

News; International

Humanitarian Corridors Open to Four Cities in Ukraine; Protesters in Russia Arrested by Police; U.S. And Europe Looking at Ukrainian Government Exile; Ukrainians Showing to the World the Truth; Millions Fled for Their Lives in Ukraine. Aired 3-4a ET

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6,816 words

7 March 2022

CNN: CNN Newsroom

NWSRM

English

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[03:00:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MICHAEL HOLMES, CNN ANCHOR (on camera): And welcome to our viewers joining us in the United States and all around the world, I'm Michael Holmes coming to you live from Lviv in Ukraine where we continue to follow breaking developments.

And the Russian defense ministry says it is opening humanitarian corridors from four Ukrainian cities including Kyiv. And in Mariupol, where shelling over the last few days has made it too dangerous to evacuate civilians, two attempts at a human corridor being called off there.

Now these images coming to us from Kyiv, I want to show those to you. These -- this is a check point, it is manned by Ukrainian forces and Ukrainian civilians have been evacuating through there, it's relatively quiet right now as we look at it live, but in the past few minutes, we have seen buses packed with people pulling up and people walking through there to some semblance of safety, we hope.

The harsh and heartbreaking reality for so many on the ground is being caught on camera, intense shelling, also hitting the town of Irpin where the mayor says eight people were killed during evacuation efforts there.

Since the start of the invasion, Russia has fired 600 missiles according to a senior U.S. defense official who says Moscow now has 95 percent of its amassed combat power inside this country.

According to the United Nations, more than 360 civilians have been killed as the war rages but concedes the real number is likely much higher than that, 12 million people are now in need. Inside Russia, anger and protest against the invasion persist, police have been seen, in fact, beating demonstrators and on Sunday alone, more than 4,500 people were detained according to one independent monitoring group.

Now, Ukraine's president also venting his frustration saying sanctions aren't enough to stop Russia and Vladimir Putin whom he accuses of planning deliberate murder.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY, PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE (through translator): It seems it is not enough for the Russian troops. Not enough ruined destinies, crippled lives. They want to kill more. For tomorrow, Russia is officially announced an attack on our territory, our defense facilities. Most of them were built decades ago when there was Soviet government. They were built in cities and now they are in the urban setting where dozens of people work and hundreds of thousands live nearby. This is murder. Deliberate murder.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HOLMES (on camera): All right, for more now, I am joined by CNN's Scott McLean who is on the Polish/Ukrainian border. Good to see you up there, Scott. Tell us more about these humanitarian corridors and the people who were fleeing.

SCOTT MCLEAN, CNN INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: Hey, Michael, yes, they cannot come soon enough as you mentioned earlier, they have attempted these corridors for the past few days but it seems neither side or at least both sides are accusing the other of violating the terms that they had agreed to. And so today, now that we have the Russian ministry of defense that is saying that it's now opening these corridors but it is going to Russians so it's not clear whether the Ukrainians are on board with this and whether or not those corridors even if people do decide to take them will actually hold.

However, people get out of those areas in eastern Ukraine, certainly cannot come soon enough. The people that we're seeing here are desperate to get out while they still can. So, we're about 10 kilometers inside the border right now with Poland and this is a checkpoint up there, and you can see the cars are lined up for quite a way.

Mark, if you just want to show the rest of the line here, it's lined up for probably, from what I can tell at least half a mile with just cars. We know that closer to the border, a lot of people are crossing on foot as well. And from across the country, they are all headed west. Some are coming by road, some going on foot and as we saw yesterday, many also going by train.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MCLEAN (voice over): With each new round of bombing and shelling comes a new wave of people seeking refuge outside Ukraine, many arrive in the western train hub of Lviv, where people are lined up out the doors of the station for the next train to Poland. Those who wait are almost entirely women, girls and boys who suddenly look a lot like men.

