

➤ **Life at Sea report 2022: Kindness amid conflict**
Supporting seafarers when war rocked the industry



STELLA MARIS



15% of the world's seagoing workforce is Russian or Ukrainian



5% of the world's seafarers are Ukrainian (77,000 men and women)

➤ **Less than two months into 2022, the shipping industry was rocked by the outbreak of war in Ukraine.**

One in seven of the world's seafarers are Russian or Ukrainian. There are 77,000 Ukrainian seafarers – and many of the globe's 55,000 vessels rely on Ukrainian workers.

The conflict impacted not just Ukrainian seafarers, but the worldwide seagoing workforce.

At first, many Ukrainians returned home to ensure their families' safety. However, very few were able to return to sea because they were needed to stay and fight. Now, seafarers unable to work and the families who rely on their income are facing extreme financial hardship.

For the shipping industry, the number of Ukrainian seafarers has fallen by 19% since before the war. That, and the fact that a number of shipping firms are now reluctant to employ Russian nationals, has put a severe squeeze on the global workforce.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian seafarers who did not return home immediately are now trapped in a cycle of extended contracts. They're tired and anxious, and in need of psychological and emotional support.

From the day war broke out, Stella Maris has been on the ground supporting seafarers and their families facing an unprecedented crisis. Today, our team remain in the port city of Odesa, Ukraine, doing everything possible to stand with those who need help.

As the conflict in Ukraine continues, there's an urgent need to keep supporting seafarers. We are calling on the shipping industry to step up its support for Ukrainian seafarers and their families by partnering with Stella Maris in the coming year.

By contributing to our Centenary Emergency Fund, supporting a seafarers' counselling service and donating to the work of our team in Odesa, industry partners can show their commitment to Ukrainian seafarers – and demonstrate kindness amid conflict.



Tim Hill
Chief Executive Officer,
Stella Maris UK



➤ Stella Maris: what you need to know

Stella Maris is the largest international ship-visiting charity in the world. We are a unique and expanding global network of chaplains and volunteers in ports in 57 countries.

Every year, our global team conducts up to 70,000 ship visits. We provide welfare services, advice and friendship. We meet practical, pastoral and spiritual needs among seafarers of all nationalities and beliefs.

Stella Maris also provides vital support when crisis hits. We support crews and their families through traumas such as kidnapping and piracy, abandonment, hospitalisation, death and suicide. We help them cope with separation, loneliness, assault, bullying and financial issues.

Many seafarers say the support we provide is a lifeline, that our chaplains and volunteers are a friend in port wherever they go, and they couldn't imagine what life at sea would be like without us.



Up to **70,000** ship visits carried out each year



1,000+ chaplains and volunteers around the world



Every **4 minutes** a seafarer is visited by Stella Maris in the UK



In **353 ports**



In **57 countries**



“ To talk with seafarers,
to be their friend... that counts.
We must continue this work. ”



Our team in Ukraine

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine – and our small team in Odesa, a major port on the south coast, found themselves at the heart of a humanitarian crisis. This is their story...

“We never saw it coming,” says Stella Maris assistant port chaplain Rostik Inzhestoikov. “The war was not forecast-able.”

Speaking via WhatsApp from Odesa, where there are ongoing missile strikes, drone attacks and power blackouts, Rostik sounds tired. The stress of living in a warzone is taking its toll.

But Rostik is also upbeat – because looking back at 2022, he and port chaplain Fr Alexander Smerechynskyy did everything possible to support Ukrainian seafarers and their families.

Amid the initial shock of the invasion, the pair organised transport to take the wives and children of seafarers to the border of Ukraine for evacuation and liaised with our team in Poland as a Stella Maris centre there became home to refugees.

Since then, Rostik and Fr Alex have provided humanitarian aid to retired seafarers, set up a soup kitchen for families of seafarers and delivered food to seafarers trapped on ships in the Black Sea. They provided pastoral and spiritual support to seafarers through social media. They even arranged for financial grants, provided through our Centenary Emergency Fund, to go to hundreds of seafarers’ families.

All this, while grappling with their own hardship and fear.

“You are always alert, waiting for an attack. You are never certain your family will be ok,” said Rostik. “The biggest challenge during the winter were the power blackouts, because you still need to survive. For more than 15 hours a day, we had no electricity.”

Looking back, it’s clear their steadfast support has saved lives. *“We’ve had hundreds of messages from grateful seafarers,” said Rostik. “They appreciate not only the practical support but also our words. We’ve talked with seafarers who have been on the bridges of ships watching bombs fall on their home cities. They are so scared. But to talk with them, to be their friend... that counts.”*

Looking ahead, the need for ongoing support is vital – and shipping industry partners have a key role to play. *“We don’t know what the war will bring next, but I do know one thing: we must continue this work,” said Rostik. “We are deeply grateful for all the support we receive.”*

“ The support provided by Stella Maris to Ukrainian seafarers and their families has been remarkable. We’re so grateful.”

Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski,
Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic church in London



£150,000 financial support has been provided to 300 Ukrainian seafarers' families



➤ Support for Ukrainian seafarers and families

Over the last year, Stella Maris teams around the world have supported hundreds of Ukrainian seafarers and their families. Here are four stories which show the difference we make.

A home for refugees

Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Stella Maris took responsibility for a retreat centre near the port city of Gdynia, in Poland, to house Ukrainian seafarers and their families fleeing the conflict.

The centre was very quickly at capacity, housing 54 seafarers and some of their immediate family within weeks. Upon reaching the centre, each person was given an arrival pack of appropriate clothes, personal toiletries and other essential items. Everyone was provided with safe accommodation, heating, food, communications (free SIM cards and internet access) and psychological support. In addition, children received online education, books and toys.

Stella Maris worked with the local government in Poland to provide additional services, such as medicine and education, and to help those arriving to access longer-term support if required.

The centre was run and facilitated thanks to significant donations from UK P&I Club and the TK Foundation.

“ Ukrainian seafarers and families notice how much support you gave. They couldn’t believe it – but help was there. Thank you. ”

Rostik Inzhestoikov, Stella Maris assistant chaplain in Odesa.



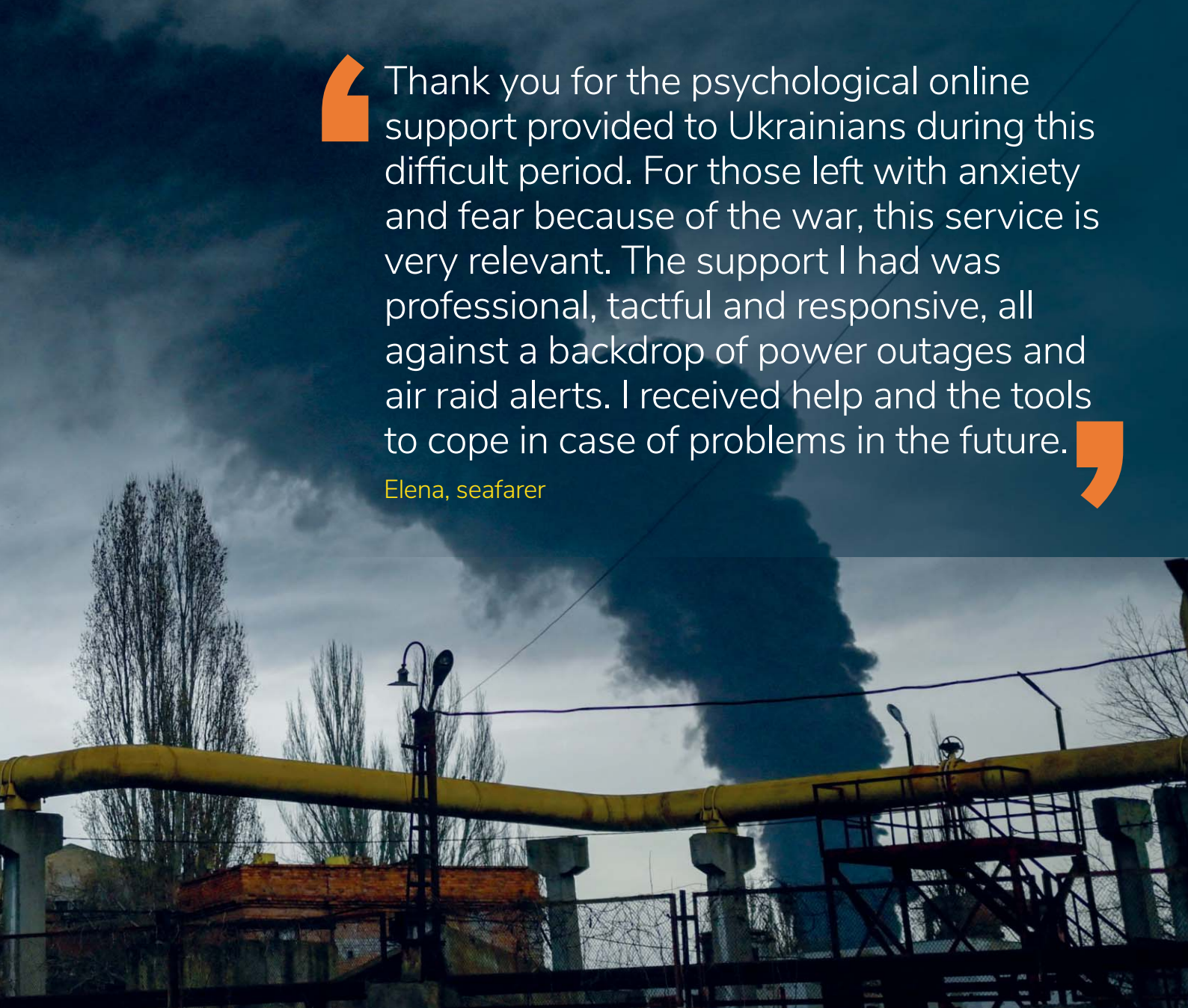


➤ A reunited family

Stella Maris' international network proved its worth for one Ukrainian family when a series of connections around the world ended up in a captain reunited with his loved ones after seven months apart.

