

HELP FOR REFUGEES, INC.

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We are a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation that helps orphans and elderly Christians (many in their eighties, even 90s) who had been imprisoned for their faith in present or former communist countries. At this critical moment, we also help needy Christian refugees from Ukraine! Where needed, content and pictures are dated.



OCTOBER 2026

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Hebrews 13:2)

The late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand endured 14 years of Romanian communist imprisonment. For nearly three years, Mrs. Sabina Wurmbrand was also imprisoned for her Christian witness. She was kept in some of the same prisons as Richard (separately and at different times) and in the forced-labor camps at the Danube-Black Sea Canal.

From a Bible meditation by the Reverend Richard Wurmbrand:

Surrounded By Angels

One sleepless night, I tried to recollect as best I could, visitors who had passed through my home. Being a minister, there were very many. I asked myself, "who of these could have been angels?" Some of the visitors I had helped, ended up being very harmful to myself and my family. How could these have been angels? Others did me good. Nothing was out of the ordinary. They did not seem to fit my notions of true angelic beings.

From the spiritual point of view, a human can be something different than what appears to our eyes. Some humans are true devils. During the time I suffered 14 years in Romanian communist prisons, I met an extremely evil communist torturer. He repeated often: "I thank God, in whom I do not believe, such a time has arrived (he meant communism) when I can show all my evil being." Indeed, a true devil in a human body.

Other fellow humans proved being angels or we do not know how else describe them better. If we were able to talk to a caterpillar and tell it, "one day you will fly here and there as a multi-colored butterfly", it would hardly believe us. But this is the miracle of God's creation. The Lord Jesus explained how his contemporaries did not know well the Scripture or the power of God. At the resurrection, believers will be like the angels! (Matthew 22:29-30)

My wife Sabina was also imprisoned by the Romanian communist regime for nearly three years. She was imprisoned in a labor camp where for many hours prisoners were breaking stones with sledge-hammers and loaded and unloaded stones into train wagons, for the building of a canal by the Danube River. More than 100,000 prisoners were held in this labor camp. Thousands died in this camp. The communists told the inmates, "we will use you here until you die of hunger or sickness."

The tortures suffered by Christians at this communist prison camp were beyond belief. Thus, brother Terelai Petrica for instance, described: "I was working close to the prison morgue. There I witnessed daily 3-5 corpses having their parts of their legs, heads or ribs cut off or broken (from tortures.) Most prisoners who died though, died of hunger. The icy cold finished all off, as there were no windows or doors during the heavy (Romanian) windy winters. The doors and windows were installed and tightly shut though during summer (so as to torture us

with stuffing heat.) “Brother Szekely Balint also imprisoned there wrote: “Where I was kept in the Danube Canal Labor Camp the death of a person was considered of the importance of the death of a fly. At one time the head guard hit someone with a shovel so brutally that he broke his own hand. The (communist) commanding officer at the “Five Ridges” Colony at this Canal Prison Camp would force detainees to stretch on the ground and he would dance on their body similarly to the dancing of a bear, as he was way more than 200 lbs.” Brother Prodan Ioan recalled: “As to the Danube Canal prison-camp “Calvary,” I should describe here only how the dead were thrown naked into shallow graves, as due to the freeze the other prisoners could not dig deep. In the spring, dogs were uncovering the graves and eating up these corpses. This was the communist inferno.” And a Christian, Stefanache Dragomir also described: “It was the most frightening extermination camp the population (under communism) knew of. I was left outside to freeze to death and found by some people in some ditch. People who found me realized I was not dead but had totally passed out.”

