Congress, on behalf of the American people, has been exceptionally generous with providing funding. These funds are vital for the Ukrainian people, as well as the people around the world who rely on Ukrainian farmers.

However, I must tell you that your work is not done. It's never done. There are structural reasons why established international

aid groups took so long to have a presence in Ukrainian. Those reasons will not change with billions of dollars.

Large quantities of unwanted food are being delivered today with little regard for what the people of Ukraine can or want to eat. There is only so much dried pasta a Ukrainian family needs.

We have tried repeatedly to work with the World Food Program, but the U.N. teams remained way too often outside Ukraine for weeks and weeks instead of activating local teams inside the country.

With boots on the ground, we know exactly where the need is. We talk to the community every day. We work next to the community. I am afraid that we are even at risk of duplicating efforts and spending and throwing money at the problem.

Let's be clear: Ukraine can feed itself, but they are at war. Millions are displaced. Infrastructure is damaged. Bridges and roads are damaged. Electricity outages. What World Central Kitchen does is helping reestablish in an emergency the system of food flows.

We buy local when we can, all the time. It is telling that World Food Program is bringing food into Ukraine when at the same time World Food Program is saying it needs food to export from Ukraine to feed other countries. It doesn't make sense. When you don't have real boots on the ground, your decisions are often not the right ones.

The current system just does not work when people are starving and thirsty in a crisis. We need a more agile and effective system to deliver aid. That means reforming approval processes, cutting red tape, and rethinking contracting rules.

I hope and your staff will work with us on changes that can address these concerns. USAID has an incredible mission and dedicated staff. They can be even more effective with some additional authorities and flexibilities to help much more quickly.

Thank you for your time and attention and including me in this very important hearing. I look forward now to answering any questions you may have.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Chef. That was very, very instructive, and that's exactly the type of information we want to hear. We see all the good work, but, behind the scenes, we don't have to grapple with the bureaucratic difficulties that you've just described.

So let me just say I'm not surprised because of the—I think the situation here is extraordinary and we were not prepared for it. However, with your help, with the help of the private sector, with the advice of people who are actually doing the work, I think we can make the adjustments that you recommend.

Chef Andrés, as you noted, I did lead a bipartisan congressional delegation to Poland—three Democrats, three Republicans. And I'm thankful for the participation of my Republican colleagues. We went to Moldova, Poland, and Romania to observe the refugee situation in the region since the Russians launched its invasion earlier this year.

While in Poland, we did have the opportunity and pleasure of visiting one of your World Central Kitchen meal preparations sites in Przemysl, near the Ukrainian border. Your staff, including Jason Collis and Anna Bornstein, were gracious and took the time to

show us the mechanics about how the logistics were working there to get the ingredients in, to prepare them, and then to in some cases ship them into Ukraine, in other cases take care of people who were fleeing that country, that war zone.

All of us were impressed by the dedication of your organization and World Central Kitchen's employees and volunteers. I want to thank you and your staff for all of the efforts to serve and feed the people of Ukraine. It really is heroic.

Chef Andrés, you and your team have spent a significant amount of time in Ukraine since Russia began the invasion in February. In your testimony, you stated, quote, that "with our boots on the ground, we know exactly where the need is in Ukraine."

I want to tap into that a little bit, on-the-ground knowledge. Can you describe some of what you've seen in your time in Ukraine? And what has struck you most about the conflict and the difficulty that we are experiencing in getting meals, getting food to the Ukrainian people, and getting the food that they need? That's the important part.

Can you drill down on that a bit? It might help us in making recommendations to the agencies that are making those decisions.

Mr. ANDRÉS. Thank you.

Right now, we are serving—there's different realities in Ukraine, and there's not one plan that solves the different situations. Let's see if I'm able to explain myself.

We are—you mentioned that these—over 12, 13 million people, between refugees and displaced people, within Ukraine. With so many people out of their cities, out of their workplaces, out of their cities, one of the main problems is that the normal social functions of the economy are broken.

So it's very important that "emergency" means that we are there, coming to the outside, as people are fleeing the war, that organizations like ours will go to try to repair, temporarily, those systems of distribution. I always say that we are not really cooks; what we are is people that try to put the logistics and the distribution, so people get the access they need.

So, right now, we are in more than 1,410 shelters. We have been in so many for almost 80, 90 days at that number, so we know very well the situation of the shelters. Some of them are official, meaning run by the country or by the local state or the city. Others are just shelters that just happen on their own, by people that open their home or their restaurant or their school, and just happen.

Those places, sometimes they have so many people living in them that they will not have a proper kitchen to feed so many people every day. So those places, we will need to give them hot meals to simplify the process of feeding such a high quantity of people.

And we use the local infrastructure. Who is the best to feed people? Restaurants and chefs. So we use local restaurants, channeling the money that the American people has been supporting us with. We are 100-percent private financial—every dollar we spend in Ukraine comes from mainly Americans and other people around the world.

We empower the local restaurant community, who know their communities well. And we use those restaurants to cover the needs

of those shelters, not only in Ukraine but also in the other countries surrounding Ukraine.

But then there's other places, like north of Kyiv. I was, on April 1, in Bucha. This was within hours of the Ukrainian Army defending their country, taking over and start putting out—moving north and putting out the Russian troops. There we began arriving with hot food.

But I went to Bucha recently, many weeks after, and the situation has changed dramatically. Some supermarkets has opened in the cities like Bucha and Irpin and Hostomel and Borodyanka, but there's people without jobs, there's people that still are in shelters.

In those places, we keep bringing hot meals, but now in rural areas we realize that the absence of infrastructure, because the bridges are broken, or other reasons—they don't have enough labor to reopen those supermarkets—we are bringing bags of food that are roughly 15 kilos each, that equal around 20, 25 meals each, that we will deliver in those communities north of Kyiv every single week, once a week, to the hour, in every location, covering the lack of infrastructure and supermarkets.

This is two of the ways we've been doing it, on top of using the same trips to do two things: bring seeds to big farmers that, where because lack of funding or where because lack of infrastructure, needed somebody to help them with seeds, like some flour and corn and wheat; but, also, there's many Ukrainians that, in front of their homes in the rural areas all across Ukraine—and now I've been almost all around Ukraine twice, three times—they will plant in front of their homes. And you can see right now every single home planted with food that will be able to provide for those families in August, September.

For us, to do the hot meals, to do the bags of food for families, and then to be able to be giving seeds that they will convert into food that technically is like giving them money is the three ways I believe the Ukrainian people in the short, mid, and long term are going to be needing our help until this war stops.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you very much.

My time has expired, but I would like to recognize my distinguished friend, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Grothman, for any statements, any questions he might have. The gentleman is recognized.

You'll have to unmute, though.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK.

Thank you again, Chef Andrés, for being here.

Obviously, this affects the food supply of both the Ukraine and globally. Have you seen Russia take any actions that you think are specifically designed to affect the import or export of food?

Mr. ANDRÉS. Obviously, I have not seen them—physically seen any Russian stealing, but I've seen—I arrived to Ukraine on my last trip by boat. I went the Danube River from Romania up to Izmail, and I was able to experience firsthand all the difficulties that Ukraine is having maybe to import goods and to import food but also, more important, to export grains.

We know, I know, that this is because we see the boat blockade. I've been in Odessa. We've been with the Governor of Odessa, the

mayor of Odessa. We've seen missiles been hitting Odessa's infrastructure continuously, Mykolaiv, hitting the ports.

We understand that when they keep hitting grain silos, when they keep hitting train stations that are vital to be moving grain inside Ukraine and outside Ukraine, when they keep hitting ports directly, they are doing a huge damage not only for Ukrainians to feed themselves, but we know that they are doing a huge damage to the more than 400 million people that we know the grain that Ukraine produces is able to feed.

So these are the ways obviously I've seen how Russia, in a way, very directly, is using this war to put an extra pressure around the world by creating famines in places that we should not have.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK.

Are there specific areas of Ukraine where people are—finding food is more difficult than others? Are there specific areas that you feel we really have a crisis in?

Mr. ANDRÉS. Obviously, in the places that the Russian troops kind of control for a period of time and then they left, they created a lot of destruction. I've seen myself in places like north of Kyiv or in other cities I mentioned before, in Bucha and Irpin, the destruction there was real. Chernihiv, Kharkiv, where we are very active.

We are in Kramatorsk, where one missile hit in the train station, with more than 3,000 children and women waiting to escape the horrors of war, and where, nearby, we were feeding the people that were waiting for those trains that they're vital to put them out.

Obviously, in the south—I was in Zaporizhzhia not too long ago and Mykolaiv, only 25 kilometers—those cities are 25 kilometers away from the front lines. In the moment you go and you get closer, within 5, 4, 3 kilometers, and you can sense even more what the war is doing to those communities that they are living there.

And many people are going to say, why the people don't leave? When you have elderly people that they are sick and they cannot move and the country's at war and there's nobody wants to, can move them or they don't want to leave because they feel they are too poor or too tired and the only thing they have is that little house they worked all their life—those are the places that this is becoming very difficult.

We are listening. I was with the mayor of Mariupol only a few days ago. And obviously we understand the destruction in the city of Mariupol, but now we know that the city of Mariupol is going through a very big food and water crisis, with cholera cases increasing every day, with lack of food that Russians are not providing, with lack of clean water that Russians are not providing.

