

## CWA Country of Study 2024.

### Charleville CWA present – UKRAINE

Charleville CWA have chosen Ukraine as their Country of Study as it has come into the international headlines for all the wrong reasons. Ukraine was invaded by Russia on 24 February 2022, and the relentless military bombardment and massacre of defenceless people has drawn the overt sympathy of the ladies of the CWA and wider community.

One interpretation of Ukraine is “borderland”. Borderlands are all about diversity and competing understandings of community and nation. They are always mixtures of people with different languages, religions and customs. Some will think of themselves as kin to the people on one side of the border: some will look to the other side. But all Ukrainians have lived as one people who work hard, cherish each other and want to live in peace. They are bordered to the north and east by Russia, with Poland and Rumania to the west and the Black Sea to the south.

Ukraine gained it’s independence as a country in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Post-Soviet Ukraine has built a national identity around the memory of Holodomor, the famine of the early 1939s which is seen by the current Ukraine state as a punishment Stalin intentionally visited upon Ukrainians. Ukraine has proudly built a country on these foundations. The current Head of State is President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (since 2019), and it is obvious from the frequent news footage of him in his beloved Ukraine amidst the rubble and refugees that he is caring and compassionate about his country and his people.

Ukraine **had** a population of over 41 million people in 2021 -now we can only imagine or guess how depleted that figure is now in May 2022. Refugees have fled in huge numbers (not accurately recorded) over the borders to Poland and Romania etc. Also thousands upon thousands living underground in shelters.

The Charleville CWA feel passionately about the unjust invasion and on-going massacre of the defenceless people and subsequent displacement of refugees. Women and children are fleeing and leaving their men behind with only the clothes on their backs. This defenceless country is deserving of our interest.