

CHILD-SENSITIVE GUIDE



Save the Children



What's happening in Ukraine?

It's can be scary and upsetting to hear about war. On the 24th of February 2022, Russia launched attacks on Ukraine, and many people have had to flee their homes for safety. Sadly this isn't the only conflict happening in our world. You may be hearing words like "war" and "refugee" in the news or at school. So what does it all mean?

What's happening in Ukraine?

On the 24th of February Russian forces under the orders of the president, Vladimir Putin, launched attacks on Ukraine. To do this, they have used weapons like missiles. Under the orders of president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukraine is fighting back. This means that people had to leave their homes very quickly to escape. Many people in Russia are **protesting** these attacks.



Sasha (7), Dmytrus (6), Yuriy (3) and their parents after they crossed the border from Ukraine into Hungary. They don't know where they will go yet, but for now they just want to rest.

Why did these attacks occur?

Learning about **history** is really important to understanding, and preventing, most conflicts. Country borders haven't always existed, and they **change** through time. Russia and Ukraine used to be a part of a big country called the Soviet Union. But 30 years ago, this broke up into many smaller countries. There is **disagreement** over which parts belong to Russia. There has been armed conflict in Ukraine since 2014 over these areas, in which many people have been displaced and experienced conflict. Recently, Ukraine wanted to join a group called NATO, but Russia didn't support this idea. There is **never** any good reason for a war.

What does refugee mean?

A **refugee** is a person who is **forced** to leave their home because their life is in danger. People might have to flee their homes due to war or **conflict**, or **persecution**. Refugees can come from **anywhere**. Refugee status was created to protect **everyone**, even you and me here in Aotearoa.



How many Ukrainian refugees are there?

More than 3.7 million people Ukrainians have fled to neighboring countries in the first month of this war. When they cross a county border they are able to **register** with the United Nations to claim **refugee** status. Ukrainians are fleeing to Poland, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia and Belarus.

What about the people still in Ukraine?

There are an estimated 6.5 million people who haven't fled overseas, but have left their homes and are still in Ukraine. We call these people **Internally Displaced Persons** (IDPs).

Some people may stay in Ukraine as a choice, maybe to fight, some people may not have been able to escape yet. Some people may be staying because they have **responsibilities**, like doctors and nurses working at a hospital, animal shelter workers, or caring for a sick relative. Some people may **not** be **able** to escape due to a disability.

On the Ground



Thanks to generous donors and school fundraisers, more than \$1 million has been donated to Save the Children NZ to provide **humanitarian aid** for the children of Ukraine. How will this money be used?

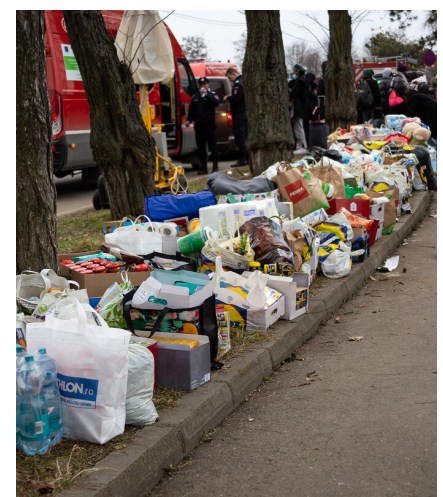


Save the children staff in Romania prepare essential aid supplies such as food, blankets, water, warm clothes and medicine to be driven into Ukraine for children and families who have not been able to leave.



As well as distributing essential items, children still in Ukraine are being supported with online mental health and counselling sessions through Save the Children.

When families escape Ukraine and cross the border, families can collect packages of supplies from Save the Children. These include warm clothes, shoes and socks, food, blankets and toys.



Child-Friendly Spaces



When children reach the border, Save the Children provides safe spaces where kids can be kids. Here they can play, draw, laugh and feel safe.

What can I do to help?