Those are the areas that obviously we're going to need U.S. and international community to put pressure, to make sure that we can also, even in the middle of the war, we can come in with humanitarian aid to make sure that those people, those populations are not going thirsty, are not going hungry, or, even worse, are not dying because of cholera and other situations because of the unhealthy conditions.

Mr. GROTHMAN. You must, therefore, talk to people who were in a Russian-occupied area even though maybe the Russians are

pushed out now. How does Russia treat the people when they are occupying their area?

Mr. ANDRÉS. I mentioned before I was in Bucha April 1 and April 2, and I think we all saw the horrors of the photos. I know what I saw with my own eyes. And obviously I have spoken with hundreds, if not thousands, of people that sometimes the only thing they wanted was a hat.

The treatment of the Russian troops, in the times there was interaction—I will tell you stories and even things I could say I saw with my own eyes, of people that were shot from the back in their head only because they dared to leave their home just to try to pick up a loaf of bread if a bakery was still baking. Just a very simple thing of trying to feed your family became just an act of heroism.

So obviously the stories are horrific in more ways than one, of shootings that they didn't need to happen; of civilians that they didn't need to die; of bombings of the schools when families were trying to escape the horrors of war; where cars, which I saw with my own eyes, cars that they had very clearly the name of children in the top and in every side and the back of the cars. Those cars were totally full of holes that you could argue those were shots, that Russian troops kept shooting at when just people were trying to go to the safety of their homes.

What I saw in those early days in the north of Kyiv, Bucha and Irpin, this is something obviously I'll never forget in my life.

But the horrors are real, the horrors happened. And that's why it's very important we are there next to those people, making sure that, in this case, food and water is not another one of the many problems they are going to be facing in the weeks and months ahead.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK.

Are there any specific sorts of foods that you have a shortage of or that there is a shortage of?

Mr. ANDRÉS. Well, in certain—I want to make sure that the Ukrainian Government is doing an amazing job—the Ukrainian Governorst, the Ukrainian people. You are going to say, why would Central Kitchen need to be there or why we need to be helping them? Obviously because they are at war, and we know that war is a very chaotic situation.

We are trying to reopen some factories. We are trying to tell somebody, if you reopen these pasta factories, a country that what they have is a lot of wheat, we buy all the pasta from you. And things like this are happening.

Kherson that right now is under Russian occupation and has been under war, all that area south going east, we all know that they are big producers of things, for example, like onions, like tomatoes, et cetera, et cetera. Without those farmers having a normal farming season, those foods are going to be scarce.

You could say, "But we can feed the world without onions." Yes, totally agree. But World Central Kitchen does is just making sure that we use every single resource we have at our fingertips. We are bringing from the outside things that, because of war, are highly limited inside Ukraine, like America will import a lot of foods that for some reason America is not able to produce.

But, overall, I would say that Ukraine is fine. We need to understand that the best way America and the international community can be helping Ukraine is not by bringing everything from the outside, but it is making sure that we keep supporting the local economy, the local infrastructure, investing the money locally, creating jobs locally.

That will give Ukraine—in the fighting for the freedom of their country, make sure that we invest into the solution, making sure that the entire economy doesn't collapse. That is what World Central Kitchen is doing, supporting restaurants, buying from local farmers, buying from local factories, that they can produce the foods that the people need.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman's time has expired.

The chair now recognizes the full committee chairwoman, Mrs. Maloney, for five minutes for her questions. Thank you.

Chairwoman MALONEY. Thank you so much, Chef Andrés, for being with us this morning and for everything you and your team have done for the Ukrainian people and around the world to help other disaster victims.

In your advocacy for the vulnerable people that you serve, you have criticized how difficult it is for the international community to respond and that it's often too slow. And in a tweet you posted to celebrate President Biden's signing of a bill granting \$40 billion in assistance to Ukraine, you said that the Ukrainian people, quote, "can't wait months," unquote, for help to arrive, and I agree completely.

So what lessons have you learned during previous disasters that would let us help Ukrainians faster and more efficiently than we have today?

Mr. ANDRÉS. I think that big problems have very simple solutions, and sometimes we overcomplicate things.

I think—well, we went in. We created a big team. We have more than 4-, 5,000 people in our network of people that are working with World Central Kitchen, that this is what allows us to be fast and adapting.

Adapting is when we made those bags that we sent to the communities—because we go every day. I mean, I've been there more than 50, 55 days of my life. I've been 106 days in this crisis, but I've been inside Ukraine, especially the early days, but, again, I just came back 3, 4 days ago after another round of 12 days. By being there in real-time, you are able just to adapt in real-time. If somebody is telling you, "Hey, José, another organization just brought a lot of pasta; we've got pasta for two months," we are able the next week to take any pasta we had in those packages and re-deliver maybe with more fruits and vegetables, increasing the output of fruits and vegetables. And more often than not, we are buying local.

But now what I would say is that, for food, World Central Kitchen, we are with 3,970 distribution points, 3,900 distribution points. With this I only want to say, quite frankly, very humbly, but at the same time very proud, that we know what's going on. We know what the people need. Because we are talking with them every single day.

So, for food, what I would say is that now I'm afraid that we are going to be multiplying efforts by now more organizations finally arriving and everybody bringing food because they are doing something. And sometimes I would say that more doesn't equal better. The right amount equals better. Because we cannot collapse the local economies by giving too much food for free at the same time.

We need to be very specific. I've been talking to mayors, like in Mykolaiv, that their concern was, how do we know that we are not breaking and collapsing the local economy? Well, you could argue, too, that those mayors need to know that their people are out of jobs and sometimes banks are not open or sometimes people don't have an ATM so they need cash or—so that's what we are covering.

But it's very important that the solutions and the actions don't happen—you don't make a decision today for six months from now, but that you in emergencies are, day to day, assessing the situation so you know when the people need the help and you know when you need to start moving out.

Chairwoman MALONEY. Well, since the war began more than three months ago, have you observed any improvements? And what obstacles remain?

Mr. ANDRÉS. Well, improvements, there have been many. In all the cities that they've been reconquered by the Ukrainian troops and the Ukrainian Government, like in Irpin and Bucha, supermarkets are open again. Some of those bridges are already fixed. Life seems, in many parts of Kyiv, back to normal.

But, then, in that same city, they have hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people that are displaced, living in different refugee camps. Those are the challenges. The challenge is that those people are going to need our help. I mean, again, it's close to 14 million people, between displaced internally in Ukraine and refugees outside Ukraine. Many of those people are going to be needing all the help they can get.

And we're going to have to be creative. Do we give them cards so they can buy their own food? Maybe that's another great idea. I know World Food Program is trying to put that program already for a few weeks.

So, the challenges we are facing is adapting to the situation as cities are being retaken by the Ukrainian Government, going very quickly in those cities to provide very quick support with food and water to those communities, but then watching closely so we can keep adapting as this war progresses. Because the solutions of today will not be the same ones that the people need a month from now. So, it's imperative that the solutions given are always reestablished in the weeks ahead.

Chairwoman MALONEY. Well, my final question is that we prioritize, on this committee, ensuring that taxpayers' dollars are being spent responsibly, in a way that Congress intended. Sometimes the bureaucracy can get in the way.

Mr. Andrés, what specifically could the U.S. do to help improve how humanitarian aid is being delivered, while still ensuring assistance is going where it is most needed?

Mr. ANDRÉS. So, World Central Kitchen right now is fully funded for this operation with private money from Americans, individuals, some foundations. We are spending between \$1.5 million and \$2.5

million, \$3 million a day. It depends on the day; it's not the same on Monday than on Sunday. It's not the same the day we are filling up our warehouses than the Sunday that maybe we don't have the trains or the buses or the trucks delivering.

But I do believe that it's very important that we don't double up and that also we move quick in establishing those funds. I come from the private sector. I don't work for World Central Kitchen. I'm just the founder and I am a volunteer of World Central Kitchen. What we need to be trying to make sure is that the decisions, that they are already proven, that are working on the ground, that are supported. Don't try to just to support new things or new NGO's that want to come and establish themselves over 100 days later, when they didn't have real knowledge of what was going on in the war in the early days.

So, this is going to be very important. I don't believe that we can work by committee. Sometimes, with all due respect, especially in emergencies and especially with food, when you work by committee, that means that everybody's in charge. When everybody's in charge, it means that nobody's in charge. And, therefore, you keep throwing money at the problem.

I do believe that World Central Kitchen has proven itself, that has done a very quick, fast, and effective job to be in those places and adapting to the situation, throwing out the plans and adapting day to day.

I do believe that the great people of USAID—I know many of them. I've been with Ambassador Power on the ground in Poland and other places. I do believe what they need to do is just change the way they are able to make the decisions to what organizations they support and how quickly that money can be flowing.

Big problems have very simple solutions. We are—this is not my organization. This is not World Central Kitchen's organization. This is an organization, actually, of the American people and, I could argue, an organization of the people of world. We are here to be your organization to bring quick and fast delivery of food humanitarian assistance in the middle of a war in this case. It's our first time, but the lessons in the last 107 days, they've been big. We've done our master's. We've proven that we can be adapting quicker and faster than anybody.

Chairwoman MALONEY. Thank you. And we in Congress continue to work to ensure Ukraine has the security and humanitarian assistance it needs to defend against Russia's illegal war, we must always push to get that assistance out the door as quickly and as responsibly as possible. You are doing a fantastic job. Thank you so much.

