

English Transcript of Conversation with Eugene Tkachev

March 28, 2023

Here we are in Chasiv Yar.

We move across open spaces in sharp dashes.

You can hear big explosions.

Explosions sound not far from us.

This place is very, very hazardous.

Eugene Tkachev, a member of the Proliska humanitarian mission, shows us what Russian artillery has done to Proliska's local headquarters building.

We were here a month ago, after the first hit on headquarters.

Since then conditions have become much worse.

The nails in the roof came loose from the explosions.

This roof is only 2 years old.

It was renovated with UN money for a children's camp.

We bought that water tank for the local people with donated money.

The projectiles flew very close.

You can see how the fence was damaged.

Thank God the water tank is not damaged.

One of the fragments damaged our power generator.

Thank God there is a spare generator.

The explosion is scary, but the fragments are even scarier.

They can break anything.

One hundred year old oak trees have been shattered.

Shards are everywhere.

See how one even flew into the generator.

This generator is dead.

The generator has been running here every day since early morning.

It powers a pump to fill the barrel with water, where people then draw water for themselves

About 8 tons are pumped out per day.

This is the only regular supply of water in the town.

Sometimes the military administration brings water from a nearby village or farm.

Sometimes our organization "Proliska" also provides bottled water.

There is no electricity or gas, nothing to subsist on except humanitarian aid goods.

Communication is also often non-existent.

I will not leave this town or this land.

This place is my home, and we will kill this Goliath together . . . God willing!

How could I give them my city and my territory?

We deliver 30 types of humanitarian aid.

How could I leave?

My hair has turned gray in this town.

We have a beautiful forest and many lakes, where I have walked with my grandchildren and will walk with my great-grandchildren, of course without Russia . . .

!!! (sounds of explosions in background) !!!

. . . hehehe, some fireworks to punctuate my vows . . .

(reporter) Those blasts seem very close . . .

Yeah, who knows . . .

Anyway, let's get going – people are probably waiting for water.

In my blogpost "[Elderly in Exile](#)", I described the town of Chasiv Yar. Chasiv Yar is the original hometown of the nursing home at which I am currently volunteering here in Ukraine. Chasiv Yar is less than 5 miles (8 kilometers) from the town of Bakhmut, where some of the most intense fighting in the entire war has been taking place. The [battle for Bakhmut](#) still rages. The nursing home evacuated to western Ukraine last year when unpredictable artillery bombardment in connection with the battle for Bakhmut began damaging buildings in Chasiv Yar. However, the founder of the nursing home, Eugene Tkachev, stayed in Chasiv Yar.

In addition to founding the nursing home, Mr. Tkachev is also currently very actively engaged in providing humanitarian aid to local civilian residents. Throughout the winter he drove into Bakhmut every day, carrying potable water and other supplies to local residents. Only recently, as the Russian army's pincer attack on Bakhmut became tighter and tighter, he was no longer able to enter Bakhmut. Now, however, his hometown of Chasiv Yar is directly in the sights of Russian artillery. If Ukrainian forces are driven out of Bakhmut, they will probably take up new defensive positions right in Chasiv Yar, effectively placing Eugene's home town right at the center of the new front line. However, Eugene doesn't want to leave. "So much of my life is here, so much gray hair, but also so much joy . . ." (see recent interview here and English transcript of interview here)

Let us all hope that Ukrainian defenders succeed in repelling the Russian assault and Eugene is able to remain in Chasiv Yar. Yet, even if that dream comes true, an incredible amount of rebuilding work will need to be completed before the towns of Chasiv Yar and Bakhmut are again fit for habitation. Readers who are interested in participating in the work to rebuild Chasiv Yar and Bakhmut are welcome to reach out through the [RAYA Community](#) page.