



World Council of Churches

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Geneva, 19 April 2022

His Holiness Kirill
Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia
Russian Orthodox Church

Your Holiness,

With heavy heart, I am writing to you again at the end of Lent, as we enter Holy Week, accompanying our suffering Christ on His way to Calvary and to the day of Resurrection.

The tragic and brutal war in Ukraine which started in the eve of the Lenten period, has taken so many innocent lives of civilians, women and children, brought immense destruction, displaced peoples and communities and made millions of refugees. People are in great despair and suffering!

The Orthodox and Greek Catholic faithful in Ukraine, in Russia and all over the world are preparing to celebrate at the end of this week the most important feast of the year, the Day of Resurrection.

It is well known that for Eastern Christianity this day has a special resonance and importance. The history reminds us that even in the most difficult moments of persecutions, wars and sufferings, nobody could stop the faithful singing and proclaiming boldly the Easter hymn which affirms the victory of life over death, of light over the darkness, of freedom over tyranny: **Christ is Risen from the death, trampling down death by death.** It is moving to read that during the First World War the fighting stopped for a moment so that the soldiers could share with one another the Resurrection greeting or about those confessing Christians in the Soviet gulag who, being asked to kneel in front of the common grave before their execution, gave up their lives while singing together the joyful and victorious paschal hymn.

At the end of the week, according to the requirements of the special Easter midnight service, Your Holiness will walk out of the church as every year, and with loud voice will proclaim to the world, to the entire cosmos that Christ is Risen and that the peace of the Risen Lord world is not only for a selective or special group of people but for the whole world.

In the light of these affirmations which are the core of our very identity, I have dared to write to you, with deep respect and filial love.

People lost their trust and hope in politicians and in a possible peaceful negotiation and a ceasefire. We receive daily requests from the faithful in Russia and Ukraine but also from all over the world to contact Your Holiness and to ask to intervene and mediate for

a peaceful solution, for dialogue rather than confrontation, for end to the fraternal blood shedding.

I am aware that it is not in your power and authority to stop the war or to influence those who have such powers of decisions. But the faithful are waiting for a comforting word from Your Holiness. They think that if you come out with a public statement and request, as the spiritual father of so many millions of Orthodox in both Russia and Ukraine, that might have an impact.

We hear now worrying news that plans are to attack churches during the Easter night celebrations and to spread even more terror, fear, mutual accusations and demonization.

We have kept asking the political leaders for a ceasefire and for return to the table of dialogue since the very beginning of hostilities but with no result. On the contrary, in the present circumstances we all see that the war has intensified, indicating that peace cannot be achieved as soon as we all would have desired and expected.

Our humble request to your Holiness in this particular and impossible situation is to intervene and ask publicly for a ceasefire for at least a few hours during the Resurrection service. To give a chance to the soldiers and to the terrified civilians to embrace and greet one another with the paschal greeting, to silence for a moment the bombs and the missiles and to hear instead the triumphant sound of the church bells and the joyful signing of the faithful people. May such a short ceasefire be a foretaste and a proof that a lasting peace can be achieved.

With love and respect,



Father Ioan Saucă
Acting General Secretary
World Council of Churches