

## Supporting Ukrainians' Resilience and Recovery in Toronto



**Canada** — A Ukrainian Pop-Up Shop launched in Toronto with the support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is delighting scores of holiday visitors, and helping to support economic recovery in Ukraine. The shop features the art and products of over 50 Ukrainian artists and craftspeople, including small businesses launched by veterans and those from war-affected regions of Ukraine where shelling is an everyday occurrence.

Kateryna Kliui creates handmade “motanka” dolls that are traditional family amulets in Ukraine. “I live close to the (Russian) border in Chernihiv region. If something happens to my home, my dolls will be preserved in Canada.”

The Pop-Up Shop is not only promoting the handmade crafts of talented artisans but also showcasing Ukrainian art and culture. Tetiana Protcheva is a master embroider from Kyiv, who is known for her innovative designs combining traditional Ukrainian embroidery and modern technological elements like QR codes to promote deeper understanding of Ukrainian culture and history.

“It is extremely important to show how creative Ukrainian people are and help them promote their business,” said Tetiana. The launch of the Pop-Up Shop in September 2024 coincided with the largest Ukrainian festival in North America, which promotes Ukrainian culture and brings in over 1 million visitors annually.

“I really admire the resilience of our artists,” said Oleh Nikolenko, the Consul General of Ukraine in Toronto. “At a time when Ukraine is being bombed daily, people who don’t have necessary electricity or basic services continue to create and produce high quality goods and products.”

Oleh is one of the primary organizers of the Pop-Up Shop. He explained how the project comes at a time when Ukraine is continuing to face Russian invasion, with the past two years of war having done extensive damage to Ukraine’s exports and overall economy. Facilitating the export of small businesses’ goods aims to help create new export channels for Ukraine and contribute to

its long-term recovery.

The Pop-Up Shop participants were organized by NAZOVNI.Online, an economic diplomacy platform affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. In partnership with IOM, NAZOVNI.Online coordinated with Meest Canada the shipping of the participants' wares. So far, 45 containers with the products have been shipped from Ukraine to Canada.

Additionally, IOM facilitated the shop's social media marketing to boost sales and spread the word about this unique Ukrainian place in Toronto. "The Pop-Up Shop gives an opportunity for Ukrainian small businesses to introduce their goods outside of Ukraine," said Oleksandra Sologub, Operational Director of NAZOVNI.Online. "The situation right now is not easy. Even with the power cuts and everything the businesses are running. They're trying to stabilize, they're trying to give [places of work] to people."

The organizers are enthusiastic about the initiative, and for Canadians and other visitors to discover what Ukrainians can create. The Pop-Up Shop is currently available for in-person shopping at 3015 Winston Churchill Boulevard, Unit 5, in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 7pm.

The initiative is additionally funded through USA for IOM and supported by IOM United States and the Canada-Ukraine Chamber of Commerce. For more information about the Ukrainian Pop-Up Shop, please contact Mariia Dakhym at +1 (437) 299-3643 or visit the shop's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61562614063583> (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61562614063583>).



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