[03:05:01]

This family fled central Ukraine. Yulia (Ph) left her brother, father, and husband to fight the Russians. Now she is going to Poland with her mother and her two boys aged one and 16. UNKNOWN (through translator): When my husband left, he said to our son, you're the man of the house, and now at 16 years old he's become a grown man. Our children need to have a childhood. They shouldn't become adults under these circumstances.

MCLEAN: Well over a week into the war, there are swarms of volunteers handing out food and hot drinks, and heated tents for a break from the frigid winter cold. But sometimes, tempers still flare. This woman says she's been here since 5 a.m. with her 10-year-old son.

UNKNOWN (through translator): I don't have any other choice. I came from far away. I need to evacuate my child. My husband stayed.

MCLEAN: Exhausted and frustrated, a volunteer suggests she try a bus to the border. There are line-ups for those too, standing room only to make the 50-mile journey to the pedestrian crossing to Poland. Seventy-two-year-old cancer patient Tetyana (Ph) wanted to stay in Kyiv but said the bombings were hitting far too close to home.

UNKNOWN: Crash, crash, crash, crash, crash.

MCLEAN: As darkness arrived, so did this family who said they drove three days across the country from a village near Kharkiv, they're trying to figure out where they can stay the night, but seem resigned to sleeping in the car. Oxana says her elderly mother and husband stayed behind. She not only has to get her own children to safety but her friend's daughters too.

UNKNOWN (through translator): I don't know when this nightmare will end. I'm so tired.

MCLEAN: Back at the station, the next train won't leave for another four hours. but for the masses of people here, it's worth the wait.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MCLEAN (on camera): Now those yellow city buses there you saw in the story, we've already seen already this morning a convoy of about five or six of them headed to the border, they're allowed to skip the check points here.

Now as for the status of those corridors, there is another round of negotiations between the Ukrainians and the Russians happening at about five hours from now. Yesterday, the Red Cross made very clear to both parties that if they're serious about making these corridors work, they have to roll up their sleeves and agree not just on the fact that there should be these corridors but also on the very granular details as well, Michael.

HOLMES: All right, Scott McLean, great reporting there. What a situation. I appreciate it, Scott, near the polish border.

Now my next two guests have been with me many times over the course of this conflict before it even started in fact, Peter Zalmayev is the director of the Eurasia Democracy Initiative, and Taras Berozovets, is a Ukrainian political analyst and founder of the Free Crimea Project. I wanted to check in with you gentlemen again, update us on what is been happening since we last spoke a few days ago, where are you, what have you seen. Let's start with you, Peter.

PETER ZALMAYEV, DIRECTOR EURASIA DEMOCRACY INITIATIVE: Well, Michael, hello. Yes, and indeed we're still in the same location not too far from Kyiv. We are still hoping to get here at some point, we feel confident that the defenders of Kyiv are not going to give up the city.

We, what we're doing here is, you know, using the reliability of communications here in the city to, and therefore have launched an operation to try to penetrate the Russia's informational blockade, Putin increasingly -- increasingly shut down all independent media in the country, essentially no information, objective information getting into the country about the war here in Ukrainian.

We have launched a YouTube channel which seeks to get to the Russians the true story of what's happening in Ukraine. And what's happening in Ukraine as you see growing desperation for Vladimir Putin, increasingly illegal tactics where civilians are being shelled, and nuclear power plants are being essentially taken -- taken in order to use them to blackmail the west, but it's getting really, really scary.

HOLMES: Right.

ZALMAYEV: As Putin has realized that his operation in Ukraine has not gone according to plan.

HOLMES: It is. Taras, let me -- let me ask you this, what are you hoping to achieve with this -- with this YouTube channel and trying to break that sort of veil that state media has over Russians. What are you hoping to achieve?

TARAS BEREZOVETS, UKRAINIAN POLITICAL ANALYST: It's absolutely obvious, Michael, Russia is turning in a country to the north -- North Korea, just very much the same like it used to be in Soviet Union they control everything. Social networks, TV channels, YouTube channels, or whatsoever.

