

July 6, 2022

Dear Member of Congress:

We write as representatives of many faith communities, distressed by the terrible human toll of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, to express our alarm at reports that the war could last for months or even years longer, and potentially expand beyond Ukraine's borders, or escalate to a nuclear exchange.

As faith leaders, we recognize the precious and equal value of every human being and are called to work to end violence and war. Russian President Vladimir Putin's illegal assault on Ukraine is an affront to our deepest moral and spiritual values. Not only has this attack killed and injured thousands and forced millions to flee their homes, but it also has caused food shortages and skyrocketing energy prices that threaten the most vulnerable populations around the globe.

With so many lives at stake, we believe that the United States has a moral duty to do all it can to help end the war as quickly as possible. Our diplomatic and military policy and efforts should be aimed at bringing both sides to the negotiating table to reach an immediate ceasefire and a settlement that ensures a durable peace based on international law and principles of human rights. Stopping the bloodshed must be our top priority.

We are concerned, however, that many administration officials and members of Congress have been pressing for unrealistic, ill-defined, and rapidly changing notions of "victory," some of which would leave no room for a negotiated end to the war. Growing speculation that the United States' real aims are to overthrow the Russian government and/or permanently weaken the Russian economy could end up increasing the chances that Russia will perpetuate further atrocities against the people of Ukraine, launch an attack on NATO countries, or use nuclear weapons. Any of those outcomes would be calamitous.

It is clear that at the human level, war has no winners. Regardless of the eventual outcome, millions of innocent people will have suffered death, destruction, forced displacement, insecurity, and hunger as a result of the war.

We thank you for your efforts to hold responsible parties accountable for their role in any war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the conflict. The principles of humanitarian action, accountability, and justice in conflicts must be consistently applied around the world. We request your continued support to the humanitarian and protection needs of people displaced by this conflict, including Ukrainian residents of African and Middle Eastern descent, and urge that this support not come at the price of the needs of the tens of millions displaced globally.

The United States must make every effort to prevent the escalation of violence, the expansion of war aims and the prolongation of fighting. We urge you to support diplomatic efforts that create incentives for a negotiated settlement necessary to reach a just and lasting peace.

Sincerely,

American Friends Service Committee
American Hindu World Service (AHWS)
Center on Conscience and War
Church World Service
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP)
Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, Washington, DC
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
National Council of Churches
Oblate Ecological Initiative
Pax Christi USA
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Sojourners
The Episcopal Church
United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
U.S Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, JPIC Office