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For Immediate Release

INTERFAITH WORKS PREPARED TO WELCOME UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

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InterFaith Works of Central New York (IFW) is saddened by the war in Ukraine, and our thoughts and prayers are with those who have been devastated by these events. Almost 3 million refugees have fled into neighboring countries, according to the United Nations, and aid groups have described it as one of the largest humanitarian crises in recent memory.

As with other refugee groups, these individuals will likely wait in neighboring countries to determine whether it is safe to return to their homes in Ukraine. If not, they will have the option to seek shelter in a refugee camp established by the United Nations.

“At this time, InterFaith Works is not aware of a national plan to resettle Ukrainian refugees in the United States using special immigrant status. The President of the United States, in consultation with the Congress, has the option of establishing a special status that would allow Ukrainian refugees to arrive more quickly, as was the recent case with Afghan evacuees. We are awaiting word as to whether any special status will be granted,” says IFW President/CEO, Beth A. Broadway.

Most refugees who determine that they cannot go home will likely come under the protection of the United Nations where they will undergo a lengthy process of vetting overseen by the United Nations for at least two or more years before being approved to resettle in the U.S. If approved for resettlement in the U.S., they will undergo an additional multi-step intensive vetting process involving many federal agencies.

InterFaith Works is monitoring developments carefully and stands ready to welcome refugees from Ukraine and other places where people have suffered from war, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and environmental devastation, as we have done for the last 40 years. We are grateful for the support of Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon and Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh who have written to President Joe Biden expressing interest in welcoming Ukrainian refugees to Central New York.

Those who would like to help InterFaith Works prepare for the potential arrival of Ukrainian refugees, may consider making a donation to the agency. These gifts will help provide needed housing, transportation, food and clothing.

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InterFaith Works affirms the dignity of each person and every faith tradition, builds racial and religious equity, and creates bridges of understanding among us. Founded in 1976, InterFaith Works addresses deeply embedded social divisions leading to community action and policy change. InterFaith Works' social service programs address the needs of and empower people who are vulnerable, low income and targets of oppression, including refugees, the elderly and the institutionalized, through direct service and educational programs. Key programs are the Ahmad & Elizabeth El-Hindi Center for Dialogue & Action, Center for New Americans, and Senior Services.

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