[03:10:00]

According to the Russian independent media just the last week, nearly 200 Russian independent journalists have left Russia. So, it's obviously very dangerous to stay in Russia and to be a journalist about what is happening in Ukraine. That's why we are here working side-by-side with Russian counterparts to tackle Russian propaganda. We are targeting the Russian public, we are giving them news here from Ukraine.

HOLMES: Which is a very noble effort. Peter, let me ask you. You told one of our producers something that struck me. You said, and I think I quote you here, you said, "you see women with permanent tears in their eyes. Horror is visible everywhere." Is it even possible to describe what is happening to the people where you are where literally a month ago or so were living normal lives in a beautiful city? ZALMAYEV: It is very difficult, Michael. There are very few people who remain, who are old enough to remember World War II. They are in their mid-90s, you know, so that means that there are hardly any people left in Ukraine to be able to kind of relate to previous experiences of what it feels like to be in a country the entirety of which is under assault.

Taras and I wake up every morning and there's this split second, you know, a moment of grace where we feel like well, maybe this has all been a bad dream, and then we wake up into this and we realize that it's not. We are still stuck in this incredibly dark reality, you know.

The photo you referred to earlier of a family of three, a mother and her two little children yesterday being killed by crossing the bridge trying to escape the northern part of Kyiv, and then there's a video of that. It is so senseless, you know, I still can't shake it off.

All these people around us are seeing the same thing, obviously, and, you know, we're living the same experiences. We're living the same videos. It is, you know, we are not able at this point to digest what we're seeing.

HOLMES: Yes. Taras, the thing, Ukrainians and Russians, they have this historic, these cultural, these language ties with each other. What are Ukrainians saying now about Russia, Russians? How have feelings changed because of this?

BEROZOVETS: Well, I think feelings generally around the country change dramatically. We have our personal story. My mother-in-law is one of previous Ukrainian cities on the east, we lost any connection with her the last six days because Russians blockade the city, they bomb it, and they are trying to kill every civilian in it.

And I think after this, millions of Ukrainians would feel, I would say, literally hatred towards even Russians, not only Vladimir Putin but Russians themselves. It's very hard now here in Ukraine to explain to people to persuade that it's not Russians as a nation who that Ukrainian killing them.

People say we have to blame not only Putin but the Russians themselves. It was very clear yesterday, by the way, that Russians who protested against this evil regime in many Russian cities, it was very clear signal to many Ukrainians and many people to the west that Russian spirit is still alive, that there are still many people who feel sorry about what's going on here in Ukraine.

But I would say from my perspective, from the perspective of many Ukrainians, it would be very hard to forgive Russians after all.

HOLMES: And Peter, before we let you guys go, your thoughts on that same question?

ZALMAYEV: Well, I mean, I'll just -- I obviously, you know, agree fully with Taras, but Michael, if you allow me to just say something that I think is very important so that policy makers who are listening, hear us. That you know, now there's a no-fly zone discussion and the Ukrainian president has appealed to the policy makers to close the air space over Ukraine.

They have refused to do so for understandable reasons, they are afraid of nuclear confrontation with Russia. But folks, Putin has called the world's bluff and it's going to be time to call his bluff back sooner rather than later. Putin is not going to stop at Ukraine.

So, you know, I'm afraid Europe will have to revisit this issue. For now, though, it has to enable Ukrainians to control their own air space by giving them fighter jet. This is being discussed now between eastern, essentially European allies and the U.S. It has to enable, help Ukraine boost its air defenses, surface to air missiles and Bayraktar drones. This is very important. Ukrainians are showing incredibly resilience but they need all the help they can get. Thank you, Michael.

[03:14:56]

HOLMES: Yes. I've been interviewing both of you since well before this even began and we will continue to check in and follow your journey. Peter Zalmayev, Taras Berozovets, as always, good to see you both. Do stay safe. Thank you.

ZALMAYEV: Thank you, Michael.

