

Backstory

Jeanne Sarson and Linda MacDonald of Persons Against Non-State Torture first met “Maria” at the Beijing+25 meetings at the UN in Geneva in 2000. They were introduced to her by Megan Walker who had travelled to Ukraine two years before to meetings Maria had organized to educate the Ukraine government about the Nordic Model to reduce prostitution in Ukraine. Since Megan was instrumental in getting the Canadian law the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons enacted, Maria had included Megan in the delegation to speak to the Ukrainian politicians.

Jeanne and Linda spent some time with Maria in Geneva and came to know she was a very dedicated feminist. After they returned to Canada, they stayed connected to Maria via email and Facebook.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, Linda contacted Maria asking if she would be interested if they could send money directly to her to be able to help the women and children there, without going through any red tape. A collection was gathered from their family and friends in Nova Scotia. One friend, who had close ties with Ukrainians where she grew up in Saskatchewan, pledged a regular monthly amount to wire to Maria. Linda mentioned this to Women Refugees Advocacy Project’s Chris McDowell in Vancouver during a phone call, never expecting WRAP to come in with support.

The rest, as they say, is “herstory”.

<https://womenrefugeesadvocacyproject.ca/>

<https://nonstatetorture.org>