

Lviv, February 28th, 2022

Ukraine is "one of us and we want them in the European Union", Ursula von der Leyen

Dear Partners of UCU and Ukraine!

Today, Russian occupation entered its 5th day of military aggression, with hundreds of casualties, hundreds of thousands of refugees, and millions of destroyed lives. This is more than a Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is a brutal assault on democracy, humanity, global order and the whole civilized world overall. Since the beginning of the war on February 24th, much of the international community pledged its support for the Ukrainian people in various forms. Diplomats work tirelessly. We see large-scale and influential sanctions against the Russian economy. Ukraine's allies are sending financial and military aid. Likewise, many international companies, NGOs and initiatives have joined in helping Ukraine. Unfortunately, all these enormous efforts have not stopped the war yet. The Russian killer is relentless!

1. **Death of Ukrainian children.** Russian missiles keep dropping on civilians' heads and buildings. Russians keep attacking kindergartens and orphanages, thus committing war crimes and violating the Rome Statute. Hospitals and mobile medical aid brigades are also targeted by the Russian shellfire and the sabotage groups, working in Ukraine's cities and towns. According to the MFA's report, as of today, 352 people including 16 children were killed and 1684 people (116 children) wounded in Ukraine during five days of the Russian invasion. (The numbers are being updated). Russia will have to answer for its behavior at the World Court in the Hague. Ukraine has submitted its application against Russia to the ICJ and we request an urgent decision ordering Russia to cease military activity now and expect trials to start next week. Your active civic support and demand that Putin and Russia be convicted of their crimes will help to restore confidence in and effectiveness of international law.
2. **Ukraine's official request to join the European Union.** For centuries the Ukrainian nation has fought for its own independence as an equal and rightful European state, with a strong identification with European values, such as democracy, freedom, equality, just governance and human rights. After gaining independence, we keep proving that we are part of European society. We defend

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our freedom, dignity, and future. We protect and develop norms, laws, and reforms that are important for being a modern and free country. We are fighting not only for our lives and freedom but also for the whole European society that we respect, admit and want to be a part of. Today, the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed a historical application for Ukraine's membership in the European Union. Thanks to the support of many European countries and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, we feel confident that this will be an important step in order to not only finalize our integration to the European Union but also to achieve true peace. Your voice is critical at this moment! Please appeal to your governments and your representatives in parliaments to support our aspiration.

- 3. Negotiations with Russia.** To stop fatalities, Ukraine decided to hold its first negotiation session with Russia near Ukrainian-Belorussian border. The aim is to cease fire on Ukrainian territory to prevent casualties. As a result of the first session and according to the Ukrainian delegation, both sides identified common topics that they must work on and departed back to their own capitals for further consultations and implementation of the first session. The next session will happen shortly. The start of the negotiation process is a crucial part of peace in Ukraine. Our delegation will defend Ukraine's national interests and sovereignty. Nothing much was achieved during the first session. But the meanness of the aggressors knows no limits. During the talks, the parties agreed to a ceasefire. However, taking advantage of the moment, Belarus and Russia continued to attack Kharkiv, Kyiv and other settlements from the air. We emphasize once again that the words and promises of the Russian regime are worth nothing.
- 4. Referendum in Belarus.** The dictator Lukashenko signed a decree appointing a referendum on amendments to the Constitution of Belarus on February 27. As a result of this referendum, he wanted to strengthen his power and create additional danger for Ukraine and the world. In addition, he creates security guarantees that do not allow him to be held accountable for his actions during his terms. Most importantly, he deprives Belarus of its nuclear-free status. These changes mean that he does support the war against Europe. He is ready to get nuclear weapons from Russia and use them not only as a blackmail instrument but also to kill our soldiers, families, and children. Almost 66% of people "voted" for the

amendments to the Constitution. We ask you to support the decisive steps to stop another dictator who instigates the war, kills our soldiers and civilians by dropping the missiles from the country he made a hostage of his lunacy. The consequences of Lukashenko's actions can be fatal and affect citizens of all countries.

5. **Humanitarian crisis at Ukrainian border.** We Ukrainians are thankful and proud of all the support of our fellows worldwide providing help to our people and assert human values to win the war against totalitarianism and dictatorship. While many Ukrainians are fighting, there are the ones who must save their young kids, some of which have just been born. International volunteers are working hard to provide these people with the possibility of saving their souls from the enemy's fire. Providing shelter in neighboring countries, food, basic sanitation, and hygiene products is crucial. Women with little kids who stay at the Ukrainian border sometimes for 3-4 days need resources to survive during this period of turbulence. Most necessary at the Ukrainian border is food, baby food, water, diapers, wet wipes, coverlets, toilet paper. We ask you to become a part of global solidarity with Ukraine now and address NGOs and volunteer centers with help. The young Ukrainian generation will forever remember the good that the world community provided them with!
6. **How does the Ukrainian Catholic University deal with the current state of war?** The community of the Ukrainian Catholic University is now being actively engaged in various volunteer activities. Our main objectives: Witness, Serve and Communicate lead us through these hard times. UCU operating group has been working non-stop since the first day of Russia's full-scale invasion in Ukraine. For example, UCU cooperation with UNICEF has launched the assistance to refugees to provide them with the first necessary humanitarian aid. UCU has also become a center for many volunteering projects, including media coverage of war, humanitarian aid, city security, IDPs support etc. Our students are redistributing clothes, food supplies, medicines and hygiene products for the soldiers all over Ukraine and to IDPs, who came to Lviv. Yesterday, 27th of February, we handed over to the military: 1 quadcopter, 5 walkie-talkies, 8 phones, 51 power bank, 23 boxes of food (including thousands of bars, dry food, coffee, tea, canned food, etc.), 15 chargers, 19 large boxes of medicines and many

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many other items. We do not stop the educational process, despite the recommendation of the Ministry of Education and Science to pause instruction for two weeks. We believe that there can be no vacation during the war. Traditional lectures have been canceled, however all classes were transformed into practical activities according to the service-learning approach that UCU has been pioneering for the last few years.

We must win! We must be united in this struggle!

Yours sincerely,
Rectorate and Operating Group



If you want and can join humanitarian activities, you may send any aid you deem appropriate. Please check our FB page for the list of current needs - <https://www.facebook.com/UkrainianCatholicUniversity>

UCU's operation is now fully devoted to defending our country and supporting people affected by the war. We would be grateful for your donations to ensure the fulfillment of our mission during this time, as well as the functioning and safety of the university community - <https://supporting.ucu.edu.ua/donate/>.

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You may also transfer your donations to Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation
<https://ucufoundation.org/donate/>.

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