

UIA PROGRESSIVE APPEAL

'I know you're with us'

AJN STAFF

“UKRAINE right now is an example of how the Jewish people can really be one.” So said Rabbi Sergio Bergman, president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) in Melbourne this week.

At a private event for the United Israel Appeal's Progressive Appeal on Tuesday, the visiting Argentinean rabbi – in a podium interview with Peter Kohn, senior journalist of *The AJN* – emphasised that Jews around the world need to be proactive to lend a hand to stricken Jews in Ukraine, and help provide them safe passage out of the country – and an opportunity to make aliyah.

“That is what we are doing right now. We have a network of some 12 cities in Ukraine where there are Progressive Jewish communities.

“Our task right now is to get buses, to get emergency money, medicine and food – and move people across the border.

“This is a time of action – but you can't do it alone,” he added, and Progressive Jewish communities in Ukraine are working together with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), the Jewish Agency for Israel and other organisations.

“Everything's changing. Now, for example, Poland is a safe



Rabbi Sergio Bergman (right) in conversation with Peter Kohn.

place, where we're moving our people ... we have Progressive rabbis in Poland, we have safe houses.”

But beyond that, “we have a future and a home in Israel ... And tonight, with our appeal, we are supporting both our worldwide network and our centre of inspiration, the future for our people, the State of Israel”.

While in Melbourne, Rabbi Bergman is meeting with Netzer, discussing Jewish issues relating to climate change, and attending Shabbat services.

At a Sydney event with Rabbi Bergman, attendees were shown a video from Rabbi Alexander Dukhovny of Kyiv Reform congregation Hatikvah, recorded in a basement shelter.

“It's a difficult time. I'm very emotional, but I know that you are with us,” he said.

To support the UIA Progressive Appeal, which includes the Ukraine Relief Fund, visit upj.org.au