

Alaa, student of Cyber Security, Kharkiv

Arrival in Munich: March 6th

"I had heard about the possibility of a war. But I never expected it to actually happen. Because the relationship between Ukrainians and Russians is like in one family. I thought it would be a political war, but not a real one.

Even when the war started I went on with my every day-program, because I was convinced of that this would be over soon. I had to be. They were brothers after all, weren't they? How could they do this? But they did. And they continue to do so.

After the first week of war I saw people being bombed in front of my house. That was the point for me when I knew: I have to go if I don't want that to happen to me. I left together with a friend. We traveled from Kharkiv. To Hungary first, then Vienna and from there we took another train to Munich.

We had some problems in the train. The order was: Women, children and Ukrainians first. So we had to wait for a whole day. We arrived at the train station at 6 a. m. and finally caught a train at 10 p. m.

I had been in Ukraine for six years. I have some attestations from the university. In that respect I was prepared for the case of war - even though I didn't expect it to really happen.

I was in the last year and about to finish my thesis. I received a message from the university that they're gonna do their best to help us graduate as soon as possible. I can't do anything but wait.

I hope to find a job here, this would be the best option for the moment. I would like to thank the social administration at our camp - they do their best and are really helpful. I won't be able to go back to Ukraine. What I've seen was a country in development. This war is a massive throwback. Five years at least.

One day before the war started I called my parents and told them that I wanted to travel to Kiev to apply for a visa for Denmark, Germany or France. The next day i woke up: Ukraine was bombed."

Ilyasse, student, Kharkiv

Arrival in Munich: March 6th

„We were traveling for five days. We took a train to Lviv. After we've had heard about difficulties at the border to Poland we decided to try it in Hungary, stayed in Budapest for a short while and went on to Munich via Vienna.

At first we hoped the bombing wouldn't take long. There were problems with food. The supermarkets were closed early and it wasn't much food left. When there was a bombing nearby our house it was the time when we knew: We have to leave. We have no choice. It's too dangerous.

I don't have any papers from the university, I left half of my clothes there, there was simply no time. We've sent a bunch of documents including my Ukrainian personal number etc. to the German authorities - now I'm waiting for a response.

We hope to extend our stay in Germany. Going back to Morocco is not really an option. My first priority is to study. So a part time-job would be the perfect situation. But as we speak my situation an legal status is still unclear. For now it's like living in the anteroom.“

Anas, student of medicine, Zaporizhzhia

„It's insane. February 23rd was my birthday. When I woke up the next morning my friend called me and said: "They are attacking us." And then I saw the military air planes. I'll never forget that. It was the last thing I would have expected. Even the week before February 24th people lived in harmony.

Everybody was sure: War is something that's never gonna happen to us for real. We were worried, when foreigners were recommended to leave Ukraine. But we didn't leave. We would have been considered as absent at university. I was afraid to lose a whole year.

We hid at first. I went to the university because I thought this would be a safe place. They took us to shelters. Always when the government was afraid of attacks we went down there. Until the government decided an evacuation program by trains. Poland is quite far away if you live in Zaporizhzhia.

I talked to my fellow students from India, Morocco, Nigeria. Since we lived very close to the Russian border the situation was confusing. There were separatists. So we were afraid. Because everybody was wearing guns and we didn't know friend from foe.

After two days of thinking we started our hectic journey. The train stopped on the track. We had to put out the lights an step away from the windows. It was crowded, there were small children, terrible situation.

We arrived in Lviv after 24 hours. We couldn't pass the border to Poland because there were too many people and because of racist things that happened. So we decided to go to Slovakia. Six hours by bus. In Slovakia we felt safe. We ate, we got something to wear and slept in a military facility. The next day we went to Bratislava, after that to Hungary, Vienna and finally to Munich.

When I crossed the border by train near Salzburg and said I came from Ukraine, they took photos and fingerprints and gave me an address I should turn to. I slept at the Hauptbahnhof. The nex step was here: At the Meindlstraße. This ending makes my story better than other stories.

When it all started I asked for my scholarship certificates. I was in my third year. Most of my friends don't even have this paper.

People think everything is fine now because I'm in a safe place. But It's not. My future, my vision, my studies, my life in Ukraine, the people I lived with - everything is blurry. There is no perspective right now.

I try my best to escape the circle of thinking. I study German just to move. I can't do nothing. All I need is a chance - and a little more time to learn the language. Because that's the key to continue my studies here.

I want to work, I wouldn't accept help from the government. I don't like to be treated as if I was seeking for asylum - because I'm not.“