



July 8, 2022

Shaylin Sluzalis & Germán Parodi
Co-Executive Directors, The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies
112 N. 8th Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia PA 19107

Dear Ms. Sluzalis and Mr. Parodi:

Thank you for your letter to Administrator Power expressing concern about the impact Russia's unprovoked war in Ukraine is having on people with disabilities and older persons, and inquiring about what USAID is doing to ensure their needs are being met. USAID considers the situation in Ukraine a humanitarian protection crisis and prioritizes the protection of vulnerable groups as central to our mandate. We are deeply concerned about the significant protection needs of vulnerable populations affected by conflict, including people with disabilities and older people.

USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) deployed to the region in late February to respond to growing humanitarian needs stemming from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Based in Poland, the DART is leading the U.S. Government's humanitarian response inside Ukraine to help address critical humanitarian needs caused by the invasion, including responding to the needs of vulnerable populations. USAID is building on its longstanding partnerships to promote the safety and wellbeing of those affected by the conflict by expanding and adapting existing protection activities.

To address the needs of vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and older adults, USAID is currently supporting eight partners focused on providing services in the area of protection in Ukraine. Two of these partners provide tailored protection services for older persons and people with disabilities, including psychosocial support, home-based care, and legal aid. USAID protection programs emphasize community-based approaches and work through community spaces, faith networks, and peer support groups. Furthermore, we are in the process of expanding our support for both protection programming and protection coordination to meet the needs of displaced, evacuating, and besieged older adults and people with disabilities, recognizing the particular vulnerabilities of those in institutional care.

USAID, jointly with the U.S. Department of State, has prioritized addressing the needs of vulnerable groups disproportionately impacted by the crisis. We are actively engaging with implementing organizations to identify and address gaps and barriers faced by people with disabilities and older people. We know this will require sustained commitment among all key stakeholders, and we welcome and appreciate your information and lessons learned, so we can build on what works. Thank you for raising this important issue. We look forward to continuing this conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah Charles", is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Sarah Charles
Assistant to the Administrator
Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
United States Agency for International Development