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News

‘I fear a cultural genocide’; Ukrainians in Western Mass. watch, worry and help

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Anna Nagurny, a professor in the Isenberg School of Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, on a zoom call with academics from Ukraine (photo provided)



By [Jim Kinney | jkinney@repub.com](mailto:Jim.Kinney@repub.com)

AMHERST — University of Massachusetts Amherst professor Anna Nagurny is teaching a course this semester on humanitarian logistics and health care.

And in Zoom meetings, helping her colleagues at the Kyiv School of Economics keep Ukraine's supplies flowing, its streaming refugees cared for and a plan for the survival of the school itself.

“The supply lines are still working well as are the financial, internet, and energy networks,” Nagurny said. “Many students, and some faculty and staff, are now in territorial forces to defend Ukraine and they need food, clothing, medicines, etc. We strategized as to how we can best provide support, including financial support, and how we can assist also in the recovery and reconstruction, since this group has been approached by the (Ukrainian) government.”

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They also talked over the effectiveness sanctions will have on Russian behavior.

Nagurney, the Eugene M. Isenberg Chair in Integrative Studies at Isenberg School of Management and an expert on logistics and supply, is on those Zoom calls dressed in blue and gold, the Ukrainian colors, with a Ukrainian flag in the background.

She was born in Canada to a family that fled Ukraine after World War II. Ukrainian was her first language because she didn't learn English until she went to school. She's watched the country develop and as a professor is on the board at the Kyiv School of Economics.

It'll take a quick stop to the war to avoid an even humanitarian tragedy. Ukraine is known for its rich soil. It's the breadbasket of Europe, but Ukraine needs peace to get a crop in and transportation networks that are intact.

Her husband, Ladimir S. Nagurney, comes from a family that immigrated more than 100 years ago. But he, too, is in contact with relatives.

"They are surprised at how well things are still working," he said. "

Anna Nagurney's said she has a growing fear for Ukraine's art and architecture as museums get bombed.

"What really concerns me is the beginning of cultural genocide," she said. "I am frankly terrified when it comes to the beautiful churches in Kyiv."

All of this is in danger, she said, because of the madness of Russian leader Vladimir Putin and his frustration with Ukraine and its desire to integrate with Europe.

"Ukrainians want to turn West," she said "That is driving Putin mad. Literally."

Rev. Andriy Krip, pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Ludlow and Descent of the Holy Spirit Ukrainian Catholic Church in Deerfield, said he is frustrated at the slow pace of world's response.

"Every minute, innocent people are dying. Small children are dying," Krip said. "Hopefully those decisions from the world would be faster."

"The world should learn the lesson now."

He said people have been coming, or mailing in , to the churches with donations.

Others in the region are stepping up to help out.

The [Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts](#) said Monday it has joined the Jewish Federations of North America's \$16 million emergency campaign to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable Jewish populations living in Ukraine.

Funds will be allocated through Jewish Federations' core partners, The Jewish Agency for Israel, The Joint Distribution Committee and World ORT, and others who are on the ground in Ukraine, the Federation said. The money will provide critical welfare where it is needed most and support to protect and safeguard Ukraine's Jewish community as well as Jews in neighboring countries. Funds will support urgent necessities of vulnerable Jewish populations, community security, temporary housing for displaced persons, emergency needs in Jewish schools and Aliyah-related assistance

Nagourney is working with a few groups including [Razom for Ukraine](#), a nongovernmental organization that works in the country, and she is also working with the [Ukrainian National Women's League of America](#).

The Westfield public schools are hosting a "dress down" Friday to raise money for Ukraine relief, said Stefan Czaporowski, superintendent of schools.

He sent out a message over the weekend asking for understanding. Westfield has students of Ukrainian and of Russian heritage.

"Our counselors are identifying young people they want to talk with and reach out to" Czaporowski said.

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