
Ukraine: Bulgaria's Catholic convents open their doors to refugees. Brother Nikolov to SIR, "ready to go to the borders to take them"

(Sofia) Open doors for Ukrainian brothers: under this slogan, the convent of Franciscan Friars Conventual of Rakovski (Bulgaria) makes itself available to take in Ukrainian refugees. "We can accommodate families of refugees, women with children, old people, even people wounded in the war, until the conflict in Ukraine is over", Brother Ventislav Nikolov, Superior of the "St Maximilian Kolbe" community of Rakovski, explains to SIR. "We are in touch with the Ukrainian embassy to Sofia – Brother Nikolov adds – and with several Catholic organisations, including Caritas, as well as with big companies of our region. There are lots of people who are willing to help". The priest explains that "the convent could take in up to 28 people, but it could take in even more, there are guest rooms with beds and private toilets". "If needed, we can put up tents and camp beds in the courtyard", he goes on. "We and our volunteers are ready to go to the Ukrainian border with our vehicles and take people to Bulgaria", Nikolov states. In addition, food and accommodation would be provided to the refugees, and so would healthcare, legal advice and "all the conditions for a dignified life". The Friars Conventual of Rakovski encourage to "not be indifferent to what is happening, and that longed-for peace may arrive at the doors of each one of our homes". A call for financial help is sent instead by the Capuchin Friars of Sofia who are collecting donations for their brethren working in seven places in Ukraine: Kiev, Dnipro, Kamianske, Krasyliv, Starokostjantyniv, Vinnytsya and Uzhhorod. According to Bulgarian authorities, over 1,500 Ukrainian refugees have crossed the Bulgarian border. Over 200 thousand people of Bulgarian origin live in Ukraine.

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