My wife recounted a miracle that happened during her imprisonment time in this Danube labor camp: “One Sunday when brought back to our prison cell, some five or six women gathered on the concrete, under the bed in order to be able to pray together without being seen through the door peephole. We did not have a Bible but repeated in a whisper from memory, passages of the Bible about Saint Stephen who before he was stoned to death, was “being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55) Again about Saint Stephen: “And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.” (Acts 6:15)

While we were talking in a low voice under the bed about Saint Stephen, we had among us a lady, formerly one of the richest ladies of Romania. She was not a Christian. She was in prison because her husband had been one of the political leaders of the country before the communists came to power. She said, "I wonder about you Christians, you seem to be intelligent women, but how could you believe that Stephen, standing before his enemies knowing that he would be put to death, how could you believe it, that his face could be so beautiful?" A Christian lady answered, "I am sorry for you. You do not know Jesus, the Son of God. But whenever Jesus comes in a heart, He never comes alone, He always comes with all His richness. He comes with His angels. He comes with the glory of heaven and so when you open your heart and Jesus comes in your heart to be your Lord and Savior, He brings His beauty. And so, Stephen could be so beautiful like an angel.”

In the middle of this dialogue, at once the door opened. The Communist guard came directly to the place where we were gathered under the bed, brought us all out, gave everyone a hard beating. Bleeding with many wounds, he threw us back into the cell. We Christians knew too well what price we had to pay to talk from the Bible and to pray. We were afraid for this lady who was not a Christian, how will she react and what would she say?

While we were thinking about these things, the first one who spoke to me was this formerly rich lady who now was poor and hungry, bleeding all over the face, smeared with blood and tears. She said, "Now I know the very fact that the Communists are persecuting the Christians, the very fact that they have beaten us simply because we spoke about Jesus. This very fact for me is the best proof, that your God is God indeed. And your Jesus will be also my Jesus the Savior." And she did not know that now her face smeared with blood and with tears, shone and was beautiful like the face of an angel.”



The Communist Jilava Prison, entrance to the underground cells.



A cell in the Jilava prison: bunk-beds without mattresses, the stove never heated in cold winters.



A mugshot of the late Reverend Richard Wurmbrand while held in the Jilava prison.

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (Apostle James Epistle 1:27)

HELP FOR REFUGEES supports Christians who had been imprisoned for their faith in communist countries, and if contacts are available, their descendant families. We also support: the Agape House in Pascani, Romania - an orphanage founded in 1993 by Pastor Richard Wurmbrand and his family, and also the Richard Wurmbrand College, (a high school in Iasi, Romania) where children of disadvantaged Christian families are able to study.

A Testimony from the Taranukha family:

Hello, my name is Olga Taranukha, I am 42 years old. My husband is Igor, he is 45. We're from the Sumy region of Ukraine. We have two adult daughters, who were minors at the start of the war. In Ukraine, I worked as a primary school teacher. My husband had just started breeding goats to build his own small farm and sell natural dairy products. Unfortunately, it didn't work out.

On 2/24/22, we awoke to the sound of a military jet flying over our house. Our village is 17 km from the Russian border. Once the invasion started. My husband quickly got ready and went to Sumy to pick up our eldest daughter from the medical college where she studied. Online, we saw photos and videos of long columns of Russian tanks and military equipment heading through our community. The Russian soldiers hadn't harmed civilians yet.

We stayed home for about a month, and practically did not leave. Sometimes we hid in the basement when the explosions were very loud. Our daughters' schooling resumed online, and I also taught lessons.

By early April, the atrocities in Bucha and Irpin happened. It became known that the Russian units that committed those war-crimes were stationed in the Kursk region, near us. It was unknown where they would be sent next. Perhaps to our villages. My husband then decided that we needed to leave urgently. I didn't want to, but for the sake of my daughters (they were seventeen and fifteen at the time), I agreed.

Our Departure: Igor found contacts of childhood friends who had left for Oradea, Romania at the beginning of the war. Miraculously, our family lent us funds for the trip across Ukraine and drove us to the border in a day and a half. We spent the night in a Baptist church, I think in Vinnytsia. We crossed the border on April 9, 2022. My husband returned home to Ukraine.

We were met by a man I had never seen before. He took us to a children's camp in the mountains near Suceava, which at that time served as a temporary shelter for Ukrainians. A couple of days later, we were put on a train to Oradea, where we were met by the pastor of the Romanian church Biserica Baptistă Stânca Veacurilor. They helped us with documents, food, clothes, and housing. We didn't intend to stay in Romania. We left with only two backpacks and paints (my daughter loves to draw).

