

## Refugee Crisis: Pursue Peace (Peace Moment for March 27, 2022)

When I saw the video of the explosive fireball in front of the Kharkiv State Administration building in Kharkiv, Ukraine, I immediately recognized the sidewalk where I had walked many times. It is easy to speak our lament for places we know or people who seem more familiar or more connected to us. And the crisis in Ukraine is most certainly deserving of our lament. We cry to God for peace.

But in this peace moment, we also pause to remind ourselves that Ukraine is not the only place in crisis in our world that is creating internally displaced persons as well as an outflow of refugees. Afghanistan, Ethiopia Tigray, Burundi, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Central America, Iraq, Nigeria, Rohingya, Sahel, South Sudan, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen are all cited as emergencies by the United Nations. By the end of 2020, there were some 82 million displaced people around the world – a number that had doubled in ten years – and that was

before the events of the last year in Ukraine and Afghanistan. Approximately 1% of the world's total population is being displaced by violence, war, famine, disease and other emergencies.

We are driven to ask ourselves not only what humanitarian response we can make but also what words of justice can we speak.

Psalm 72:3-5 (ERV) (altered) reads:

*Let there be peace and justice throughout the land,  
known on every mountain and hill.*

*May the [rulers] be fair to the poor.*

*May [they] help the helpless and punish those who  
hurt them.*

*May people always fear and respect you, God,  
as long as the sun shines and the moon is in the  
sky.*

As I ponder those who flee from the fireball in front of a civic building in Kharkiv, I am reminded of counsel to the church in Doctrine and Covenants 163:3a-b:

*3 a. You are called to create pathways in the world for peace in Christ to be relationally and culturally incarnate. The hope of Zion is realized when the vision of Christ is embodied in communities of generosity, justice, and peacefulness.*

*b. Above all else, strive to be faithful to Christ's vision of the peaceable Kingdom of God on earth.*

*Courageously challenge cultural, political, and religious trends that are contrary to the reconciling and restoring purposes of God. Pursue peace.*

(Glenn Johnson)