Mr. ANDRÉS. Thank you.

Chairwoman MALONEY. I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back.

The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from North Carolina, Ms. Foxx, for five minutes.

All right. I think she may have stepped away from her screen.

The chair now recognizes the gentleman from Vermont, Mr. Welch, for five minutes for his questions.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you very much, Mr. Lynch, and I also want to thank Mr. Grothman for this hearing.

Chef Andrés, it is unusual for us in this committee, actually in Congress, to have before us somebody who has a long record of success and commitment to addressing hunger issues and who has such practical knowledge. There are a couple of things that you said I wanted to just give you an opportunity to elaborate on.

No. 1, the buy local, do everything we can do in the effort to address the nutrition and hunger issues in Ukraine is enhanced, as I hear you, the more we do to rebuild their local agricultural economy.

And then, second, on a practical level, can you just describe what the effects of what's happening in Ukraine and how that effects both fertilizer production and the export of fertilizer in the export of grain to other countries around the world? Because I think, as we address the issues of hunger in Ukraine, we have to be mindful that what is happening in Ukraine is compounding the issues of hunger elsewhere.

So, I just want to turn this over to you. And, also, I want to express to you my gratitude, which I think we all share. Thank you.

Mr. ANDRÉS. Thank you very much. And thank you for the question.

I'm not going to use an example of Ukraine, but I'm going to be—I've given more than 30 years of my life trying to be part of the solution, not only cooking for the few but cooking for the many and learning. And I began here in Washington, DC, where actually the Senate, over 28 years ago, had a Hunger Caucus right at the D.C. Central Kitchen. That's a kitchen I was able to work. So, my life learning is not being used in universities; I never graduated. It's being used being there and watching and listening to experts or learning on my own, listening to the people.

I'm going to give you the example of Haiti. I was very proud of how U.S. responded to the Haiti earthquake in 2010. If anything, America should be very proud of the aid we gave to those citizens in Port-au-Prince. It was a massive aid given, and I'm forever—as an American, I was proud to see.

Other thing is how we use the money and if we were effective, but this is going to be life itself. We always need to work to try to keep doing more of what we do well and trying to improve what we didn't do so well.

But one of the things I really followed fairly closely was—I understand a different country, in this case America, is giving aid. You will argue that if you are giving food aid, that money that is American taxpayer, makes sense that you are spending the money to buy from local American farmers. Well, frankly, every country probably should do exactly the same. All of this is perfectly fine.

But the issue we have is that, then, in the process of trying to help, we don't think in a 360-degree way, and we create other problems by America and international community giving so much food for free into Haiti in the weeks and months after the earthquake.

In the process, we gave a lot of rice. North end of Port-au-Prince is an area that is a rice-producing area. Those rice producers, nobody was buying the rice from them. Why? Because the huge amounts of rice we were giving for free.

Actually, so much food was being given in Port-au-Prince that we created migrations internally to Haiti, because people were flowing

from places with no food to Port-au-Prince, where they were giving you free food. This is a reality, and this happened, and I was part of seeing it.

I can guarantee you, even though I didn't spend any time—and I know I'm under oath. I'm giving you my honest personal opinion by following those things through years. We've been feeding Haitians in shelters in Tijuana. Some of these Haitians began migrating in 2010 after many of them lost jobs in rural areas because they couldn't sell the rice and other food products.

In a way of us helping Haiti, we created other problems by not thinking. That is why I'm always suggesting that we need to find better balance.

Mr. WELCH. Yes.

Mr. ANDRÉS. If you want to be helping a hungry country, in the process of feeding them, we may be already investing and having a better migration—having less migration issues in the southern border. If we just keep throwing money at the problem—that, in this case, is feeding the people that are hungry today—but in the process we create other problems that then put pressure on the border in the south, with people that lost their jobs 10 years before, and there they are, knocking on the doors of America, that is why it's one of the many other reasons we need to start thinking better of why it's better to invest money in those countries we are trying to help versus just throwing them so much food that we create problems of logistics because the airports and the ports are overwhelmed.

Again, I mentioned before, it's very absurd to me that World Food Program is bringing food into Ukraine when, at the same time, World Food Program is saying that we need to find ways to export food out of Ukraine. If we have food inside Ukraine, why just we don't buy that food?

And why we don't put the food that World Food Program is trying to bring in, send it to Syria, send it to Ethiopia, send it to the countries that need the food right now? You are solving a lot of logistical—

Mr. WELCH. Thank you.

Mr. ANDRÉS.—problems by not putting more pressure.

So I think this one is the one I would say is the most important.

And I do believe we need to put factories up and running inside Ukraine. The ones that closed at the beginning of—or the markets that—anything we can do to open those is better in the best national security of Ukraine. In the process of helping Ukrainians with humanitarian aid, we are multiplying every dollar America may give because we create jobs, we put Ukrainians to be able to feed themselves because of logistics.

But, again, they have the food internally. I've seen the silos. Remember, I've been—there's one place inside, I forget the name, in the middle of Ukraine; they have a very huge flag. They claim it is the center of Ukraine. There is this factory we began partnering with. They do seeds. We began helping distribute those seeds to the farmers. They didn't have any cash, a way to buy it themselves.

So, again, the logistics is what is important. Ukraine has food to feed itself, but we need to remember they are at war. It's not a country that's going to have famine for lack of food; it's a country

that needs our support with logistics and spending and investing the money in the right places to make sure that food doesn't become a problem.

Mr. WELCH. Thank you very, very much.
I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

Mr. WELCH. Very helpful.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you very much. That was very insightful. Great questions and very helpful answer. Thank you.

The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from North Carolina, Ms. Foxx, for five minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, neither I nor my staff understood the organization of this panel this morning. I am prepared to ask questions of Mr. Graham, but we did not understand how you were doing this this morning. In fact, when you started, I tried to find out; my staff said, hold off. And so I am prepared to ask questions of Mr. Graham.

I thank Chef Andrés for his work and for his insight. And I think that he is absolutely right to be talking about how we can help build the economy of any country that is in stress like this. But I thank him for his work, and I'm ready for the next panel.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. I do appreciate that. We did struggle with different time zones. Several of our witnesses are in different time zones, so we were trying to accommodate everyone.

But let me just add my thanks to Chef Andrés for his great work and his testimony here this morning. This was very, very helpful.

If other members have any questions for Chef Andrés, we will take those into the record, and we will try to deliver those to Chef Andrés and get further answers on those questions.

Mr. LYNCH. But, at this point, I think we will transfer to the next panel. I want to excuse Chef Andrés and thank him for his testimony and his good work.

God bless you. Please stay safe. I know you're operating in some pretty dangerous areas. And we just appreciate the work that you and your organizations are doing for people that we care about very deeply. And I think you present the presence of the United States in a very favorable way, and we appreciate that as well.

Thank you.

Mr. ANDRÉS. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. We're going to recess just for a moment to activate our next panel of witnesses. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. LYNCH. Welcome back, everyone.

I would now like to introduce the witnesses for our second panel.

First, we are joined by Mr. Christopher Stokes, who is the emergency coordinator for Ukraine for what is known in the United States as Doctors Without Borders, or MSF in French. Mr. Stokes has served in various capacities for Doctors Without Borders, including as General Director in Belgium, and in field assignments in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Indonesia, Chechnya, and now Ukraine.

Next, we will also have and hear from Amanda Catanzano who is the Acting Vice President for Global Policy and Advocacy for the International Rescue Committee. Ms. Catanzano has previously served in multiple roles with the U.S. Government, including as Di-

rector for Strategic Planning at the National Security Council and as Policy Planning Director for the Secretary of State.

Third, we are joined by Mr. Pete Walsh who is the Country Director for Ukraine for Save the Children. Mr. Walsh has an extensive career working in areas of conflict and for Save the Children. He has previously served as Country Director in South Sudan and in Tanzania.

Fourth, we have Mr. Edward Graham, the Vice President of Operations for Samaritan's Purse. Mr. Graham joined Samaritan's Purse in early 2019, and after a 16-year long career with the United States Army, and I want to thank him for his service to our country as well.

The witnesses will be unmuted so we can swear you in.

Would you all please raise your right hands?

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Mr. STOKES. I do

Mrs. CATANZANO. I do

Mr. WALSH. I do

Mr. GRAHAM. I do

Very good. Let the record show that the witnesses have all answered in the affirmative.

Thank you. Without objection, your written statements will now be made part of the record.

With that, Mr. Stokes, you are now recognized for your testimony.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER STOKES, EMERGENCY COORDINATOR FOR UKRAINE, MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES/DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Mr. STOKES. Thank you, Chairman Lynch, Ranking Member Grothman, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for organizing this hearing on the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

I'm speaking to you today from Ukraine where I'm serving as an emergency coordinator for Medecins San Frontieres, but known in the United States by our English name, Doctors Without Borders. We operate in over 70 countries around the world, guided by the humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence in line with universal medical ethics. These principles not only form the core of our identity, but they are also our protection when working in war and conflict.

MSF first worked in Ukraine in 1999 and has been responding to the conflict in eastern Ukraine since 2014. As you are aware, conflict between Russia and Ukraine escalated in late February 2022, displacing millions of people internally and into neighboring countries. Civilians have been injured and killed, homes and cities destroyed, hospitals and clinics damaged. The war has placed many in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

Ukraine, however, has an advanced healthcare system and a highly trained work force. These healthcare workers are asking for the supplies and support necessary to continue to care for their pa-

tients. The health system is supplemented by an extensive network of local organizations and volunteers who play a significant role in assisting people in need.

