



A Voluntary Charity working in Ukraine and Moldova

with roots going back to 1990



Voices from Ukraine – Dima, a delightful young man who never had the opportunity to grow old.

While driving with my good friend Andriy, he began telling me about a young man named Dima. It was clear, even in the way he spoke his name, that he held a deep affection for him. I could see how much Dima meant to him—and now, how much his loss is felt. Dima was just 20 years old when he was killed. So young. Far too young.

Andriy also spoke of Dima with heartfelt admiration, describing him as a truly good boy. Life hadn't been easy for Dima. His parents struggled with alcoholism, and from a young age, he took on the role of protector and carer for his younger siblings—Marina, Nazar, and baby Snezana. It was Dima who made sure they were safe. It was Dima who tried, time and again, to steer his parents away from drinking.

Mercifully, his mother, Sofia, stopped drinking just before the war began. She hasn't touched alcohol since. It feels like this change in her was a response to Dima's unwavering hopes, his desperate prayers, and his deep love for his family.

Dima wasn't just a kind soul—he was intelligent and hardworking. Andriy had heard so many good things about him from many people. In fact, on our way to visit his family, we stopped to speak with an elderly couple who, upon hearing we were going to see Dima's mother, began sharing stories about him—how remarkable he was, how he stood out even from a young age. Their eyes lit up as they remembered him.

When we arrived, we met Sofia, her husband Iuri, and Dima's siblings. They welcomed us with quiet strength and a sorrow that needed no words.

On June 28th last year, Sofia tried calling Dima. He didn't answer right away, but later he called back briefly. There was a lot of background noise. He told her to go to the shop and buy something, quickly said he was busy, and ended the call.



CHRISTIAN RESPONSE IS A VOLUNTARY CHARITY AND RELIES ON DONATIONS

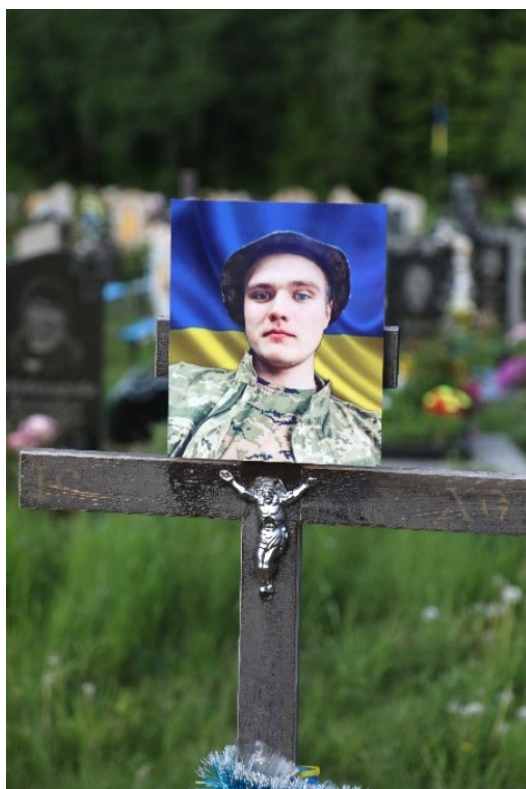
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The next day, June 29th, she tried calling again. No answer. Fear crept in. She found the number of one of his colleagues and eventually spoke to a friend who said Dima was on manoeuvres and wouldn't be back until July 10th.

But when the 10th came and went without any word, Sofia tried again. The friend could only say that Dima hadn't returned—and they didn't know if he had been taken prisoner, or worse. In time, photos came. Her heart must have known before her mind could accept it. The body was unrecognisable from the burns—white phosphorus had left its mark. But she saw his hand... and a little of his hair. She believed it was him. She travelled to Dnipro. What she saw there no mother should ever have to see. Still, she found the strength to say, "That's my son." A DNA test was required to confirm what she already felt in her soul. It took five long months for the results. It was him, her Dima.

Only one hand and a small patch of hair had survived the fire. The rest had been taken by war. In January of this year—months after his death—his remains were finally returned, and on January 6th, he was laid to rest.

Sofia is doing her best to carry on. She spoke quietly but clearly: the war must stop now. Even if Russia keeps what it has taken, enough lives have been lost. Enough mothers have buried sons.

Dima lives on only in memory, but he accomplished so much in his short life. He gave his all to protect his siblings, to bring peace to his home, to serve his country. I can't help but wonder—what more could he have done, had he lived?

We were grateful to be able to bring some new clothing for the family and a special cuddly toy for little Snejana. Small things, but given with love and in memory of a boy who carried the weight of the world on his young shoulders, and did so with courage and grace.



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