HOLMES: All right. Ukraine's president has so far refused to leave the capitol in the face of Russian attacks. Coming up, what would a Ukrainian government in exile look like should the country's leadership have to flee?

Also, still to come, with calls growing for Vladimir Putin war crime investigations there are questions as to whether a prosecution could be successful. I speak with an expert about that, coming up.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

HOLMES (on camera): Welcome back. The president of the European Commission tells CNN any possible war crimes between Russia and Ukraine need to be investigated. Ursula von der Leyen saying that the humanitarian situation on the ground is, quote, "desperate."

Now all of this as Europe and the U.S. have been discussing how the west would support a potential Ukrainian government in exile should President Volodymyr Zelenskyy be forced to flee.

CNN's Natasha Bertrand joins me now live from Brussels, Belgium to discuss it. What are you learning about these plans to set up a Ukrainian government in exile if that becomes necessary?

NATASHA BERTRAND, CNN WHITE HOUSE REPORTER: Yes, Michael, so sources telling me and my colleague Kylie Atwood that the U.S. and Europe have been in discussions about what a Ukrainian government in exile may look like should that become necessary.

[03:20:04] There are a number of potential plans here ranging from setting up and supporting, and supporting President Zelenskyy setting up in western Ukraine in Lviv to actually supporting a government in exile in Poland should the -- should Ukraine -- should Ukrainian officials and Zelenskyy need to flee the country entirely.

Now these are all preliminary discussions primarily because U.S. and western officials are not really able right now to raise this directly with Zelenskyy himself. He is very reluctant to engage in any of these conversations that have to do with him leaving Kyiv because he is determined to stay there and fight.

And so, these conversations are happening kind of in European capitals as well as with the U.S. And right now, it looks like any kind of potential move might have to be by certain members of Zelenskyy's government who would be willing to leave Kyiv and set up elsewhere to maintain that continuity of government, should Kyiv fall, and should Zelenskyy be unable to flee the capital.

Now, all of this planning comes as the situation on the ground obviously has gotten much worse with civilians being targeted with the Russians kind of targeting infrastructure indiscriminately, as they have brought in heavier weaponry and tried to sustain this bombing campaign and kind of bombard these cities indiscriminately as they have had trouble maintaining hold and taking hold of the cities across Ukraine, particularly Kyiv.

The European Commission president has said that the U.S. and Europe are determined to help the Ukrainian leadership in any way they can because this is not only existential for Ukraine, it is existential for Europe and the west.

HOLMES: All right. Appreciate the reporting. Natasha Bertrand --

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

URSULA VON DER LEYEN, PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Not only a fight of -- between Ukraine against Russia, Russia that chose the war against Ukraine, but it's a bigger topic. It's also the democracies fighting the autocracies and, therefore, it is for us existential really to support in every way possible Ukraine and its brave leadership.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BERTRAN (on camera): Now, Von der Leyen also calling for an investigation of potential war crimes by the Russians. In an interview with our own Jake Tapper yesterday. Of course, this is something that the U.S. has stopped short of. They said that they do call -- they do support an investigation into potential war crimes by the Russians, but they are not yet calling what the Russians are doing actual war crimes, Michael.

HOLMES: All right, appreciate the update, Natasha Bertrand in Brussels. Thanks so much. And joining me now from Washington is David Scheffer, former U.S. ambassador-at-large for war crimes during the Clinton administration, also the author of "All the Missing Souls."

It's good to have you with us, Ambassador.

The ICC says it is going to fast-track war crimes investigations. You got dozens of countries asked for one, the allegations of like. But how difficult is it to successfully bring a war crimes case?

DAVID SCHEFFER, FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE FOR WAR CRIMES: It's always difficult. It's always arduous, and it always requires a tremendous amount of expertise and detailed examination of documents, of forensic evidence, et cetera. However, in this conflict it is actually not as difficult as we experienced in other conflicts. And the reason is that the amount of indiscriminate shelling and assaults on civilian populations is so obvious, so blatant, documented by the hour by the media, by the citizens of Ukraine, by governments, by overhead imagery, it is probably the most documented record of ongoing war crimes in the last 30 years. And we've had a lot of experience with this.

