News



Metropolitan Archbishop A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia inspects a residential building Sept. 8, 2024, that was destroyed by Russian glide bombs in Kharkiv, Ukraine, located within 30 miles of the frontline of Russia's 11-year invasion of that nation. (OSV News/Gina Christian)

Gina Christian

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As Russia's full-scale invasion reached the 1,000-day mark Nov. 19, Ukraine still stands as "a testament to the miraculous endurance of our people, to God's grace," said Archbishop Borys A. Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia.

Launched Feb. 24, 2022, the invasion continues attacks initiated in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and incursions into Ukraine's Luhansk and Donetsk provinces. Two joint reports from the New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights have determined Russia's invasion constitutes genocide, with Ukraine reporting close to 147,000 war crimes committed by Russia to date in Ukraine since February 2022.

Since March 2023, the International Criminal Court has issued six arrest warrants for Russian officials charged with war crimes, including the nation's leader, Vladimir Putin, and his commissioner for children's rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, who are accused of unlawful deportation and transfer of at least 19,546 children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation.

At present, 6.79 million Ukrainian refugees have been recorded globally, with 3.5 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine as of October 2024, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.N.'s Displacement Tracking Matrix, respectively.

In a statement provided to OSV News Nov. 18, Gudziak described the span since the full-scale invasion as "1,000 days of tears, death, wounds, pain, fear, and anxiety," as well as "1,000 days of sacrifice, heroism, resilience, faith, and love."

Noting that Russia "believed Ukraine would fall within days," while "Western powers doubted we would last more than a few weeks," Archbishop Gudziak — the son of Ukrainian refugees who left the country following World War II, and founder and president of Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv — expressed his "profound gratitude for every single day we have been given."

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"I thank God and the people," said the archbishop, noting the sacrifices of "the soldiers, the volunteers, the chaplains, the medics and first responders, the repair crews and energy workers, the journalists and video reporters."

He commended "the mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, children and grandparents in our families, the great Ukrainian global family, the world of people of good will," as well as "countless non-Ukrainians world-wide that pray, advocate, and help with the defense and with the economic and humanitarian challenges" wrought by the war.

The archbishop also pointed to people "who labor tirelessly and give generously — those who, without seeking recognition, quietly bear witness to the boundless depths of love."

Above all, he said, "My deepest gratitude is to those who have given their lives.

"Eternal rest to our fallen warriors and the innocent victims of this war," Gudziak said. "Glory to those through whose courage we endure."

That endurance will continue to be tested in the coming months, as Putin has doubled down on his war strategy — enlisting anywhere from 10,000 to 100,000 North Korean troops to intensify the attacks — and as additional Western aid remains uncertain, particularly following the U.S. general election in November.

Yet, said Gudziak, "I am grateful for every sunrise, even when it arrives with air raid sirens and the shadow of danger — because it rises over a free Ukraine. I am grateful for every sunset, even when it brings the weight of our losses and the foreboding of another restless night — because it closes a day in which Ukraine is still alive."

And, he concluded, "God's truth will prevail!"

This story appears in the **War in Ukraine** feature series. View the full series.