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Pope Francis, alongside Papal Almoner Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, blesses an ambulance to be donated to a hospital in Ukraine's Ternopil region in this undated photo taken at the Vatican and released June 24, 2024. (CNS/Dicastery for Charity Services)



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Pope Francis blessed an ambulance filled with medicine and first-aid equipment that will travel some 1,800 miles from the Vatican to support those wounded in Ukraine.

Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, papal almoner, will make his eighth trip into Ukraine to donate the ambulance and medical supplies to a hospital in the country's Ternopil region, the Dicastery for the Charity Services announced June 24. The dicastery's statement was accompanied by a picture of Francis blessing the ambulance.

In Ternopil, "many convoys arrive every day which transport civilians and soldiers forced to flee the border area with Russia, where the fighting is most fierce," the dicastery said. It will be the third ambulance the pope has sent to Ukraine, it said, and this one will also be "a valuable tool to support those rescuing injured people."

During his trip, the cardinal will also inaugurate the St. John Paul II rehabilitation center on Francis' behalf "for the integral physical and psychological rehabilitation of those who have suffered war trauma," it added.

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The center and others like it, "desired by Pope Francis," were built with the contribution of some pontifical foundations, such as Aid to the Church in Need and the Papal Foundation, the statement said.

The dicastery noted that the centers "are open to everyone without any distinction of faith, of nationality and without any exclusion."

Additionally, it said that medicine will be made available not only to those who were injured in battle but also to their families and loved ones.

By donating the ambulance and medical supplies and establishing the rehabilitation center, Francis "reminds us that faith is not disincarnate, but it takes upon itself the difficult situations of the most poor and fragile brothers and sisters," the dicastery said in its statement. "These concrete gestures of compassion seek to clear the way for mercy to reach the grace of forgiveness."