It's also important to remember that these attacks on civilians are not just isolated instances where you examine it and say, is that a mistaken missile firing, or was that really a legitimate firing on a target of military value? These are all taking place under an illegal act of aggression.

In other words, when you have an aggressive war, and this is clearly one, then the entire assault, every missile firing, every tank firing by the Russian military, has an illegal character to it.

Vladimir Putin on an almost daily basis is incriminating himself publicly, as being directly associated with all of these military assaults on civilian populations. And so, it will be an easier case than I would predict that would, you know, probably within a few months he will be indicted by the ICC.

[03:25:07]

It is an important discussion to be having, and your expertise in this invaluable. David Scheffer, I really appreciate it. Thank you so much.

SCHEFFER: Thank you.

HOLMES: Still to come on the program, we're going to take you to the Polish/Ukrainian border as thousands of refugees continue to cross to safety. And the volunteers doing their best to ease the suffering.

Also, the country of Moldova is sheltering hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees. They now form a significant percentage of the population there. CNN on the scene at one stadium now serving as a shelter.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK) HOLMES: Now let's bring you up to date on the latest developments in Ukraine this hour. Russia's ministry of defense says it is opening humanitarian corridors today from four Ukrainian cities. They are the capital Kyiv, also Kharkiv, Sumy, and Mariupol.

Now we got these images I think we can bring to you live. This is in Kyiv. Civilians have been passing through this checkpoint manned by Ukrainian forces. We've seen people, including children walking through on foot. It looks quiet now, but there had been a lot of people going through, bus loads, in fact, over the last hour or two.

[03:30:02]

Who knows how long they have been waiting to get out? We've also seen those buses emptying where you are looking right there now.

[03:30:00]

You can see a bus there right now, in fact, people making their way through to hopefully some semblance of safety.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of people are being trapped in Mariupol for the past two days. Attempts to open evacuation routes were canceled because of heavy Russian shelling according to Ukrainians. The mayor of the city says his city is without power, heat or water. They haven't even been able to collect the dead.

A U.S. defense official says Russia has fired 600 missiles since the invasion began, and 95 percent of the amassed combat power that was outside Ukraine's borders before this began is now inside the country.

Now, more than one and a half million refugees have fled Ukraine since this invasion began. The U.N. says it is the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Some Ukrainians staying behind, of course, to support the fight. These are civilians here working at a Molotov cocktail factory here in Lviv.

Now, Poland has taken in the most Ukrainian refugees since the invasion began.

CNN's Arwa Damon is at the Polish/Ukrainian border and takes a look at how volunteers are helping those fleeing the fighting.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

ARWA DAMON, CNN SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: What we're starting to see is this sort of sad rhythm that starts to play out in reception centers like this one. The buses arrive. The people file off exhausted, mostly women and children, but then there is this pretty incredible effort by an army of volunteers to provide them with food, water, diapers, toys for the children, clothing to replace everything that it is they had to leave behind.

But you also need to remember that just because someone has managed to reach safety, they are so far from being even remotely OK. Those who have been able to flee, the vast majority of them, are just utterly racked and consumed with guilt and fear. Fear for those who were left behind, guilt because they actually had to make that impossible decision to leave.

And for the vast majority, it really has boiled down to saving their children. But they have left their men behind, their husbands, their sons, their fathers. Conversations here start to take on a different and perhaps to a certain degree unique feel, because you have to also keep in mind that Poland and Ukraine, the populations are all -- they're quite close, and so conversations here are no longer about how high, you know, how are you today.

It's hi, my friend called me. He's decided to go to Ukraine to fight. Or, hi, my relative inside Ukraine, we haven't been able to get a hold of them. And so, the way that the war is percolating over the borders, permeating over the borders, that is having a separate impact on the Polish population here, who is also now trying to figure out how to absorb these hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who are coming across the border.