As MSF, we've expanded our work in Ukraine where we currently employ over 600 staff. And since February 24, MSF has brought more than 800 metric tons of medical and relief supplies into Ukraine. We've established medical supply lines, provided training to hospitals across the country, and worked alongside Ukrainian doctors and nurses to restart medical care in the wake of active fighting.

MSF supports services for survivors of sexual violence with medical and mental healthcare. Mobile medical clinics allows us to reach both urban areas where shelling makes movements dangerous and in outlying, rural areas where medical care has been interrupted by conflict.

While roads are considered too dangerous, the two MSF-medicalized trains that we are currently operating are the only means to move large numbers of critically war wounded safely across the vast distance of the country from east to west. These trains move patients from overburdened hospitals close to active conflict zones to hospitals away from the fighting and where there is more capacity for patient care.

As of June 8, we've conducted 24 referral journeys by train, assisting 653 patients and their caregivers. Most patients are civilian, wounded by heavy artillery and rockets used extensively and indiscriminately in densely populated areas. An additional 78 infants and toddlers were also evacuated from an orphanage using the train, an orphanage that happened to be near the front line.

Also, at the time of the missile strike on the Kramatorsk railway station, hundreds of civilians were awaiting evacuations to safer areas of Ukraine. MSF had evacuated patients from there only two days before. And in the aftermath of the attack, we transferred 11 injured people to safer hospitals in the west of the country. Most of them were children, the youngest being eight years old.

In accordance with international humanitarian law, MSF is seeking urgent access to all people affected by the conflict wherever they are. People living in occupied and contested areas need protection and access to medical care and central service. Impartial humanitarian aid must be allowed to reach them. Access to healthcare will be a continuing challenge in the coming months. Regardless of war, babies are born, children become ill, and those with chronic diseases need access to medications and therapies.

While we can provide hospitals with training and materials to respond to influxes of war wounded, the initial medical act that saves a person's life is often just the first step on the path to recovery. War inflicts physical and psychological traumas that require specialized, long-term treatment.

While continuing to support the medical needs of people affected by this crisis, it is important that this happens in addition to, and not at the expense of other vulnerable people around the world. The impact of the war on Ukraine will affect MSF's patients far from that crisis. In multiple countries, we see outbreaks of measles following pandemic-related interruptions in routine vaccination programs.

In Afghanistan, waves of malnutrition and measles have resulted in pediatric hospitals so overwhelmed with severely ill children that there were not enough beds. In Chad, we are reaching our capacity to meet nutrition needs after U.N. programs were cut. We're doing our best to scale up our response to severe malnutrition in northwest Nigeria.

We recognize this government's additional funding for assistance in Ukraine and elsewhere, yet regret that it will not meet all the needs. We've seen the resources the United States and international community are capable of mobilizing when the political will exists are massive. We urge you and other governments to rise to this moment and to respond to neglected crises with the same determination and commitment.

Thank you for your concern for the people in Ukraine and around the world and for the opportunity to hear this testimony today. I'll be pleased to respond to your questions. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Stokes.

We want to welcome Ms. Catanzano. You're now recognized for five minutes for your testimony.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF AMANDA CATANZANO, ACTING VICE PRESIDENT FOR GLOBAL POLICY AND ADVOCACY, INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

Ms. CATANZANO. Chairman Lynch, Ranking Member Grothman, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for convening this hearing on the humanitarian consequences of the war on Ukraine.

I represent the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian organization providing aid in Ukraine, supporting refugees in Europe, and welcoming Ukrainian parolees in the U.S. We also operate in over 40 crisis-affected countries, giving us a global perspective on the cascading crises this conflict has unleashed.

Ukrainians, of course, are feeling the war's impact most directly. Thousands have been killed or injured and millions more have lost their jobs, their homes, and their hope. Nearly 14 million have been displaced, including two-thirds of all children. Needs are worst in the south and east, where hundreds of thousands are trapped amidst intense fighting. 1.4 million lack running water. Western and central Ukraine are comparatively calm, and we're seeing more Ukrainian returnees than refugees.

But missile strikes in Kyiv over the weekend remind us that stability is precarious. Already over 200 healthcare facilities have been attacked. Over 1,800 schools have been damaged or destroyed. 90 percent of Ukrainians could fall below the poverty line, erasing two decades of economic growth. Nearly 16 million Ukrainians need humanitarian assistance, but insecurity and access challenges are limiting the response.

The war has spurred the fastest moving refugee crisis since the second World War, producing 7 million refugees, almost all women and children. Despite the inspiring welcome, the response is showing strains, especially on Ukraine's closest neighbors. Most refugees remain in Poland, stressing housing stocks. Moldova, among Europe's poorest countries, is hosting the most Ukrainians per capita and could see more if the conflict moves south.

But the U.N. refugee response is 80 percent underfunded, and donors, including the U.S., have channeled most funding through U.N. agencies, rather than frontline implementers. Volunteers, local government, and private sector resources are filling gaps heroically, but this will wane with time.

And in just 100 days, the fallout of this crisis has gone global. Ukraine and Russia produce a quarter of the world's grain. With Black Sea ports blocked and millions of tons of grain trapped in silos, food prices are skyrocketing everywhere the IRC works. In Somalia, which depends on Russia and Ukraine for 92 percent of its grain, food prices have surged 40 to 100 percent. The cost of malnutrition treatment has soared so we are reaching fewer of Somalia's 1 million malnourished children. And water trucking costs have doubled, halving the number of Somalis we can supply with clean water during a historic drought.

Yemen depends on Ukraine for nearly half its wheat. Lebanon imports 80 percent of its grain from Ukraine. Food prices from the Sahel to Central America have surpassed five-year highs. The U.N. warns 47 more people—47 million more people will experience acute hunger this year, adding to last year's record, 276 million. And with all eyes on Ukraine, the U.N. flash appeal for that crisis is 75 percent funded, but appeals for other crises globally are less than 19 percent funded on average.

The IRC applauds Congress for allocating over \$4 billion in emergency humanitarian funding. We urge the U.S. to build on that step. First, while only an end to the fighting will ease the suffering inside Ukraine, the U.S. should prioritize diplomatic efforts to expand humanitarian access, including strengthening U.N. monitoring mechanisms to document the denial of access, encourage the government of Ukraine to remove barriers to cash-based aid which is vital to meet needs, while also giving Ukrainians agency in supporting local markets, and invest in protection services to meet the unique needs of women, children, the elderly and disabled.

Second, to show solidarity with the host communities in Europe, the U.S. should, together with other donors, increase funding to host countries before private and local government funding decreases. Push for burden-sharing across Europe, both with respect to numbers of refugees hosted and equitable access to support. Regularize the status of Ukrainian parolees arriving in the U.S. by passing the Ukrainian Adjustment Act.

Third, to mitigate the global hunger fallout, the U.S. should commit additional funds to humanitarian contacts most dependent on Ukrainian and Russian exports, to ensure U.S. sanctions have clear guidance related to critical commodities like food and fertilizer, and to catalyze humanitarian diplomacy to open Ukraine's Black Sea ports with the countries most affected by the shortages at the center.

But aid is not enough. There must be more accountability. The dynamics of death, destruction, displacement, and denial of access are driving the misery. These tactics are not unique to Ukraine. The U.S. should reaffirm its own commitments to international humanitarian law, ensure respect for it is a prerequisite for security partnerships and arms transfers, including for Ukraine, and support mechanisms to monitor violations in all conflict settings. The

war in Ukraine should mark the end of impunity, not set a new precedent for it.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Ms. Catanzano.

We want to welcome Mr. Walsh. You're now recognized for your testimony. Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF PETE WALSH, COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR
UKRAINE, SAVE THE CHILDREN**

Mr. WALSH. Thank you very much, Chairman Lynch, Ranking Member Grothman, and distinguished members of the subcommittee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the current crisis in Ukraine that continues to put 7.5 million children at risk. I'm calling in from Kyiv today in Ukraine, and it was on the 24th of February that we rapidly scaled up to meet the needs of 12 million people across Ukraine. We work with local and national partners to provide cash, water, food, medicine, hygiene kits, establish safe spaces for children, and deliver bunk kits into the front line.

I wanted to open with a real-life story of my experience in Ukraine. On the 5th of April, we visited the southern ports and shipbuilder city of Mykolaiv and, more specifically, Mykolaiv children's referral hospital the day after a reported air strike in and around the hospital grounds.

Walking around the grounds, I saw shrapnel shards, projectiles, and ambulance, private cars, and a large minivan destroyed, blown-out windows of neighboring properties, the blood on the floor outside the emergency department. The hospital—the hospital—sorry—walking—the hospital is in a residential area. Not a single military target was in sight.

While there were reports of civilian fatalities, I remember two stories of two girls, both who were in the operating theater at the time of the attack, one, a 15-year-old girl, who was having shrapnel removed; and the second, a six-year-old girl, having a bullet removed from her arm from previous attacks. And then, one of these missiles and rockets from the attack hit the operating theater. Tragically, the girls received further blast injuries from that attack which rendered them into intensive care. Their lives were now in severe danger. However, the wonderful Mykolaiv medical director, Dr. Iryna, who I met, told us on that day that the girls were unlikely to survive the night. However, five days later we had a call from Dr. Iryna, informing us that by some miraculous reason, they did survive but with life-changing injuries and trauma that will remain for the rest of their lives.

