



Save Ukraine Now
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Save Ukraine Now: Background

Establishment and Growth

Dr. Gary Kellner founded Save Ukraine Now (SUN), a non-partisan, inter-faith coalition, in September 2014 to alleviate the exploding humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. With extensive contacts and decades of experience in Ukraine, including with government leaders and faith-based communities, Dr. Kellner is uniquely positioned for this ambitious task. He directed social programs in Ukraine for more than 15 years and established the country's first program in leadership studies, benefiting more than 10,000 individuals through degree programs, conferences and seminars.

General (ret.) Wesley Clark, the former Supreme NATO commander in Europe and Presidential candidate, serves as Chairman of the Board of Save Ukraine Now, and Neal Bratschun, who headed a 100-person staff for the United Nations Development Program in Afghanistan for nearly five years, is the International Country Director.

SUN rapidly established a permanent office in Ukraine to facilitate its activities, and a plan was formulated to provide humanitarian assistance to areas of "frozen conflict," where the suffering is greatest and aid workers daily risk their lives. Working directly with the Office of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and with the leaders of Ukraine's faith communities, SUN determined what emergency supplies were required most.

Dr. Gary Kellner, in tandem with the leaders of Ukraine's major faith communities, organized a micro-distribution network of 12,000-to-15,000 local congregations to ensure assistance reaches isolated villages in eastern Ukraine. This network serves as a bulwark against corruption and made SUN unique as it began to coordinate among other agencies, individuals and organizations already providing assistance.

Activity on the Ground

Save Ukraine Now provided heating supplies to its first refugee center within days of opening the Kiev office in November 2014.

The first SUN medical team was on the ground in the recently liberated city of Slavyansk shortly thereafter in an urgent mission to alleviate some of the suffering. SUN also marked the holiday season with special events at the Column Hall of the Kiev City Administration where it gave presents to 1,500 orphans and refugee children.

The situation deteriorated dramatically during the winter, with the number of internally displaced people skyrocketing from 500,000 to 1.1 million within weeks. More than five million people have been affected by the conflict, with 1.7 million of them children, according to UNICEF.

Ukraine Survival

Save Ukraine Now responded quickly to the new situation. It launched a national shipping container campaign, dubbed *Ukraine Survival*, and is enlisting thousands of faith-based and civic associations across the United States. SUN asked organizations to collect clothes, blankets, household items, and healthcare and medical supplies. SUN supplies the shipping container, and the participating group defrays the shipping costs.

To underscore the seriousness of the situation and to show the unity of Ukraine's faith communities, SUN invited the leaders of all the nation's major faith communities to participate in a U.S. tour to kickoff *Ukraine Survival*. The initiative launched in Detroit and Chicago with prayer breakfasts and evening banquets. General Wesley Clark also provided strategic briefings at the Detroit Economic Club and Northwestern University.

SUN envisions events in other major American cities to raise awareness of the humanitarian catastrophe. The leadership of SUN believes wholeheartedly in the generosity of the American people and supports any form of assistance possible for the Ukrainian people in their hour of trial and suffering.

Conclusion

Save Ukraine Now's unique paradigm for the provision of emergency relief has created an unusual yet powerful alliance among government agencies, NGOs and faith-based organizations. Together with its extensive micro-distribution network, these groups are making real headway under very adverse circumstances.