But it's also worth noting that when it specifically comes to this conflict in Ukraine, the reception that we're seeing for refugees from all of Ukrainian's neighboring countries, that it's quite different that previous receptions. You know, we've seen four refugees from other parts of the world in the past, and I have to say it's quite heartening to see that at least in this conflict, refugees are, in fact, welcome.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

HOLMES: That was CNN's Arwa Damon reporting for us there.

Now, scores of children are being evacuated from orphanages while the war rages in Ukraine. On Saturday, more than 200 children waiting on a platform in a Lviv train station after fleeing their orphanage located in part of a conflict zone. In colorful jackets and winter hats, these kids of all ages made their way to board a fleet of buses bound for their new, hopefully temporary home in Poland, the pain of the exodus evident on the face of the director of the orphanage.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

OLHA KUCHER, DIRECTOR, ZAPORIZHZHIA CENTRAL CHRISTIAN ORPHANAGE (through translator): My heart is being torn apart. I'm sorry, it is tough. When families are separated, it is very hard. I simply lack words. And I feel so sorry for these children. They're so young.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

[03:35:03]

HOLMES: Hundreds of children from orphanages across Ukraine have already crossed the border, around 700 of them now living in the Wausau hotel that southwest of Warsaw. The hotel has opened its rooms and halls to refugees and says it will keep it that way for as long as needed. Moldova has opened a huge stadium to house some of the refugees, nearly 1,000 people staying in one location. Our Ivan Watson is there on the scene and filed this report.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

IVAN WATSON, CNN SENIOR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENT: governments are still trying to wrap their heads around the size of the refugee exodus now coming out of Ukraine. And this is just one example to help illustrate it. It is a stadium in the capital of Moldova where you have hundreds of people staying.

The numbers can swell to more than 800, and each day hundreds of people then leave to move into Europe, and then there are hundreds of additional arrivals who come here. The people I have spoken to describe fleeing explosions, fleeing attacks on their cities and homes. And all of them are wrestling with this terrible question, how do I rebuild? How do I start a new life when my country has been invaded by the Russian military and nobody has any idea when this war will come to an end?

The Moldovan authorities are also overwhelmed. They say there have been more than 230,000 refugees who have come through their borders in just nine days. They are expecting many, many more. That is just a fraction of the 1.5 million people displaced by this conflict. Every person you talk to here has a story of loss and fear, and no answer for their children of what the next day may bring.

Ivan Watson, CNN, Chisinau.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HOLMES: If you would like to help people in Ukraine who might be in need of the basics of life, shelter, food, water, warm clothes and so on, go to [cnn.com/impact](https://www.cnn.com/impact). There you will find several ways in which you can help if you choose to do so.

I'm Michael Holmes live in Lviv, Ukraine. Let's go back to Rosemary Church in Atlanta for our continuing breaking news coverage. Rosemary?

ROSEMARY CHURCH, CNN ANCHOR: Michael, thank you for your incredible reporting. I appreciate that.

Well, Jews in Ukraine are fleeing the Russian invasion bound for Israel. A live report from Jerusalem just ahead.

Plus, we are following more anti-war protests inside Russia. One human rights group says thousands of protesters were detained on Sunday alone. Stay with us. Back in just a moment.

[03:40:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CHURCH: More than 4,500 people were detained across Russia Sunday in connection with anti-war protests. That is according to an independent human rights monitoring group tracking detentions in the country. In St. Petersburg, video posted to social media shows anti-war protesters in a violent altercation with police.

CNN geolocated and verified the authenticity of the video which was taken on Sunday. CNN also contacted St. Petersburg police to ask about the nature of the arrests, but did not receive an immediate response.

In New York City, the war in Ukraine has shaken a tight-knit Russian and Eastern European neighborhood known as Little Odessa.

