



BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

NETWORKING THE BAPTIST FAMILY TO IMPACT THE WORLD FOR CHRIST

Statement by the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee March 24, 2022

As the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), a Christian Worldwide Communion in 128 countries and territories representing 176,000 churches and 51 million Baptists, we stand together as a worldwide Baptist family that draws upon 400 years of shared history and denounce the violence in Ukraine and appeal for a just and peaceful solution.

We reaffirm a BWA Executive Committee resolution first passed in Monrovia, Liberia, 1968, “We express publicly our burden and distress [that] we have been able to achieve so little peace and have witnessed so much violence and bloodshed in our days. We proclaim to the world our deep feeling that war as a means of permanent solution is untenable, and we believe that any peace that is not based on justice and righteousness is equally untenable and dangerous.”

In 2014, responding to the reality that portions of eastern Ukraine had been devastated by political and military conflict, the BWA General Council gathered in Izmir, Turkey, “acknowledge[d] with deep sadness and great concern, the ... severe tension between Russia and Ukraine” and noted our support for “all initiatives towards the reconciliation of those who have been in conflict.” We stand together to call to repentance all who have practiced unjust violence in this conflict and to uphold the promise to pray, support, and work for peace across Ukraine and Eastern Europe.

As we again decry the aggression and violence, we call on BWA Baptists to continue in:

UNITY

We thank God for the ways BWA Baptists are showing unity in the midst of this conflict. From pastors opening doors amidst shelling in Ukraine, to seminaries providing a place to rest for refugees, to the solidarity expressed by Baptists in countries like Cuba, Lebanon, Myanmar, and Nigeria who know the pain and anguish of suffering firsthand as they face their own present challenges; we are encouraged by these expressions of solidarity. We stand together with our Ukrainian and Russian Baptist sisters and brothers and those in neighboring countries, and we are grateful for their membership in the worldwide Baptist family.

PRAYER

As brothers and sisters within a global Baptist family, we are called to be both peacemakers and people of prayer. As one Baptist family rooted in Jesus Christ as Lord, we bear witness to the biblical truth that “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.” We know it is vital for Baptists around the world to stand with those who are suffering by fervently praying for peace. We celebrate news of Baptists organizing prayer events all over the world and continue to call upon Baptists to pray in anticipation of the change that will come as faithful prayers are raised in all of the BWA’s 128 countries and territories.

SUPPORT

We have been humbled by the outpouring of gifts from around the world to support the humanitarian response of Baptists in Ukraine and neighboring countries. Member bodies, aid agencies, churches, and individuals have all contributed generously. Our strength as a global Baptist family is in the support of one another and no gift is

inconsequential. We stand with the European Baptist Federation (EBF) in echoing a call first issued by the BWA Executive Committee in 1920 – to sacrificially give as a worldwide Baptist family to meet humanitarian needs with the compassion of Christ and Gospel generosity.

As we continue to advocate for peace, we call upon government and multilateral leaders to pursue:

HUMANITARIAN CARE

Due to violent hostilities that have already led to millions of refugees and internally displaced Ukrainians, destruction of entire Ukrainian cities including civilian infrastructure such as hospitals and churches, and the tragic loss of many lives, humanitarian care is urgently needed. This care is needed immediately through safe humanitarian corridors especially in areas where civilians are currently dehydrated and starving to death. In commitment to shared humanity, all people of goodwill are encouraged to give generously and to resist demagoguery and demonization of entire populations. Neighboring countries are urged to provide consistent enduring welcome and assistance for all people regardless of their citizenship or country of origin. In recognition of the long-lasting impact of violence, governments and multilateral groups are asked to commit now to help rehabilitate and rebuild that which has been destroyed.

ACTIONS OF PEACE

As the path to peace is possible only as concrete actions are taken, we request:

1. Immediate cessation of aggression against Ukraine, withdrawal of foreign troops from Ukraine, and the establishment of a process towards a lasting and just peace across the region. As Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”
2. Continuous honoring and building upon of the joint agreement made on March 3, 2022, to establish a “humanitarian corridor” through Ukraine and allow for the safe movement of civilians and vital goods, services, and medical care for those in need. As Jesus said, “I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing.”
3. Pursuit of peaceful and free societies that flourish on the basis of ongoing commitment to uphold freedom of religion, belief, and conscience and negotiated agreements that establish holistic security. As Jesus said, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
4. Mitigation of the widespread harm to all civilians and non-combatants. As the Apostle Paul writes, “Love does no harm to a neighbor.”

Today we affirm again our love for all people across this region, renew our commitment to enter into the sufferings of humanity, and stand in the belief that all conflicts and differences can be resolved peacefully. We exhort all people and all governments to stand together in these affirmations and to use every avenue to pursue just peace.

We claim afresh the words of those gathered at the Baptist World Congress in Stockholm, Sweden in 1975,
“We acknowledge that peace is the gift of God ... Peace begins in the hearts of people of goodwill.”

In this time of unjust suffering and intense violence, we call for just peace in Ukraine and across Eastern Europe that enables a peaceful and prosperous life for all people.

STAND WITH US: BaptistWorld.org/prayforpeace

The Baptist World Alliance, founded in 1905, is a fellowship of 245 conventions and unions in 128 countries and territories comprising 51 million baptized believers in 176,000 churches. For more than 100 years, the Baptist World Alliance has networked the Baptist family to impact the world for Christ with a commitment to strengthen worship, fellowship and unity; lead in mission and evangelism; respond to people in need through aid, relief, and community development; defend religious freedom, human rights, and justice; and advance theological reflection and leadership development.

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