



Solidarity with the Ukrainian people and all victims

March 23, 2022 – The objectives of the International Federation of ACAT (FIACAT) are based on the values and standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. They are also rooted in the Christian faith of the members of FIACAT and ACAT, which inspires them *to fight against torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, the death penalty, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions.*

It is based on this specific mission that FIACAT wishes to express itself, together with its members and in synergy with other NGOs, on the tragic consequences resulting from the armed invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and the great danger that this poses to the world.

First of all, FIACAT relies on the Resolution on the aggression against Ukraine of the United Nations General Assembly of 2 March this year, expressing the demands of the international community which, inter alia, "*Condemns all violations of international humanitarian law, violations of human rights and abuses of human rights, and calls upon **all parties to comply strictly with the applicable provisions of international humanitarian law (...)** and to respect international human rights law*" (emphasis added).

FIACAT strongly demands that all parties strictly respect the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular the 4th Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and their Protocol I of 1977, as well as their international legal obligations under human rights conventions, in particular the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (including, art. 6 and 7), the European Convention on Human Rights (including, art. 2 and 3) as well as the conventions against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, applicable in the framework of the UN and the Council of Europe.

FIACAT stresses that the international conventions on human rights ratified by the Russian Federation, in particular the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture, remain applicable until the expiry of the period provided for by each convention following denunciation.

FIACAT notes that the "*inherent right of individual or collective self-defence*", recognised by the UN Charter, is being exercised in Ukraine by a people who are suffering armed aggression within its internationally recognised borders. FIACAT recalls that the right to self-defence must meet certain requirements and be exercised within strict limits. Under no circumstances does self-defence justify any form of exaction or permit the violation of fundamental human rights, such as the practice of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, or summary executions, against any person or group party to the conflict.

FIACAT, together with other NGOs, will exercise its role of vigilance in a war of aggression where civilian populations are dramatically exposed on the front line.

The solidarity with people forced into exile and the reception of refugees that is currently taking place are particularly exemplary. FIACAT stresses that these actions towards refugees must be extended to other situations in the world. These people are vulnerable, especially women and children sometimes isolated on the roads of exile, who are exposed to trafficking, exploitation, and the most serious risks. We call for the utmost vigilance and urgent preventive measures.

FIACAT, with the means at its disposal, will continue to give its support and solidarity to the Ukrainian people in their struggle for the universally recognised values of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law that we share. We salute with admiration the courage of the many acts of peaceful protest and resistance by Russian citizens from different backgrounds, risking their freedom and their lives. We express the hope that their country will return as soon as possible to the path of human rights and peace and to its full place in the global and regional international community.

The members of FIACAT and ACAT join all those around the world who pray for peace, seeing prayer as a resource and a strength to mobilise action and build a world where human rights are effectively respected.

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