CNN's Polo Sandoval reports on a community bonding together to show their support for the Ukrainian people.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

POLO SANDOVAL, CNN CORRESPONDENT: In South Brooklyn's neighborhood of Brighton Beach, Russians dominates everyday life from the language spoken to the Cyrillic signage.

MICHAEL LEVITIS, RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RADIO HOST: You can live here your whole life and not speak a word of English.

SANDOVAL: But lately says Moscow native Michael Levitis, it's the support for Ukraine that is prevalent in this Eastern European enclave in New York nicknamed Little Odessa after the Ukrainian sea port. Brighton Beach is home to one of the largest Russian-speaking communities outside of Europe.

LEVITIS: Right now, everybody is Ukrainian. Everybody is Ukrainian. As a show of solidarity, people are posting in their store fronts, on Facebook, Ukrainian flags.

SANDOVAL: On light post.

LEVITIS: On light post. To show that we are, the people of Ukraine, we're against the war, and we want the bloodshed to stop as soon as possible.

SANDOVAL: Levitis stays in close contact with fellow Russian- Americans both online --

LEVITIS: I'm Michael Levitis.

SANDOVAL: -- and on air as a host of a talk radio show.

LEVITIS: Not always supporting what Kremlin has done, some people are understanding, and they are -- they regret that negotiations did not go the way Putin wanted. But nobody is supporting this military action and the bombing of innocent people.

SANDOVAL: Questions about how to get humanitarian aid to Ukrainians caught in the conflict dominate calls into Levitis' show. He's also heard from local business leaders, one of whom is shedding Russian branding right off his store front. Bobby Rackman (Ph) had the name "taste of Russia" taken down just this week.

LEVITIS: Just wouldn't be the right thing to do to keep the name.

SANDOVAL: A Ukrainian flag now hangs in the bustling shop's window while a new name is considered.

LEVITIS: Businesses are changing their name. Either to show solidarity with Ukraine or to take out Russian from their name so that their customers would not boycott them or confuse them with Russian- owned businesses which right now are under very heavy sanctions.

SANDOVAL: As New York City subway line thunders overhead, life seems to go on along this stretch of Brighton Beach Avenue, but it does so amid worries of a war half a world away, one that feels especially close to home here.

Polo Sandoval, CNN, New York.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH: There is also solidarity for Ukraine in a country seen as a close ally to Russia. The government of Kazakhstan allowed this demonstration in the country's largest city of Almaty.

[03:45:03]

About 2,000 people attended, shouting slogans like "no war" and waving Ukrainian flags. There were even yellow and blue balloons on a statue of Lenin. They Kazak foreign ministry has stressed its neutrality in the conflict, but there have been calls by some western lawmakers to extend sanctions to countries supporting Russia.

The Israeli government is preparing for what could be mass immigration from Ukraine. Officials say more than 10,000 Israeli citizens have now left Ukraine, and Israel is taking in Jewish refugees.

Joining me now from Jerusalem is CNN's Hadas Gold. Good to see you, Hadas. So, what is the latest on these Jewish refugees arriving from Ukraine and what does the future hold for them?

HADAS GOLD, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Rosemary, Israel has something called the law of return which states that anybody who is Jewish or has at least one Jewish grandparent can immigrate to Israel along with their families. And with its large Jewish population, there are potentially hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians who are eligible.

And as we are seeing, more than one and a half million refugees flee Ukraine, Israeli officials are bracing themselves for a wave of immigration that they have not possibly seen since the fall of the Soviet Union.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

GOLD (voice over): The children peer out of the airplane windows, entranced by the commotion down below, a red carpet arrival for these Ukrainians. Now refugees escaping war for a new life in Israel. This is one of three planes of Ukrainians that arrived on Sunday to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport including one with some 90 orphans welcomed personally by the country's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett.

Like many mothers on this flight, Lena originally from Odessa, came without her husband because of Ukraine's compulsory conscription for all men of fighting age.

LENA, UKRAINIAN REFUGEE: That's hopeful.

UNKNOWN: Are you hoping that he'll be able to join you here?