These are only two stories of the 7.5 million children affected by the war in Ukraine. On average, two children have been killed or injured every day since this—since the start of the escalation. A child has become a refugee almost every second. There have been over 9,500 civilian casualties with over 272 children killed, and a further 439 injured.

The needs of children must be at the heart of any response. We, therefore, call on the U.S. Government in the following three ways:

One, help us better protect children in Ukraine. Continue to condemn all attacks on schools and hospitals, schools need to be a safe

space and cannot be used by the military. Prioritize investment in critical programming. This includes child protection, mental health, psychosocial support, and inclusive and safe education. Recognize the specific risks that face separating unaccompanied children and support the call for no intercountry adoption at this time.

No. 2, champion our needs to access the most vulnerable children, including those living past the contact lines.

No. 3, ensure all accountability mechanisms have dedicated child rights expertise and that all mechanisms are coordinated, including with the Office of the Prosecutor General.

All air strikes and explosions continue to plague children's lives. Millions of children have lost relatives, their families ripped apart. Parents have had to make difficult decisions. Should they flee or remain? The level of violence and trauma that I have witnessed cannot be underestimated. One of our psychologists describe children arriving in one of our child-friendly spaces as being in a state of catatonic. Their drawings are filled with civilians running from tanks, bombs, and crying women.

At least 1,939 schools have been damaged and destroyed since the 24th of February. One in every 10 schools that come under attack this year was destroyed. Not only this has deprived children from safe, quality education, but also increases protection risks, cuts off children from a sense of normalcy, and interrupts other service, such as nutrition and immunization. Thousands of children have been separated and are now unaccompanied, thus exposing them to new threats including sexual violence, trafficking, or exploitation. These children may not be orphans, but, rather, they have gotten separated or they have been sent across the border for safety, a brutal decision for any parent to make.

While we are aware of health, education, psychological needs of millions of children across Ukraine, we cannot reach tens of thousands of children and their families past this contact line. This is due to the unpredictability of the conflict, unexploded ordnances, and the lack of assurance of safety.

Areas in need, such as Donetsk and Luhansk are undergoing intense military action and shelling. Families are trapped, unable to leave. There might be an elderly grandmother or sick family member. Some simply cannot afford to leave. We must be able to get access to these families.

However, as guaranteed by international law, families who want to leave must be allowed. Unfortunately, we continue to hear of families including children being caught up in shelling or denied exit from such areas. Attacks that target or cause harm to families on the move are prohibited under international law.

Save the Children has been impressed by the momentum of accountability across Ukraine, internationally recognized as a watershed moment. Several mechanisms have been initiated and deployed, including the U.S.-supported Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group and the Conflict Observatory.

While we recognize such proactive action, we reiterate our call for the inclusion of child rights expertise to ensure that collective preservation and analysis of all evidence is in line with the best interest of the child.

To conclude, at times, the conflict feels relentless and it's hard to picture a safe and secure future for millions of children. However, over the last three months, I have watched us scale up over 100 staff in country. We are supporting over 20 Ukrainian new partners and their staff, all working together to protect children.

We thank the U.S. Government for their support and we continue to call for you to work with us so that we can continue to deliver a principled, humanitarian response to millions of children and their family across Ukraine.

I thank you for your attention.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Walsh.

We welcome Mr. Graham. You're recognized now for five minutes for your testimony.

Thank you.

**STATEMENT OF EDWARD GRAHAM (MINORITY WITNESS), VICE
PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS, SAMARITAN'S PURSE**

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. Chairman, to the rest of the committee, I thank you for this opportunity. I'm going to focus a little bit more on the agility of NGO, especially faith-based NGO's, and one of the advantages I think we often have with the local church and some of these countries and how we operate and those are our partners.

I want to be clear up front. Samaritan's Purse is not a humanitarian aid organization. We are a Christian relief organization that uses the resources entrusted to us by God to meet the immediate needs of those who are suffering due to manmade conflict or natural disasters including diseases.

We love and serve everyone that is in need without discrimination. We do this because we love our neighbor. Just as the scripture commands us do, we meet the immediate needs of those suffering. And then we hope that our work reflects the love of Christ in the work that we do. We want them to know that God loves them. And he loves them so much that he sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to die on a cross for them.

All that we have at Samaritan's Purse is the Lord. It's not ours, and we give it to those people out of His hands. With that, Samaritan's Purse has several aviation assets, medical assets, hospitals that we're able to deploy around the world at a moment's notice. We've actually been very gifted with expeditionary capabilities that allow us to serve quickly.

In late February, when the war began, I was personally traveling abroad. But that's when the conflict started, and I redirected our vice president of international projects to go to Ukraine and start assessing what the need was. And immediately Samaritan's Purse deployed one of its tier 3 surgical hospitals where it began to set up and treat patients. We also set up some stepdown clinics in Lviv. At that time, we thought the Russian bear was coming, and that everything was going to collapse. Even the Ukrainians thought that because we saw, and the world saw, and then the chef did a good job of depicting thousands of refugees flying to the border and trying to get out.

When I went through the border that second week of the war, the car line was 14 kilometers long, and the need was just the chaos at the border. So, we started set up and working in Moldova,

Romania, Poland, treating those refugees and helping them, but also working medically inside Ukraine, serving those.

But we're able to set up quickly and do a lot of this and with the assessments because of our church network, and we're fortunate to have that. But eventually, the war started to change, and we saw some focus change and we knew food was going to be a huge issue, just as the chef said, but further east, where the fighting is.

While in Ukraine, though, I saw the church housing, feeding, and providing medical supplies to the displaced. I'm proud of the church. I saw many churches transporting, housing, feeding, providing limited medical support but spiritual support. They're living out the New Testament, the story of the good Samaritan. The church was and is the perfect partner. The church also allows us to get into areas serving, especially with our food program that I'll talk about, further into areas, and some of those areas I can't talk about for safety reasons, but it's an unbelievable network.

About three weeks, when we did see the war changing, that's when I went to the Baptist Union and the Pentecostal Union. These are church partners we've had for a long time, especially through one of our ministries called Operation Christmas Child. With that, we're in over 120 different countries, serving with trained staff and volunteers. So, when conflict happens in one of these countries, we respond quickly. Ukraine alone, we have 3,300 churches that participate in this program.

Our sister organization, my grandfather's, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, has worked in Ukraine for years as well. So, when I went to the Baptist Union, the Pentecostal Union to set up a reverse flow of our logistic nodes, we sent about 600,000 shoeboxes, gift-filled shoeboxes from Operation Christmas Child last year alone. That is already the logistical nodes that we need to do these large-scale feeding programs.

So right now, currently, Samaritan's Purse has 128 staff members in the region. Over 500 are our staff deployed so far. We have treated over 12,000, about 12,500 patients in our medical sites and our field hospital, 157 surgeries. That's 5,900 tons of food distributed across two countries, 1.4 million assisted. We've flown our DC-8 cargo plane out of Greensboro, North Carolina, every week since the conflict started. That's 520 tons of relief supplies, nonfood items. We even had to rent a 747-cargo plane early in the war because their need was so great.

But so our plane doesn't fly back empty, we started working with the Canadian government. And we're flying refugees—as was mentioned before, we're flying refugees out of Poland, into Canada where they're being served alongside our sister or one of our affiliate offices up there in Canada but being placed and work with the churches there for support.

But because Samaritan's Purse is a Christian organization and faith-based, we do not rely on government grants. Our donors allow us to remain agile and able to respond immediately where called to serve. There is no committee meetings, no waiting to build a team, no waiting on government grants. God has entrusted Samaritan's Purse with the resources on tap to help those in desperate need.

One of the reasons Samaritan's Purse was able to respond immediately to Ukraine, again, was that established church network that I've already talked about.

When I was in Ukraine during the second week of the war, I met the head of the Baptist Union, the Pentecostal Union. They immediately started working with us. And I'm fortunate and blessed to have that relationship, but it's not ours. That's something that God's given to us.

But this food pipeline, again, it will continue to morph. It will continue to change. We'll work with those teams and those churches to feed further to the east, and that's where many of our teams are right now. They're also set up an ambulance relay system where they're getting people with burn and blast injuries, getting them out of country, training those hospitals where we saw a great need.

But I want to finish. I don't think most Ukrainians know that the U.S. is helping with humanitarian. They know the lethal aid and they will speak into that and they're appreciative and they would ask for more. But what they don't see is necessarily U.S. humanitarian. What they see is the NGO's, and they see the church, and that's who we partner with. They see the church working and loving on their neighbors and serving those in most need.

So, I don't come to the government, asking for anything and any resources. I would just ask that you continue to encourage the generosity of the American citizen to donate to faith-based organizations that are agile, can remove quickly. Just as the chef talked about, just think if the U.S. wasn't benevolent and that the American people didn't give, what the response in Ukraine would look like right now. It would be disastrous. I think it is the generosity of the American people that has responded immediately and helped to love their neighbor here in a time of crisis.

I appreciate it and thanks for the time and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you, Mr. Graham.

I want to thank all our witnesses for their statements.

Now, I will yield five minutes to myself for some questions.

