

## Ukraine. Fr Ladnyuk: "Lysychansk surrounded on all sides. People are desperate"



, a Salesian priest who moved to Dnipro at the outbreak of the war to ensure better access to communities in the Donbas region via minivans packed with humanitarian aid, food and medicine for the people left behind. In two months, he managed to bring 500 people to safety. He carried out his last 'mission' last June 22 in Lysychansk. "The city of Severodonetsk is now completely under Russian occupation", says the Salesian priest, presently in Lviv to collect relief supplies to be brought back to those in need. "No one knows how many people are still in Lysychansk," he says. "They live in underground dwellings. We will attempt to enter again. We shall see, I am nevertheless preparing for that possibility." **Residents of towns and villages across the Donbas region are under constant attack. They are asking for drinking water and medicines in particular.** "There is no water and it can only be found in very dangerous locations," says Fr Oleh. "They also ask for medication to treat upset stomach, since the water is dirty and people are starting to get sick. They also need painkillers, blood pressure medication, wet handkerchiefs. People are in a state of despair."



When he reaches the villages, the stories are more or less always the same. "Look, someone died over there." "We have no medicines." "The person living there has hyperglycemia and needs insulin urgently." The Salesian priest shares his concerns: "I brought asthma medication to a small village that is now occupied by the Russians," he says. "I don't know how they will manage from now on since I will no longer be able to access the village and help them. I never thought I would ever experience such situations in the world today. On top of that, bombs are falling all the time, destroying everything...It's terrible." **Serhiy Gaidai, the governor of the Luhansk region, urged civilians to leave Lysychansk.** He posted to Telegram: "Dear residents of Lysychansk territorial community and their relatives. Due to the real threat to life and health, we call for an evacuation immediately. The situation in the city is very difficult. Save yourself and your loved ones. Take care of the children. Be sure that you will be taken care of in the evacuation cities on the territory of Ukraine." However, the Salesian explains, "When I tell people to come with me, they refuse. They say they have no other place to go, that they have no more money. Most importantly, the elderly - especially those who are disabled or ill, who cannot be moved- need to be cared for. And the care homes and reception facilities in Dnipro are overcrowded."