LENA: Yes, I really hope that he can come to us. But he's helping right now, and I hope it will stop soon and we can be together.

GOLD: She and her two sons spent more than 10 days making their way to Poland before catching the flight out.

LENA: I was planning about to come here, but when the war starts, it was immediately decided.

GOLD: Toabia is from Kyiv. She thinks many more Jews will soon decide like her to make their way to Israel.

How does it feel to come here having been through what you've been through for so many days?

TOABIA, UKRAINIAN REFUGEE: I think I'm still shaken because I've seen war and in front of our house the Russian plane it was hit, so it was really dangerous and so we had like a real panic.

GOLD: Under Israel's law of return, anyone with that minimum Jewish grandparent or who has converted to Judaism is eligible for Israeli citizenship along with their families.

Israeli officials say they are preparing for a potential huge wave of Ukrainian immigrants with tens of thousands of Jews in Ukraine potentially eligible for citizenship under the law of return.

With refugees fleeing so quickly, Israeli authorities set up a special processing center along Ukraine's border to help expedite what can normally be a lengthy process.

SAM GRUNDWERG, WORLD CHAIRMAN, UNITED ISRAEL APPEAL: Literally tens of thousands. Every day we've set up with our partners various hot lines and there are also certain border points, five or six border points neighboring with Ukraine. And every day we are getting in the thousands of requests, and we're trying to take care of all of them.

GOLD: After pushback from the Ukrainians, Israel is now also considering allowing Ukrainian refugees not eligible under the law of return to enter the country with a special work visa. Israel's interior ministry says they are on track to receive 15,000 Ukrainians by the end of the month. For these exhausted families, torn apart by war, traveling for days, the most important thing is that they made it out.

UNKNOWN: A lot of emotions. I'm tired. I'm excited, and I feel that I'm in a safety place, and I feel a lot of support. (END VIDEO CLIP)

GOLD (on camera): And Rosemary, on the diplomatic front Israel is still trying to act as mediator. Just a day after his surprise trip to Moscow, the Israeli Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett had another phone call with Putin. And later today, the foreign minister, Yair Lapid will be in Latvia where he will meet with the U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Rosemary?

CHURCH: All right, we'll watch any progress there. Hadas Gold joining us live. I appreciate it.

Still ahead, one carried a weapon. The other carried flowers. How a bride and groom both defending Ukraine managed to have their wedding in the midst of war.

[03:50:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CHURCH: Amid war and bloodshed, a couple in Ukraine are focused on their love. That singing is for a Kyiv military couple who decided after 20 years together that it was time to tie the knot at their military checkpoint on Sunday.

Lesia Ivashchenko and Valerii Filimonov had never been officially married until Russia's bombs began to fall. They are both members of Ukraine's territorial defense unit and became husband and wife in front of their fellow fighters. Congratulations to them.

Well, churches around the world are praying for the people of Ukraine, like this Anglican Church in Japan where some Ukrainian nationals lit candles and prayed for the peace. One woman who is an I.T. employee working in Japan says the losses in her home country are heartbreaking.

SASHA KAVERINA, I.T. EMPLOYEE IN JAPAN: The house where my parents lived the 16 floors building was destroyed by a missile. My parents miraculously survived as they -- their floor was not impacted that much.

[03:54:59]

Right now, they evacuated 20 kilometers from the impact place but the place where I was born where I grew up, the place is destroyed.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHURCH: A flash mob of Glasgow musicians serenaded London's Trafalgar Square Sunday in solidarity with Ukraine. A renowned Russian-British pianist led 200 musicians as they played the Ukrainian national anthem and other songs composed by Ukrainian artists. Hundreds of spectators gathered around the makeshift stage. Participants said the gesture is meant to show their hearts are with the people of Ukraine.

And thank you so much for your company. I'm Rosemary Church. Take good care of yourselves and your loved ones. CNN's coverage of the situation in Ukraine continues now with Isa Soares after the break.

[04:00:00]

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

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