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## **Austria: Caritas, ongoing campaign to assist Ukrainian children. “Catastrophic humanitarian situation”**

The campaign currently being run by Caritas Austria is under the motto “For childhood, too, is buried under the rubble. We help”. The country in the spotlight for the month of February is Ukraine, where at least five million children are directly affected by the war. The President of Caritas, Nora Tödting-Musenbichler, and the head of international aid at Caritas, Andreas Knapp, recently visited the region of Kyiv and Western Ukraine to get a first-hand impression of Caritas’ projects. Everyone is suffering from the war, but children are certainly among the most affected groups, they told the Catholic news agency Kathpress on their return from Kyiv. “Children are exposed to enormous psychological and emotional tensions”, said Tödting-Musenbichler. “The war is in full swing. Caritas is resisting all this, including through children’s centres, psychological and medical care, heating measures in winter, learning support, and access to education”. According to the President of Caritas, “it is important to give a future to children in war and crisis regions”. And this help is a “long-term marathon”. Ultimately, the whole country needs psychological help. Support is needed for those returning traumatised from the battlefield, for war-disabled people, for the relatives of the deceased, the missing and the wounded. “The humanitarian situation in Ukraine remains catastrophic”, said international aid manager Knapp. “The closer you get to the front line, the more precarious the situation becomes. Almost every day, there are repeated attacks and alarms even in western Ukraine. Constant fear is a constant psychological burden, especially for children”. Since February 2022, Caritas Austria has managed to help over 500,000 people in Ukraine, Knapp said. Since the outbreak of the war, more than 100,000 children have been supported in 34 projects.

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