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*****CONSUMER ALERT*****

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO BE ALERT FOR SCAMS TIED TO RELIEF EFFORTS FOR UKRAINE

Raoul Urges Illinois Donors to Research Charities Before Donating

Chicago — As the Russian invasion of Ukraine and resulting humanitarian crisis continue, Attorney General Kwame Raoul today urged Illinois residents interested in supporting relief efforts to be on the lookout for fundraising scams by individuals seeking to exploit the crisis for their personal profit.

“Many Illinois residents are looking for ways to help people of Ukraine, and while making a charitable donation is a great way to do so, it is important that people exercise vigilance and research the charity before donating,” Raoul said. “It is reprehensible that individuals would exploit this humanitarian crisis for personal gain, but taking the time to research a charity will help ensure that your donation goes to legitimate organizations engaged directly in providing aid to the people of Ukraine.”

As Illinois residents seek out ways to support relief efforts in and around Ukraine, Attorney General Raoul is encouraging people to do some research before making monetary or in-kind donations. Raoul recommends that individuals interested in making monetary contributions first find out whether the charity is providing direct aid in the region or raising money for other groups. Donors have a right to know how their money will be used, so Raoul also advised potential donors to ask questions to determine who will ultimately receive donations and whether the organization is equipped to effectively provide aid. For instance, unless the organization has staff and infrastructure to distribute clothing, food or other in-kind donations, those items may not reach the intended recipients. If a charity is requesting in-kind donations, Raoul urges donors to obtain information about the organization’s transportation and distribution plans, and be wary of organizations that are not experienced in providing such relief.

Under Illinois law, fundraisers and charitable organizations are required to register each year with the Attorney General’s office. To assist potential donors in making smart giving decisions, Attorney General Raoul provides important information about charitable organizations, such as income, expenditures and programs. This information is available on [the Attorney General’s website](#).

Attorney General Raoul also offered the following tips to help people ensure their donation will be used for its intended purpose:

- **Ask how much of your donation will go to the charity and how much will be used to pay fundraising costs.** Solicitors must give you this information if you ask.
- **Pay close attention to the name of the charity.** Some fraudulent charities use names that sound or look like those of legitimate organizations to mislead you.
- **Ask questions about the charity.** Donate only when your questions have been answered and you are certain your money will be used according to your wishes. Ask questions like whether the charity is registered with the Illinois Attorney General’s office and what percentage of the money the charity takes in goes to fundraising, administration and charitable programming.
- **Exercise caution when giving online.** Spam email solicitations that appear to be linked to relief groups could be from persons attempting to take advantage of those who want to help as the crisis in Ukraine continues. Be wary of any online solicitations from unfamiliar charities.

- **Do not pay in cash.** For security and tax record purposes, pay by check. Be sure to write the full official name of the charity on your check – do not abbreviate.
- **Request written information.** A legitimate charity will provide information outlining its mission, how your donation will be distributed, and proof that your contribution is tax deductible.
- **Do not donate if the solicitor uses high-pressure tactics, asks for cash payment or insists on sending someone to pick up your donation.** These are all hallmarks of a scam.

If a call or other solicitation seems suspicious, Attorney General Raoul recommends that donors keep notes detailing the date and time of the contact, the organization's name and the name of the solicitor whenever possible. Raoul encourages donors to contact his office's Charitable Trust Bureau at (312) 814-2595 to report suspicious solicitations.