Until the end of the school year, I still taught online lessons, but then I was forced to stop teaching school because I was abroad. The children tried to study online, but it was difficult: the three of us lived in one room, and it was very inconvenient for each of us to be in our online lessons at the same time.

The hardest thing was that our family was separated. Dad stayed at home, where the shelling had already begun. He could not work, and I had to use my teacher's salary to maintain our house in Ukraine, financially support my husband, and somehow survive abroad, where everything was uncertain and incomprehensible - the language, prices, doctors.

Our girls had a very difficult time because of the loss of their social circle. Their friends were scattered around the world, some still stayed in the village. It was difficult to continue their studies online. Therefore, our eldest daughter, when she turned 18, returned to Ukraine. I was left alone with the youngest.

About two years ago, due to the worsening situation in Sumy, our eldest daughter returned to Oradea. It became a little easier emotionally because our daughters were safe with me again.

Unfortunately, our daughters had to stop their education in Ukraine. They didn't finish their degrees and were unable to begin their professions. They are trying to adapt to life in Romania and are already living separately from us.

The Lord opened a legal path for my husband to leave Ukraine. Igor accompanied his disabled mother to Romania. But she also couldn't stay with us for long - her husband and two other sons remained at home. Igor's mother then returned to Ukraine.

My parents had remained in Ukraine. Even before the war began, my diabetic dad had to have his leg amputated. My mother has mental health problems and hypertension. It is especially difficult for old people to leave their homes. They agreed to leave Ukraine and stay with us. The transportation was now more difficult as there was no one to accompany them. We had to hire a car to take them from their home to Suceava, Romania. From there, on August 22, 2026, my husband and I took them by car. It cost us about 6,300 lei. The amount is very large for us (*apx. \$1,375.00 USD*). But the main thing is that now they are safe. Their city is under constant shelling. Infrastructure, power plants, large warehouses, factories, gas stations are being destroyed. The outskirts of the city are already under protective nets from drones.

It's a good thing we took them, because their health condition was worse than I thought. For now, I'm looking into how safe it is to leave them alone at home. I'm showing them the area. For them, this is a new, unfamiliar place, plus the language barrier, it's hard for them to find their way around. They're like little children now, and need constant care.

We now live in a small two-room apartment. The elevator in the house is too small, and it's impossible for my dad to go down in it in a wheelchair. He walks on crutches to get outside.

Once on the street he uses his wheelchair. His crutches have to be carried back to the apartment. When we return, we do it all over again in reverse. Therefore, we're saving money to move to a house or at least a 1st floor apartment, or one with a large elevator.

Currently we pay rent of 1,570 lei plus up to 1,000 lei for utilities, depending on the season. Another 3,000–3,500 lei goes for food, clothing, household expenses and car maintenance. The family income is on average 7,500–8,000 lei. Renting a larger apartment in a building with a large elevator will cost 2,500. (***Please note: 1,000 Romanian Lei = apx. \$220 USD.***)

My husband and I work all day: Igor often works overtime, and I currently work in a kindergarten and also take on extra tutoring hours. My parents also need daily care which is like another day of work. Our biggest financial need right now is the 6,300 lei we paid to move our parents out of Sumy. We paid from our savings, and now we have nothing for unforeseen circumstances. Our second biggest need is to move into a larger home for our family.

My home is in Ukraine. I understand that I will never be able to go back there. Our entire community has been evacuated, there is fighting in the area, and people are not living there. In the last photo I managed to get, my house is still standing, but there are no neighbors. Among our relatives, my nephew and my husband's two cousins are missing.

Thank God that we were settled next to other Ukrainian Christian families. At first, we attended a Romanian church with translators, and later we began to hold a separate Ukrainian service. After some time, our group united with other Ukrainian believers, and a new church was formed - BCUCO. Now I serve there in the worship group. Other members of my family are still unbelievers. I am very grateful to God that through brothers and sisters from all over the world He always sends help in a timely manner.