Ms. Catanzano, you had a very good perspective on the cascading effects, not just what's going on within the borders of Ukraine, but also you talked about the cascading effects beyond the borders. Our committee, as well, myself included, have visited, you know, Somalia, Yemen, a lot of the places that you cited that—especially North Africa where you cited the absence of Ukrainian wheat and supplies would have a devastating impact.

I also want to ask you about the border countries. So, our subcommittee spent time in Moldova, Romania, and Poland. And I realize now that Moldova is one of the poorer countries in Europe, and yet, it was heartwarming to see the way those people who didn't have two nickels to rub together were, despite that fact, welcoming in families into their own homes, refugees into their own homes.

Do you have any visibility on how those countries and those people who are also showing tremendous, tremendous hospitality and kindness to the refugee population—and I'm talking about prin-

cipally Poland, Romania, and Moldova—do you have any visibility into in terms of what their need might be?

I noticed that, you know, unlike Afghanistan, or other parts of the world where the committee has visited, where there are large refugee camps, that's not the situation in these neighboring countries. They've been—these refugees have been taken in, in large part into private homes. But I'm not sure how sustainable that might be in the long term. I think it's heroic. But I'm not so sure, you know, that it's the most efficacious way to deal with that problem.

So, Ms. Catanzano, do you have any visibility on the situation in those neighboring countries and what we might be doing to ease their burden?

Ms. CATANZANO. Thank you, Chairman. And thank you for that question.

We are operating in Poland and working in Moldova as well. And I can absolutely endorse your perspective that it's been heroic and inspiring to see the welcome that these countries and these citizens have offered to displaced Ukrainians.

I think it's also I can endorse your perspective that there are strains and stresses on these communities and these cities and these countries, given the disproportionate burden that Ukraine's nearest neighbors are bearing in this response.

Like you said, there isn't a camp-based response. This is members of the community welcoming Ukrainians into their homes and into their lives, thinking it was going to be for a few weeks and here we are 100 days later.

I think that spirit of generosity and welcome is still there. But in the case of, say, Poland, for instance, some of the subsidies the government was able to provide early on to those hosting refugees, as, you know, meager as they may have been, it was something, are running out.

There was a housing crisis in large Polish cities before February 24, but now you can imagine the strain on housing stocks when the populations of cities have swelled by 15 or 20 percent with Ukrainians. It's making it even more difficult that we're reaching the summer season, and the generosity of Airbnb or vacation rentals that were opened up to Ukrainian families, those owners, they need that income. And so, we are going to see some of those housing stocks decline.

I think similarly in Moldova, while it's not hosting the sheer numbers that Poland is, it's hosting the highest number per capita, and it has the lowest GDP on the continent. And it's not just the numbers that are housing now but us looking around corners and wondering what's going to happen if the conflict moves south to Odessa, that's going to be where those civilian population of Ukraine moves quickly. So, we've seen inflation. We've seen an overwhelming need at reception centers within Moldova.

I think we have to bear in mind that, while there's been an overwhelming amount of support for inside Ukraine, for the countries that are hosting these Ukrainians, they're not seeing the same level of support. I mentioned in my opening statement the response plan for the neighbors is only—is 80 percent underfunded. And a lot of those funds are being channeled or almost all of those funds

from big donors including the United States being channeled through U.N. agencies, which makes the response a little bit less dynamic and nimble than it could be if those funds were flowing directly to frontline implementers. I think Chef Andrés highlighted some of those challenges in his testimony earlier.

So, we are worried. We are pushing both for more funding for the refugee response, but we're also pushing for more diplomacy to enhance the burden-sharing across Europe. The European Union did invoke the Temporary Protection Directive at the start of this crisis for the first time, but it's up to the member states to implement it and to think about the scope with which they were implemented.

So, there's great disparity right now amongst the different European countries about what kind of access refugees have to support and services. So, that really affects secondary movement and keeps many Ukrainians in their countries of first refuge, which means that burden stays on Moldova and Poland.

So, I appreciate that question. And I hope that we can continue to look inside Ukraine, but also look across the border, look throughout Europe, and as you said at the start, about the cascading crises globally.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you. That was very helpful. Thank you.

I now recognize the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Grothman, for five minutes for his questions. Thank you.

Mr. GROTHMAN. You may have to unmute.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Yes, a question for Mr. Graham, or I guess the other people could weigh in as well.

Percentage-wise, you know, say 100, 100 percent would be Ukraine is adequately fed. Percentage-wise, how much food is available in Ukraine compared to what would be considered adequate?

Mr. GRAHAM. I mean, to give a percentage, I think it's different in different places. You're looking in central parts of Ukraine and to the—you know, going back to the border to Poland. Life is somewhat going on as normal, but they may not have the access to the food they normally eat.

The concerns are obviously toward the fighting area where our food networks are going and our pipelines are channeling. There you're seeing, I would—I mean, you're looking at 50 percent, maybe, to give you a number from that off of what my team's telling me and seen on the ground. But it's not just necessarily the food. It's the nutritional value that you need to get to women, children, especially those women that are pregnant. You know, it's that good quality food and programming that you need access to and getting it there. So that's one of the bigger challenges that we're seeing there in getting food.

Like the chef said, we're trying to buy locally as well. I know the silos, you talked about silos. You're looking at about, I think, it's like 35 million metric tons in the silos. But with the ports then blown up and closed by the Russians, they can't get that stuff out or they can't internally ship things into the country too well and around with the fighting.

So, it's all been talked about. There's going to be massive issues in Africa because most of the food that support Africa comes out of this area. So, we're looking years down the road at the chal-

lenges. Internal to the country, I would say along the fighting areas, you're looking at 50 percent what is needed.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. From your experience, would it be more effective or helpful for the U.S. Government agency to provide direct assistance to the NGO's position in the country, or U.N. agencies?

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, I know Amanda talked about this. I thought she did a good job highlighting this, and the chef. The U.N. is an organization that has a lot of capacity. But it is a huge bureaucratic system, and it's slow to move. And it has to build resources. There's also the—based off neutrality and who they work with, they don't hire locally within Ukraine. I can't go in—I'm not in the U.N so I can't tell all their challenges.

But I know, when you look at NGO's, the agility allows you to go work directly to the partner like us with the church. And the church is going to do the feeding and be the hands and the feet, and the Ukrainians are going to see the church, because one day Samaritan's Purses and these NGO's will leave. What does that church look like? How is that country? How is the internal systems, the internal economy set up for success for programming that's going to be sustaining? That's who we work with and it's responsive and it's immediate.

We were there the second day of the war. I haven't seen much of the U.N. I have to be honest. I've seen very few cars while I was there. I'll be back next week. I'll report back, but my team's not seeing much of the U.N. there.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. I'll give you kind of a different question, but I always kind of wonder about it. When I look, I think of countries the size like the 100 biggest countries in the world. Ukraine apparently has the second lowest birth rate of all those countries. How does that affect your mission or what's going on in the Ukraine, this wildly low birthrate?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes. Well, so especially during a time of conflict and time of war, we see a lot of children and a lot of displaced children. There's a safeguarding of children you want to take. So, we're concerned with children crossing the border, to make sure they're going with their parents or their loved one, a family member. And many of them are going without their fathers. That's a whole other challenge.

But you're also looking at the medical needs that are women. When our hospital first set up in Lviv, I was there. One of the first patients we treated was a pregnant woman that hadn't felt her child kick in the last couple of days as she was fleeing the conflict. We were just able to let her be able to see her child and the heartbeat, listen to the heartbeat. We delivered children.

There's a whole lot of needs when it comes to that. But then the feeding of children, making sure—we talk about formula here in this country. And I know it is a huge issue right now. I can imagine being a mother but imagine being a mother in this war zone, and what they're going through right now and the needs. And that's why the humanitarian need's so great.

It's also a reason, one of the reasons Operation Christmas Child is such a big program there is because there are so many children. And they want—the churches want this ministry to come in there and work and serve alongside them.

So, you bring up a great point, Representative. We appreciate you highlighting that. But I think some of these other NGO's, too, could highlight the needs they're seeing with the children and concerns, especially with safeguarding.

Mr. GROTHMAN. OK. Does anybody else wants to address that? That's OK. We'll give you another question then.

I'm glad you're working through the churches. Could you describe the role of church in Ukraine? You hear in Europe in general is becoming kind of unchurched. But could you address, maybe, compared to other European countries the role of—

Mr. GRAHAM. Ukraine.

Mr. GROTHMAN [continuing]. the role of the church?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, sir. Ukraine's a little bit different. Ukraine, I would argue, is probably the most church country in Europe with that aspect of the—and I can speak directly because I've seen it—predominantly the Baptist Union, the Pentecostal Union. You have the Orthodox church there as well, even though recently they split away from the Russian Orthodox.

But the church is active. It's alive. It's hungry. It wants to work. When I was there, before we even—I was there the start of the second week of the war. They were the ones housing and feeding and moving these individuals from the train stations to the border. And when one group would come out, another one would come into the church. And so, they're being the hands and feet of Jesus and they're living out the story of the good Samaritan. That's why I'm so proud of the church there. That might not be true in every country in Europe. But within Europe, the church is unbelievable and I'm proud of them—sorry—within Ukraine.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman's time has expired.

I did note that Mr. Walsh might have a response to Mr. Grothman's question.

You're free to answer if you wish, Mr. Walsh.

