

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE FAITH IMPACT FORUM - MAY 2022

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Supplementary Report.
2.
 - a) Condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
 - b) Call for an immediate ceasefire and urge all parties, supported by the international community, to negotiate a just and peaceful solution which respects human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
 - c) Urge prayer across the Church of Scotland:
 - for the people of Ukraine suffering under war.
 - for wisdom among the leaders of the nations and all who work for justice and truth, and who keep open the horizon of reconciliation and peace.
 - for the generosity of the Church in supporting the spiritual and humanitarian efforts of the local partner churches for those afflicted by war.
 - to strengthen all those working in response to human need in Ukraine and other places around the world afflicted by war and violence, and for those working to welcome refugees.
 - d) Condemn any Russophobia and discrimination against Russian citizens living and working in Scotland.
 - e) Encourage members of the Church who wish to host refugees to register with the Homes for Ukraine scheme run by the UK Government, under the aegis of the Scottish Government as a 'super sponsor'.
 - f) Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to continue to respond to developments in the war in Ukraine, and to raise issues with the Scottish and UK Governments, with ecumenical partners, and with Reformed church partners around the world.

Report

1. The illegal invasion of Ukraine which began on 24 February has shocked the world. The war is a barbaric violation of international norms. The Government of Russia has disregarded respect for sovereignty; the appalling reports of war crimes and deliberate attacks on civilians are harrowing. Bringing the parties to the negotiating table to agree a ceasefire, and then pursuing a diplomatic solution, should be the key aim of the international instruments and their members.

2. The moving stories of human fortitude, survival and bravery, as well as fear, horror and distress that have been relayed via social media, in our newspapers and on television screens have given a great sense of empathy. We might have foolishly hoped that such devastating invasion of a democratic country on the continent of Europe was something that was only to be read about in history books. It is a reminder of the fragility of our world and of the international order designed to maintain peace and security, and the hearts and prayers of the whole Church go out to the innocent people of Ukraine.

3. We are also learning that the war will have a catastrophic impact on global food supply over the coming months as the impact on Ukrainian wheat production will cause prices to rise. The United Nations has begun to warn of a looming global hunger crisis for the world's poorest people, including the 125 million people supported by the World Food Programme.

4. Russian citizens living in Scotland who have had no role to play in the war are innocent too, and we must utterly reject any racism or discrimination aimed at them because of their nationality.

5. We know that congregations across Scotland will have been praying for peace, for the people of Ukraine, for those offering aid, and for world leaders. The response of the Church of Scotland has included raising more than £330,000 since February for humanitarian work undertaken by our partners, the Reformed Churches in Hungary and Transcarpathia. In Transcarpathia, the Churches have remained open offering prayer and worship for any to join, and pastors and families have remained in place to support their congregations. The Church also uses funds from international partners to support ministry in this context as people have lost their incomes and there is a lack of access to banks and cash. In addition, they have

increased production at their bakery, opening churches, halls, and diaconal homes to refugees from further east who have fled for safety. Additional funds have been raised as part of the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal, which is supported by Christian Aid.

6. The Church of Scotland led partnership, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, has been offering advice and support to congregations and individuals interested in integration work, including through the provision of accommodation to refugees arriving in Scotland. The Church has also been represented at meetings with the Scottish Government and UK Department for Levelling Up (which manages the Homes for Ukraine scheme). Under this scheme the Scottish Government is operating as a 'super sponsor' and we encourage anyone thinking of taking part in this programme to do so under this umbrella. We have also been in contact with the Home Office to offer assistance and encourage speedier processing of visas and parity of treatment for Ukrainian refugees in the UK regardless of the route they have travelled to be here.

7. Information about the Church's response is available on a special webpage which is updated regularly. This includes information about how to donate money to the work of the Reformed Churches in the region through the Church of Scotland, guidance from the Church of Scotland on hosting refugees, prayers and worship resources, and other news and information.

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/the-church-response-to-the-ukraine-crisis?fbclid=IwAR3rK7RgJJESrXjO9b-rgPwWdWW0RYc3XQwkMdIPeTv3uJJIA7QPKLwfhf4>.

In the name of the Faith Impact Forum

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