There are many ways to take **action**, you can find some ideas on our education hub **here**. You can fundraise and donate to an organisation like Save the Children. You can donate here or set up a fundraiser on our website, www.savethechildren.org.nz. Lots of schools are running yellow and blue themed mufti-days to raise funds for the children of Ukraine.

New Zealand accepts 1500 **refugees** each year from around the world, and the government have announced that 4000 people from Ukraine will be able to seek refuge here. New Zealand is very **lucky** to have a refugee programme, as they bring their rich **culture**, skills and experiences with them which makes our own country even more beautiful.

It is also really important that we work **together** to prevent injustice happening, both in **Aotearoa** and around the world. Learning about history, **rights**, and speaking up, when you see someone being treated unfairly, are all really important and help make our **world** a better place for **everyone**.

Create a Welcome Pack

Arriving in Aotearoa as a refugee can be an exciting, but also scary experience for a child. Soon they will start at a New Zealand school, and begin their new life here. Create a welcome pack or video with **important information** for our newest New Zealanders. These will be shared with our partners at the Māngere Refugee Resettlement centre who will share these with the children. Send your packs to education@scnz.org.nz

Ideas include:

- A welcome letter or video
- Photos of New Zealand schools
- A description of a New Zealand school day
- Tips for getting ready for school
- Packing your school bag
- School uniforms
- Tips for making friends
- New Zealand culture
- Maori greetings and phrases



Vocabulary

REFUGEE - is a person who is **forced** to leave their home because their life is in danger and they cross a border to escape to another country. People might have to flee their homes due to war or **conflict**, or **persecution**. There are 26.4 million refugees in the world.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON (IDP) - is a person who is **forced** to leave their home because their life is in danger, but they stay within their country borders. There are 55 million IDPs in the world.

MIGRANT- is a person who **chooses** to move to another country for a **temporary** amount of time, usually to pursue an opportunity such as work or study.

IMMIGRANT- is a person who **chooses** to move to another country **permanently**, usually to pursue an opportunity such as work, a better lifestyle, or to join family.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS - There is a treaty that nearly every country in the world has signed to **protect** children's rights. These rights include being protected from danger, getting an education, and having access to a safe place to live, food, water and healthcare. War breaks this agreement in many ways.

HUMANITARIAN AID - Practical help to save lives and reduce suffering during an **emergency**.

DEVELOPMENT AID - **Ongoing** help to save lives and reduce suffering, for longer time-periods than during an emergency or event. Development aid may work to support livelihoods, education and healthcare.



Humanitarian Task



Child-friendly spaces provide children experiencing conflict, disaster, or living in a refugee camp, with a **safe space**. They are filled with toys, art supplies and education materials. They help support **children's rights** by providing them with protection, play and education. They also allow adults a safe place to leave their children while they get essential supplies for their family.



Design a child-friendly space

We would love your ideas on what you would include in a child-friendly space! Design, draw, write and describe what you think would be the perfect child-friendly space. Send your designs to us at education@scnz.org.nz and maybe we can use your ideas in the field!



Art Task - Flowers for Children



Sharing flowers is something we can all do to send a simple message of solidarity to children living in conflict. Flowers can express feelings that words can't. They can symbolise love, grief, hope and new beginnings.

Create a piece of flower art and tag us

#stopthewar on children



Writing Task - Acts of Bravery

We have heard many stories of bravery coming from Ukraine and Russia. In Ukraine, bus and train drivers are taking people to safety, doctors and nurses are staying behind to keep caring for their patients, and children are walking long distances to safety. In Russia, protestors are saying "no" to war, even though this means they might be arrested themselves.



Being brave means taking a risk. You can be brave every day by doing something that challenges you. It could be trying a new sport or activity on the playground, answering a question when you are feeling shy, or standing up for the rights of someone at school.

Write about a time that you were brave? Be sure to include detail so that the reader can understand how you felt before, during and after. Share with us at education@scnz.org.nz

Research Task

Learning about history, people and places is really important to understanding and preventing conflict. Complete the following tasks to learn more about the history of the Ukraine and Russia conflict.