Mr. WALSH. Thank you so much and really great questions. Thank you, Chairman.

So the issue of safeguarding is one of the highest priorities on Save the Children and its partners, both in Ukraine and neighboring countries. And we've set up a network of—for unaccompanied, separated children in Poland, in Romania, through our partners in Moldova and Lithuania, to work together as one to ensure that, if children are identified as unaccompanied, that they're quickly identified and very—and Save the Children really prioritizes the identification of their parents or their wider family to try and reunite them as soon as possible.

You'd notice that I did, in my testimony, talk about the request for not to prioritize adoption. Save the Children is grateful for solidarity from across the world, for people who feel they want the need to adopt these children that are unaccompanied. But more often than not, these are children with parents. And very early on in the conflict, Save the Children asked for a moratorium for neighboring countries to not allow adoption because, while many people go with the genuine belief and intent to try and support children, there are also those that may have other alternative reasons for trying to adopt children.

So that is why we are really trying to emphasize on the best interest of the child which is with their family.

Mr. LYNCH. It's a great point.

The chair now recognizes the distinguished gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Johnson, for five minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to the witnesses on both panels who have testified today, and also thank you for your work on the ground in this humanitarian crisis.

Ms. Catanzano, in a report released last month, the International Rescue Committee wrote that the war in Ukraine has, quote, "highlighted the failure of the international community to anticipate and respond to crises and fulfill basic needs," end quote, of communities in crisis.

Can you elaborate further about what IRC meant by that?

Ms. CATANZANO. Thank you, Congressman. I'm happy to respond to that question.

When we look across the protracted and existing humanitarian crises in the countries where we work around the world, we're seeing that we've been in these places, in some cases, 20 or 25 years. These are protracted emergencies. These are not events that happened overnight, and yet, here we, are still providing services so many years later.

As I mentioned, I believe, in my statement, it's wonderful to see the outpouring of support to the crisis inside Ukraine, and to see the funding levels so high. But it's also disheartening to look across the rest of the world and see funding levels so low. While the response in Ukraine is funded almost three quarters of the way only three months into this crisis, the rest of the world is looking at humanitarian response plans that are funded less than 20 percent. And these are places with communities and people on the knife's edge of famine, which is only being exacerbated by the knock-on effects of this war and the grain shortages and other food shortage, as well as increases fuel and fertilizer prices.

So, we need sustained diplomatic attention. We need sustained funding across the board, and I think what we realize is it's very difficult to keep the international donor community focused on more than one crisis at a time. From August of last year to February, all eyes were on Afghanistan. That's—you know, we've all moved on to having eyes on Ukraine. It's important that we are able to walk and chew gum when it comes to these crises around the world.

The U.S. is a very generous donor, and I really applaud Congress for the emergency supplemental and the foresight to allocate funding, not just for inside Ukraine, but for food insecurity impacts around the world. But I do think there's more that needs to be done to both combine emergency assistance with forward-looking, anticipatory funding for where we think the impacts will be worse, and to combine it with resiliency and future-oriented development programming that makes agricultural systems stronger, more drought-resistant and more shock-resistant for communities around the world that are really struggling and are only going to get worse over the course of this year as the grain shortage, the fuel shortages, and fertilizer shortages make life harder across the board.

Mr. JOHNSON. Why is it that the international community has responded so differently to the crisis in Ukraine as opposed to the ongoing conflicts across the world that require international humanitarian assistance?

Ms. CATANZANO. Sir, I can only speculate to the answer to that question.

Mr. JOHNSON. Please do.

Ms. CATANZANO. But I do think a lot of it is driven by news cycles in the media and what's on the cover of The New York Times or The Washington Post. I think it has a lot to do with understanding the dynamics of the conflict and the dynamics of the crisis. And I think the further away a crisis is happening and the less understandable it is to citizens of donor countries, the harder it is to rally attention and funding. Distance and complexity is the enemy of action. I think what we're seeing unfold in Ukraine reads very simply to people. It's—it was an invasion of one sovereign country into another. And the impact is playing out in front of our TV screens and our social media feeds every day.

So, I do think that that drives a lot of the attention, a lot of the action, the shock and the disbelief that something like that could happen in the 21st century in the heart of Europe. But I don't think that gives us license to look away from populations that have been suffering longer and suffering from—suffering—already suffering, suffering for a long time, and increasingly suffering as a result of this crisis.

So, I do think it has to do with the shock of it happening in Europe, but the fact that it's playing out on our TV and social media feeds and the fact that it's a little bit more understandable perhaps to the average citizen than what's happening in a car or across the Sahel. But I do think it's incumbent on us to overcome that and figure out how to get diplomatic and funding attention on those most in need according to humanitarian principles.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you so much.

My time has expired.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

Thank you.

The chair now recognizes the gentlelady from North Carolina, Ms. Foxx, for her questions.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And I want to compliment you on this hearing. It's one of the better hearings, I believe, we have had in this committee and others. I'm very sorry that this committee—that this hearing wasn't being held in prime-time last night, because I think it is one, again, very, very important for the American people to hear what's being said by these witnesses today.

And I want to thank, particularly, Major Graham for being here with us today. Samaritan's Purse is in my district and very, very proud of the work that Samaritan's Purse does year after year after year. I have no—[audio malfunction.]

Mr. LYNCH. Ms. Foxx, you might be muted. I'm sorry.

Ms. FOXX. I didn't mute myself. OK. Let me see.

Maybe you could stop my clock for a second.

I'm very proud that Samaritan's Purse—

Mr. LYNCH. We—yes, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Ms. FOXX. That's OK. I'm very proud that Samaritan's Purse is in my district, and I've known the Graham family for a long time.

I appreciate very much the comments that Major Graham brought up about Samaritan's Purse and the ability for Samaritan's Purse to go in and work with the churches and the Baptist Union. I've often heard—I heard on 9/11 that the Baptist men were the most effective people in New York City on 9/11 and I am very, very grateful to hear that that is continuing. I also am concerned about the issue being brought up about the U.N. and it being such a bureaucratic organization.

I would like to ask Major Graham. What lessons can the Federal Government take from how your organization—and I may, if I have time, I'll ask the others—responded to the attack on Ukraine and what things could we know and learn from this that you all have learned?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, ma'am. And, Congresswoman, it's great to see you today.

I think one of the biggest lessons—well, the world was wrong on, I think, what they thought was going to happen with the Russian invasion. Many thought they were just going to wipe right through, and we were going to see a different Ukraine, or it'd all be Russia and we were wrong and that's great.

But war changes, and it changes quickly. I learned that in Special Operations. It's fluid. Things on the ground change. As an NGO, and as a faith-based organization, we have to be agile and be able to change to the needs on the ground. When we first got there, the assumption, and it is still is a huge need, the medical need. But we thought we were talking massive surgeries and trauma. And some of that did happen, but it quickly turned to food. And that's always usually going to be the case in war and conflict is food.

But we had to be able to pivot quickly, and that was brought up before. You have to be able to do more than one thing. You got to be able to walk and chew gum. We had to do that all over the world with various projects we got going on. But even in Ukraine, there's multiple ways to be able serve and work through the church. The church—and each church union has different capacities, different opportunities to serve, different logistics nodes. We got to be able to plug in and reinforce and hammer down and reinforce action that is working.

And when we started seeing these nodes get food into areas that are beyond the conflict zone on the other side, where there is huge problems and you're not getting much and you're not hearing the press because it's on the other side of the Russian lines, we know that this food pipeline is working. We're watching and tracking where they're going. So, we reinforce that action. And we give that church and those nodes more food, more equipment, more resources.

So, you have to be able to pivot and quick. The United Nations, I'm not here to beat them up. Again, I'm not in the United Nations, never part of it. And at this point, I don't think God's ever going to call me to be in the U.N. But it is a beast. And just like in the military, I was in the U.S. Army for years. It is hard to shift and move. As agile as they think they are, that's why I stayed in Spe-

cial Operations—agile, quick, resources. The government gives Special Operations different authorities, allowed to respond quicker in a time of crisis.

Do that here as well. When you take away bureaucratic red tape, things speed up. Oversight and watch. I understand you have to track where the money goes. Those are good things. You owe accountability to the taxpayer. Find those nonprofits and NGO's that are working, that have reliable reputations in other parts of the world, that have the access, and hammer down.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you.

I want to say to Ms. Catanzano that Governor David Beasley comes to our prayer breakfast almost every Thursday morning he's in town, and he brings to our attention the needs all over the world.

Mr. Walsh, a quick question for you that you won't be able to answer on air, I don't think, but I'd like to get an answer from you later.

I have a county in my district that has had a very close relationship with Ukraine for many, many years and the churches there. And we've had some people in the county who were in the midst of adoptions of children who were approved to come to the United States to Ashe County, and those adoptions were stopped. And we have people asking us what can they do to finalize those adoptions, and there are people who want to take children in.

So, if you could give us information, give the staff of the committee information on how we might connect those people again, and what is being done to reunite children with their families, that would be interesting, I think, for the whole committee to know, but if you could give us information on contact people that we could get to for these people who are desperate to complete those adoptions.

But if you want to say anything about how you're reuniting families, and the chairman would allow that, I think it would be interesting for the whole committee to hear.

Mr. LYNCH. Of course.

Mr. Walsh, you may proceed.

Mr. WALSH. Thank you very much.