The Taranukha Family



Olga's Parents

A Message From Michael Wurmbrand

April 16, 2022 (***)**please see the update below**)

Dear contributors:

My gratitude to all who donated generously toward helping so many refugees from Ukraine, a true flood of displaced individuals. More than four million have escaped the current war and another three million are expected to come out. If one reads the daily news, one will be convinced easily these are not exaggerated figures. These are persons who flee from extensive bombing and continuing total destructions of whole towns. It happens that my birth country, Romania, and the Republic of Moldova (also a Romanian language country) have together the longest common border with Ukraine. At the same time, Romania is one of the poorest countries in the European Union and Moldova is economically worse. Between Romania and Moldova so far, one million Ukrainians have sought asylum already. Refugees come at times at the rate of 10,000 every 24 hours. Most of these refugees are women with 3 to 8 children. Fortunately, many other countries in Europe and North America are accepting to resettle these refugees if they can arrive there. Some of the younger generation might have a little knowledge of English. Many came out with hardly more than the shirt on their back. There were miles-long lines at the border. Through the local Christians who deserve all praise, we provide pocket money given in hand for food and believers' lodging for a few days, until there is a partial resolution as to near-future plans of settling some place somehow or moving-on further to other countries. \$2,000 seems to be a large sum for an elderly couple who could escape but most couples come out with larger groups of 10 to 15 children and grandchildren. Just as one example, we paid for a Victoria village home, \$6,000 for a one-month lodging and food for three adults and twelve children. Most of these refugees entertain the illusion of taking refuge out of their native country and their lodging and work, for a brief time but the way the news comes out on this prolonged war, I doubt this will be the case. I believe these refugees will remain refugees for many years to come. We publish in these newsletters a few testimonies of some Ukrainian Christian refugees.

(***)**Update:** As of May 2026, more than 210,000 refugees from Ukraine have obtained refugee status in Romania.)

Thank You for Your Generous Gifts!

Michael Wurmbrand

409	Власенко	Валентин	Медведевич	1958	Украина
410	Вольф	Андрей	Корнеевич	1958	Казахстан
411	Куркин	АЛЕКСЕЙ	ЯКОВЛЕВИЧ	1958	Россия
412	Левен	НИКОЛАЙ	ВИКТОРОВИЧ	1958	Казахстан
413	Романюк	Владимир	Николаевич	1958	Украина
414	Тиссен	Давид	Давидович	1958	Россия
415	ТУРКЕВИЧ	Василий	Тарасович	1959	Украина
416	Бычков	Степан	Павлович	1959	Украина
417	ДРИСВЯННИКОВ	АЛЕКСАНДР	АЛЕКСАНДРОВИЧ	1959	Россия
418	СКВОРЦОВА	ЛЮБОВЬ	НИКОЛАЕВНА	1959	Россия
419	Варавин	Виталий	Федотович	1959	Россия
420	Дубицкий	СЕРГЕЙ	АДАМОВИЧ	1959	Россия
421	Ляшенко	Борис	Владимирович	1959	Украина
422	Ткаченко	ИВАН	ИВАНОВИЧ	1959	Казахстан
423	МАРЧЕНКО	Станислав	Павлович	1960	Украина
424	Донченко	Александр	Максимович	1960	Украина
425	Отмахов	Вениамин	Александрович (Валерианов)	1960	Узбекистан
426	Савченко	Михаил	Михайлович	1960	Эстония
427	Фадеева (ШВЕЦОВА)	ДИНА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1961	Алания
428	ШВЕЦОВА	АННА	ВЛАДИМИРОВНА	1962	Алания
429	Богодимов	Александр	Валерьевич	1962	Эстония
430	Миняков	Павел	Дмитриевич	1962	Эстония

Above, **is only a sample** of a lengthy list, our mission was able to compile beside other lists, of over 480 elderly Baptist Christians most of them still alive, who suffered for the Christian faith in the former Soviet Union. The prison sentences amounted from 2 years, to as many as 18 years of communist prison. If considered together, their years of prison-sentences shown in our **abbreviated** table, would add up to over 2,000 years of prison. The 4th and 5th column together, show year of birth and the most recent country they live in (like Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, etc.) We try obtain exact addresses, so we may be able to send encouraging help to those still alive. We were able to send repeated help to about 120 such elderly Russian-speaking Christians and over 110 speaking other languages. Many of their testimonies you can read in the monthly newsletter. Testimonies available also on the internet. **Look up third column at:**

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