



Prayers and action for peace in Ukraine

On 24 February, as we mark the third year of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we hold our Ukrainian brothers and sisters in our thoughts and prayers, urging action for a just and lasting peace. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) remains in solidarity with all those suffering.

This brutal war has claimed over 150,000 lives, including Ukrainian soldiers, civilians, and Russian soldiers; left 60,000 missing in Ukraine; forcibly deported 19,500 Ukrainian children; and caused 160 billion euros in direct infrastructure damage, according to media reports. More than 40 clergy members have been killed, over 630 religious buildings destroyed, and countless individuals in Ukrainian occupied territories face daily persecution, torture, and humiliation.

In addition to the ongoing atrocities, Ukraine has been battling hybrid warfare that combines military aggression with disinformation to distort facts and falsely portray Ukraine as responsible for the war. A well-coordinated effort has long sought to discredit Ukraine's commitment to international law, democracy, and pluralism. Therefore, we urge the heads of states, as well as the representatives of international organisations to honour the truth and to challenge false narratives. Yet, in the face of immense suffering and injustice, the Ukrainian people continue to show unwavering resilience in their fight for freedom and independence.

At a time when Ukraine's defence capabilities face critical challenges, our solidarity and advocacy are more vital than ever. This is a time for churches and communities across Europe to come together in prayer and action, demanding a just and lasting peace. We continue to urge the European Union, heads of states, and the international community to strengthen their commitment to peace in Ukraine. A just and lasting peace requires that the sovereign Ukrainian state—invaded by Russia—be the sole representative of its interests in all international negotiations. Diplomatic engagement, humanitarian aid, and steadfast solidarity are essential to fostering peace and long-term stability.

Our Pathways to Peace initiative, established in response to the war, continues to promote dialogue and cooperation among churches, ensuring Ukrainian voices are heard.

We reiterate our deep concern over the complicity of the Russian Orthodox Church in legitimising this war and urge anew Patriarch Kirill to speak out against the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We also condemn the documents issued by the XXV World Russian People's Council, which justified Russian aggression.

Today, we continue our work as followers of Christ, striving for a future where the war ends and peace prevails in the region. "Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace" (Romans 14:19).

*Merciful God,
comfort those who mourn,
heal those who suffer,
and guide leaders toward the path of just and enduring peace.
Amen.*

H.E. Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain

CEC President