And thank you, Representative Foxx, for your question. And, you know, our hearts go out andnd we welcome and so grateful for the solidarity of the American people who, you know, have genuine adoption applications with children in Ukraine.

But right now, when martial law is in place and the normal protection systems and the safeguarding systems that you would normally find in the country are stretched, or they're being repurposed for the war efforts, there is a lot of confusion, and maybe things aren't working as they should be.

Plus, we're in an unprecedented time with children on the move. We're—you know, this response is urban. It's transient. It's about migration. And, you know, separated unaccompanied children in an emergency are extremely vulnerable to trafficking, to exploitation. And every effort must be taken to safeguards—safeguards are in place to protect children from abuse.

So, what Save the Children has tried to do is through our networks, through our partners across the countries, the neighboring countries, is to identify these unaccompanied children. And we are

doing a fairly good job at that. However, we need the government's support, which we are getting, plus additional partners to come on board to ensure that we safeguard children.

Once we identify children unaccompanied, there is a set process we follow which is—which follows all safeguarding rules and procedures that we do not rush to reunite any child that is unaccompanied. Those processes and procedures must be met. And only then once they are met, then we try to reach out to the family, the extended family, look at their status, employ local partners and use local authorities to help with the reunification process.

And we've been doing this for many years now in many countries. I saw over 4,000 children in South Sudan reunited with their families. And the grief and the joy of seeing a child run to their mother's arms, who hasn't seen that child for over 18 months and maybe have lost other members due to the war that I saw in South Sudan, is amazing.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. OK. The gentlelady yields back. Thank you very much.

The chair now recognizes the distinguished gentleman from California, Mr. DeSaulnier, for five minutes.

Welcome.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, the distinguished member from south Boston.

I just want to followup a little bit on Ranking Member Foxx's, and not for a comment but to maybe work with you. I have a family in particular in my district in northern California who I've met with. They were in the process, before the war, of adopting a Ukrainian child. That child is now stuck in Germany, and we're really having a difficult time facilitating with the State Department getting her to her adopted family in California. So, I'd like to followup with Member Foxx's comments.

And, then, our ability to comprehend consistently, I think, as a species and a society of what's happening in Ukraine, with our just being overwhelmed with what seems like daily impactful things happening around the world—but, as I listen to the discuss, I think, Mr. Chairman, of our trips, my trips to Syria and dealing with children in the refugee camps there in Jordan and following up with that and how this pattern is repeating itself.

And it seems like either an indiscriminate or a purposeful psychological tool, weapon, of Mr. Putin, to go after the most vulnerable members of what he perceives as his enemies, in particularly children, having met with those families and those kids who walked for miles to get to safety.

Mr. Stokes, the psychological impacts, the behavioral health needs—and maybe Mr. Walsh or others—how are we dealing with that in the near term, but how do we look at this ongoing?

We know the impacts to neuroscience, to developing cognitive development. I can't imagine the impacts this is going to have, as we're seeing with the Syrian refugees and what appears to be a deliberate psychological—I can't describe it—weapon to demoralize countries by doing this damage that will last generations.

So, what do you see happening? What are you able to provide in the near term? And what can we talk about for the long term?

And, unfortunately, as long as this person is in power, it seems like this is clearly a pattern that he doesn't care about. And, for some reason, it seems that our ability to concentrate and have a global response to this as a weapon of war is also a problem.

But, first and foremost, tell me what you're able to do right now to help with kids. Almost 300 kids have lost their lives in Ukraine. Almost 500 have been seriously wounded. Two out of three, I think, 5 million, Ukrainian kids no longer live in, have been forced to move out of their homes. Those impacts are significant in the near term, right now, but also long-term devastation.

Mr. STOKES. Yes. Thanks for that question.

If I can share the experience that we've seen by moving families from the east to the west here in Lviv, in the western part of the country, men, women, and children, I would say that two particular groups are affected—indeed children, but also the elderly. And these people are being uprooted from their homes and their towns in the east and coming here to the relative safety of the west.

Mental health is a major issue, and we've seen that in the patients that we are treating and the patients we are transporting. They've seen some terrible things, and some of them have been living underground in bunkers and shelters for weeks and months. We've had families shelled as they were evacuating Mariupol who we've also treated and transported to safety across the country.

So mental health is clearly a big issue for these people as well, but also the social care that's needed. Once they've been treated in hospitals in Lviv or in other parts of the west of Ukraine, they are then very vulnerable and left sometimes to fend for themselves, and this is clearly a major issue.

Also, we're seeing significant mental health needs in people who've returned from, for example, Belarus or who were taken from the north of Kyiv and taken when the Russian troops were retreating. And we've been organizing mental health care, and we're trying to look at supporting survivors of torture who are coming back from neighboring countries with some quite horrendous stories actually.

So mental health is going to be an issue. It is today and it will be for the medium and the long term here in Ukraine, absolutely.

Mr. DESAULNIER. To you, Mr. Walsh, just briefly: Do you get a sense that they understand that there is a world of support, immediately but in the long term, to help them with these issues?

Mr. WALSH. Thank you. I do. I really do.

And I think what's really important, as I mentioned and you mentioned about cognitive behavior, we are actually providing bunker kits, which is purely designed to go into the areas of contact where children are in bunkers right now and cowering from bombings and shelling and fighting. And these kits are designed to connect with the child, to get the child for the one moment, you know, to be a child, rather than having to think about what's happening aboveground. And that's really important for an early stage intervention for mental health and psychosocial support.

And I have met children, you know, in counseling sessions, in mental health counseling sessions, and heard harrowing stories of what they've been exposed to. But they do connect very well to social media, so they are also aware of the international community

and how much support is being received. But probably they hear more about the lethal aid, as mentioned by I think Mr. Graham, rather than the aid that's coming from the U.S. taxpayer.

So, yes, I do think they are aware.

Mr. DESAULNIER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for all that you do, all of the panelists.

I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

As a courtesy to my friend the ranking member, does he have any closing remarks or questions?

Mr. Grothman? If you have any closing remarks or questions.

Mr. GROTHMAN. No, I'd just like to thank you for this hearing. I'd like to thank all the witnesses. I think it was very illuminating.

We'll see what we can do in the future to use these responses as we do what we can to craft American policy not only to deal with the crisis in Ukraine but the crises around the world.

So, I'd just like to thank the chairman for convening this subcommittee, and I'd like to thank all the witnesses for spending so much time with us this Friday morning.

Mr. LYNCH. Thank you.

In closing, I do want to just spend a little time with Mr. Stokes.

You know, Doctors Without Borders has a central role to play within this conflict, as you do in so many other instances. And I'm just wondering if there are sufficient support systems around your work. Are there gaps? Are there things that we are missing?

Because, as so many of you have pointed out, you really do need to be on the ground, have boots on the ground, and sometimes bureaucracy can get in the way of things.

Are there things that you would want this committee to know regarding your ability to deliver the relief and support that you're intended to?

Mr. STOKES. I would say—thanks for the question, Mr. Chairman.

I'd say that the Ukrainian environment when it comes to healthcare is one that's, for the moment, in terms of humanitarian access, is permissive, in the sense that the Ministry of Health of Ukraine is very supportive of our work and has, under these exceptional circumstances, authorized all foreign medical professionals to be able to clinically work here in Ukraine. So, we're sending in surgeons and doctors in places like Kostiantynivka, Bakhmut that are barely 15 kilometers from the front line, and they're able to work quite effectively with good support from the Ministry of Health and the local authorities.

One of the issues that we're seeing today is that, in the east, because of the insecurity and the shelling in civilian areas, actually, a lot of the hospital staff have had to leave because they're taking their families out, and we're reduced to maybe 10, 15 percent of the health staff left in some of the key hospitals. It's true that the population is also reduced there, but basically the health service provision has drastically reduced.

And this is why we and others have been moving patients out from saturated hospitals in the east to the west. But the west is also now reaching a crisis point. Some of the hospitals are basically

at full capacity and are looking at how they can perhaps move patients out of the country or to other parts of the country.

So, the general healthcare system here in Ukraine has responded reasonably well and with great determination and courage. And we have to admit that 99 percent of the response when it comes to healthcare is done by the Ukrainians, not the international organizations. We add perhaps that little extra 1 percent.

And they're really under huge pressure. And the human-resources issue, the issue of security around hospitals close to the front lines is really coming to the fore. And we're only 100 days—"only"—well, 100 days into this conflict, and it's quite worrying to think what will lie ahead for the healthcare system and the hospitals, especially in the east, close to the front lines.

Mr. LYNCH. Right. That phase is something that we need to be thinking about right now, when this conflict is eventually over.

In closing, I just want to say how thankful I am, how grateful I am for, really, the full-spectrum perspective that yourselves and Chef Andrés were able to offer the committee and we appreciate the way you have helped inform us in terms of the decisions that we're going to have to make and continue to make regarding the situation in Ukraine and other countries around the globe that are being impacted by this conflict. So, we are really grateful for your expertise and your perspective.

I want to thank you for your remarks.

I want to commend my colleagues for their participation and some great questions.

With that, without objection, all members will have five legislative days within which to submit additional written questions for the witnesses through the chair, which will be forwarded to the witnesses for their response.

I just ask our witnesses to please respond as promptly as you are able, if you do receive further questions.

Mr. LYNCH. This hearing is now adjourned. Thank you and have a great day.

[Whereupon, at 11:12 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