It was back in Christmas 2021 when our chaplain in Felixstowe, Julian Wong, first met a Ukrainian captain of a container vessel. At the man's request, Julian facilitated a memorable last-minute day trip to London.

Fast forward to April 2022, and the captain was back in Felixstowe at the same time as his wife and daughter were attempting to flee war-torn Ukraine. Port chaplain Julian was on hand to help. He called our team in Poland, and secured beds for the pair at our refugee centre there. Our national director in Poland, Fr Edward Pracz, supported the wife and daughter as they travelled, and ensured their safe arrival at the centre.



Thank you for the psychological online support provided to Ukrainians during this difficult period. For those left with anxiety and fear because of the war, this service is very relevant. The support I had was professional, tactful and responsive, all against a backdrop of power outages and air raid alerts. I received help and the tools to cope in case of problems in the future.

Elena, seafarer

Then months later, the captain's ship called in at Hamburg, Germany. Once again, the Stella Maris network sprung into action. The wife and daughter drove for nine hours to Hamburg – and our port chaplain Monica Döring arranged accommodation for the family to spend a day and night together before the vessel departed the next morning.

Mental health support

In October 2022, on World Mental Health Day, Stella Maris helped launch psychological support services for Ukrainian seafarers and their families. Remote support from professional psychologists is now available to people struggling with their mental health because of the war, thanks to the kind sponsorship of international law firm HFW.



Going the extra mile

Dmitro* was beside himself with worry. His wife and child were hiding in an underground basement as Russian bombs fell on the Ukrainian port city, Mariupol. He knew they were trying to escape, but he'd heard nothing for days.

The only thing Dmitro wanted was to be with his family. But instead, he was working aboard a vessel making its way to Tilbury port, in east London. What's worse, he hadn't been paid for two months – so even once they docked, he couldn't leave the ship.

That was back in spring 2022, shortly after war broke out, and Ukrainian seafarers right around the world were desperately trying to return home. Fortunately for Dmitro, Stella Maris port chaplain Wojciech Holub (left) was waiting at Tilbury to help.

Immediately Wojciech opened discussions with the ship operator on behalf of Dmitro, and it was agreed he would be signed off in Tilbury – and another two Ukrainian crew members would be signed off at a following stop-over in Italy.

Dmitro planned to head for Paris, France, where he knew his family would go. But first, he needed money. So Wojciech set to work on securing Dmitro's outstanding wages. The destruction of Mariupol meant there was real difficulty with transferring payments to bank accounts held there. So Wojciech arranged for the money to go directly to a bank in Paris, and Dmitro could collect it there.

That just left Dmitro needing cash to travel to France. Initially, he was told he could borrow money from the ship to facilitate travel, but on the day of departure the offer was withdrawn. So Wojciech stepped in one more time to cover the cost of Dmitro's expenses – and finally, the grateful Ukrainian seafarer could leave to be reunited with his loved ones.

*name changed

➤ **With thanks
to our existing
corporate partners:**

AB Ports Ipswich
Arklow Shipping
Avenir
Baltic Exchange
Britannia P&I
Capheaton Consulting
DNK
GEFO

HFW
Ilama
OneCare Solutions
Shell
Swire
Tindall Riley
UK P&I
WFW





In partnership with the shipping industry

Over the last year, £150,000 in grants have been provided to 300 Ukrainian seafarers and their families.

In the coming year, funds will be needed to:

- Continue providing financial support to out-of-work Ukrainian seafarers and their families facing economic hardship.
- Grow the mental health counselling service established in 2022, to provide relief for the increasing numbers of men, women and children suffering trauma and poor mental health because of the war.
- Buy a new vehicle for our chaplaincy team in Odesa, so they can resume ship-visiting in Black Sea ports and support seafarers from all nations as they stop over in Ukraine.

The Centenary Emergency Fund also needs support to provide crisis help to seafarers of all nationalities and backgrounds, around the world, in cases of abandonment, hospitalisation, death at sea and piracy.

 We're grateful to the corporate partners who already prioritise seafarer welfare by supporting Stella Maris. We know people like you, within the shipping industry, genuinely care for seafarers and fishers. Please get in touch to discuss working in partnership with Stella Maris, to keep supporting Ukrainian seafarers and all the people of the sea. 

Ian Stokes, Head of Corporate Engagement

To support the Centenary Emergency Fund – or donate to the general work of Stella Maris – contact **Ian Stokes, Head of Corporate Engagement.**
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By partnering with Stella Maris, you support seafarers around the world.
Thank you so much.

To find out more about Stella Maris, visit www.stellamaris.org.uk

Get help for your seafarers

Email concerns@stellamarismail.org

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