

Standing with the Ukrainian people for truth, justice and peace!

As war rages in the heart of Europe and threatens to spread to Ukraine's neighbouring countries, we, the signatory International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) of Christian inspiration, members of the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations of the Council of Europe, express loud and clear our condemnation of Russia's aggression against its neighbour.

Nothing, except the madness of domination by a powerfully armed and, what is more, nuclear-armed state, justifies an attack on a sovereign and supposedly friendly or even 'brotherly' state, which over the years has been deliberately denigrated, mutilated and humiliated to the point of denying its very right to exist as a nation.

We reiterate our solidarity with the Council of Europe, which has made the voice of honour heard by suspending Russia for flagrant and repeated violations of its obligations as a member of this Organization dedicated to the respect of human rights, the rule of law and the practice of democracy.

We strongly condemn the new attacks on freedom of expression in Russia, which are constituted by the laws and liberticidal practices voted by the parliament and applied by the government, the courts and the administration at its service, against associations, press organs, journalists and citizens who are prevented from demonstrating, expressing their opposition to the war or simply questioning the choices made by the government in place.

Nothing seems to stop the "steamroller" of totalitarianism at work in Russia, which is expressed by the outpouring of armed violence, the imposition of silence on citizens, and the estrangement of all those who are still motivated by the desire for truth and freedom.

The war is shattering the dream and the political ambition of a closer union between European nations, breaking up even the churches, setting Christians who claim to be sons of the same Father and therefore brothers in Christ against each other.

We reiterate our solidarity with the Ukrainian people, whose immense sacrifices during the 20th century we recall, and whose legitimate aspiration to identity, unity, and independence, in democracy and the rule of law, is in danger of being destroyed in the coming days and weeks.

We are close to the associations, movements and citizens of Russia, believers or not, who aspire to peace and do not share nor understand the mortifying choices of their supreme leader.

We call on the Council of Europe and its member states to support Ukraine in this tragedy, to show solidarity with the victims of this conflict, wherever they come from, and to redouble diplomatic and humanitarian efforts to restore dialogue and peace.

We ask the Christian Churches, whose contribution to the construction of Europe is crucial and recognized by the treaties, to overcome their differences and to speak a single language, that of love, of the Gospel that brings people together and not of divisive opportunism.

Europe will only remain true to its values if it unites in defending them. Law, justice and truth, so shamefully violated by a member state that has justly been sanctioned for this, remain the compass that guides us and to which we, the signatory INGOs of Christian inspiration that are members of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, reiterate our unshakeable attachment.

Signatory INGOs:

ACISJF International Catholic Society for Girls

CEP Colloque Européen des Paroisses

ICCS Intereuropean Commission on Church and School

MIAMSI International Movement of Apostolate in Middle and Upper Classes

Pax Christi International

Pax Romana International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs

European Network Church on the Move

UNAEC / Europe (European Union of Former Students of Catholic Education)