1. Print out a map of Europe in black and white. Trace the border of Russia in red. Trace the border of Ukraine in Yellow.
2. Russia and Ukraine used to be a part of a big country called the Soviet Union. But 30 years ago, this broke up into many smaller countries. Do an internet search to find out the "former soviet states." Highlight these countries on the map? hint: there are 15 including Ukraine and Russia.
3. When a war happens, we see lots of sad images on the news and this can form our perception of how a place is. But before this war, Ukraine and Russia were both beautiful places to visit, and hopefully they will be again soon in the future. Do some research online for interesting or beautiful destinations and landmarks. Find 5 places in Ukraine and 5 places in Russia that you think would be amazing to visit!

When confronting topics are seen on the news, children may come to trusted adults for guidance. It is important that children can explore these topics in a safe space, as opposed to worrying and getting inaccurate information from the internet or friends. We have created these child-sensitive guides to help children understand these difficult topics without being exposed to upsetting images and content on sites designed for adults.

As educators, do we tackle these issues at school? This is best decided by the teacher and their expertise on what is best for their class. Every class and community will be different. If students express an interest or a concern about something they have seen in the news, and it becomes a topic of conversation among students, then it can be best to address these in a safe space with teacher guidance.

Children who learn about these topics are witnessing history. While it can be confronting, there are ways we can gently support them. Children who are exposed to injustice are more likely to grow up to be empathetic adults. It is important to maintain balance when protecting children from what is happening in the world, and sheltering them from the challenges that children like them are facing every day.

How to Talk to Children About War and Conflict

A Save the Children psychologist provided these 5 tips for talking to children about war.

- Make time and listen – encourage them to tell you what they know, how they feel, and to ask you questions.
- Tailor the conversation to the child – older children will need more details, while younger children may be satisfied by understanding that sometimes countries fight. Begin with simple information as too much detail may overwhelm them.
- Validate their feelings –It is important that children feel supported in the conversation, they should not feel judged or have their concerns dismissed. When children have the chance to have an open and honest conversation about the things upsetting them, they can feel relief.
- Reassure them – Remind them that this is not their problem to solve. Adults all over the world are working hard to fix this.
- Give them a practical way to help – children who have the opportunity to help can feel like they are part of the solution instead of feeling helpless. They could start a fundraiser, write letters to politicians, or create art calling for peace. Check out our A-Z of action [here](#).

Considerations When Discussing War and Conflict at School

- Are there children who have experienced war or trauma that could be triggered by these topics? It is ok to check-in with them and check out our resources on [trauma-informed teaching](#) and on working with refugee background learners.
- Are there children whose families, or countries, are directly involved in the conflict or issue? Be sensitive and ensure no group feels ostracised or blamed. This may make the topic even more important to tackle in class, so that it is not addressed in the playground.

Keep checking in for more child-sensitive guides to global issues and conflict.

HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT WAR

5 tips from a psychologist and child counsellor...



1. MAKE TIME AND LISTEN

Give children the space to talk when they want to - even if you're in the middle of something else!

Encourage them to tell you what they know, how they feel and to ask you questions.



2. TAILOR THE CONVERSATION TO THE CHILD

Older children will need more details while younger ones may be satisfied just by understanding that sometimes countries fight.

Be informed, keep calm and answer questions honestly.

Begin with simple information as too much detail may overwhelm them and cause anxiety.



3. VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Speak to the child about how they feel.

It is important that children feel supported in the conversation. They should not feel judged or have their concerns dismissed.

When children have the chance to have an open and honest conversation about things upsetting them, they can feel relieved.



4. REASSURE THEM

Remind them this is not their problem to solve. Adults all over the world are working hard to fix this.

They shouldn't feel guilty playing, seeing their friends and doing the things that make them feel happy.



5. GIVE THEM A PRACTICAL WAY TO HELP

For example, they could start fundraisers, write letters to local decision-makers or create drawings calling for peace.

Children who have the opportunity to help can feel like they are part of the solution instead of feeling helpless.

