



“Please, stop this ‘madness of war’”!

**Statement by Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich S.J., President of COMECE
on the occasion of the first anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine**

On 24 February 2022, Europe and the entire world woke up with shocking reports about the launch of Russia’s full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. Today, twelve months later, we continue to be deeply saddened by the horrific human suffering and the immense material and spiritual damage this senseless aggression has been causing every day to the Ukrainian population. The war in the heart of Europe has also shaken up the foundations of European and global peace architecture, filling the whole of humanity with fear of an uncontrollable escalation with catastrophic consequences for all humanity.

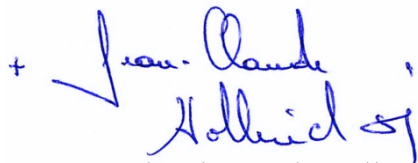
In communion with numerous appeals made by Pope Francis and the Holy See, the Bishops of COMECE have not ceased to call on the aggressor to immediately suspend the hostilities and withdraw its armed forces, in full respect of international law and the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Today, on the first anniversary of the full-scale tragic aggression, we reiterate our heartfelt appeal: *“please, stop this ‘madness of war’”!*

At the same time, we remember in a particular way all the victims of this war in our prayers, and we stand close to the millions of people suffering in Ukraine and to those who have been forced to leave their homes and found refuge in the neighbouring countries and across Europe. We are grateful for all the concrete actions of solidarity shared with our Ukrainian sisters and brothers by many volunteers, including religious and faith-based actors, who have upheld their gratuitous commitment despite dangers and exhaustion.

We also express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of European decision-makers in providing humanitarian, financial, political as well as adequate and proportionate military support to Ukraine. Its people have the right to defend themselves from the brutal and unjustifiable military aggression in order to live a life in dignity, safety and freedom in their independent and sovereign country. We strongly encourage European leaders to maintain their unity in solidarity with Ukraine during and also after the war, while not giving in to fatigue or indifference.

Lasting peace will only be possible on the basis of justice and truth. We therefore welcome all European and international efforts in documenting war crimes in view of ensuring accountability for perpetrators and making a strong vow: 'Never again!'. We put our hopes in a renewed multilateral diplomatic effort which could be propelled by a Global Peace Summit, a proposal that has been recently endorsed and supported by the European Council.

At the beginning of Lent, a time of conversion and renewal, let us pray in a special way to the Lord "to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (cf. Lk 1,79)

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+ Jean-Claude Card. Hollerich SJ

Archbishop of Luxembourg

President of COMECE