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Orthodox Church Primates call for end of war in Ukraine



Warfare continued for a fifth day around various parts of Ukraine, following an invasion on three to four fronts by Russian forces last week.
Ground combat, air raids, and missile attacks continued, causing destruction, pain and loss of life in the country of roughly 44 million people, of which a majority are Orthodox Christians.

Only a glimmer of hope emerged on Monday with a closely watched meeting between Ukrainian and Russian representatives in a border location on the Ukrainian-Belarus border, although results are even less than sketchy.

On its part, the European Union announced a set of particularly harsh sanctions against Putin-led Russia, along with a massive humanitarian effort, and even funds to supply defensive weapons to the Kiev government.

The most prominent sanction, taken along with other western countries, is to exclude most Russian financial institutions from the global Swift bank transfer system.

Greece, via the government, has condemned the attack on Ukraine, in joining its

European partners, while also sending defensive materials, humanitarian aid, and announcing that it will accept Ukrainian refugees. Athens also closed its airspace to Russian-owned and operated planes.

Meanwhile, the Primates of the world's Orthodox Churches continued to urge for an end to the warfare.



Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I

On Sunday evening, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew, spoke by phone with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, with the latter describing the prevailing situation in country after the military invasion by the Russian Federation.

Zelenskyy expressed his gratitude for the expressions of support on the part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate toward his nation, while imploring His All Holiness to intensify His prayers for the struggle of the Ukrainian people.

The Ecumenical Patriarch assured Zelenskyy of the Mother Church's solidarity and constant prayers so that hostile fire may cease and the military conflict may stop immediately.

Finally, His All Holiness conveyed his prayer for strength and endurance from above, so that peace may swiftly prevail in Ukraine, whose people – like so many other peoples – received the Orthodox faith from the Mother Church of Constantinople.



Patriarch Theodoros II

In another corner of the world, the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, His Most Divine Beatitude Theodoros II, conveyed his solidarity to the Ukrainian people.

His Most Divine Beatitude also underlined that the Church is praying for reason to reign and for the bloodshed to cease immediately, to the benefit of the good of humanity.



Patriarch Theophilos III

In the Holy Land, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Most Godly Beatitude Theophilos III, referred to a “painful crisis” that is taking place in Ukraine.

In a statement, the Jerusalem Patriarch noted that “…The strongest power of the Christian is prayer. With other Christian leaders around the world, we therefore call upon all Christian people to join in prayer for our world and for the people of Ukraine.”



Archbishop Anastasios

Back in southeast Europe, the Archbishop of Durres, Tirana and All Albania, His Beatitude Anastasios, called on the faithful and “every man of goodwill” to intensify their prayers for peace.

The Archbishop spoke of fratricidal war and a “…monologue of the violence of the powerful… The Christian conscience condemns all forms of violence, urging everyone, to the best of their ability, to contribute to peace and reconciliation in suffering Ukraine and wherever it lands.”



Patriarch Kirill

In another corner of the world and closer to the conflict, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, His Holiness Kirill, officiated at a prayer service for peace in Ukraine, while calling on the faithful to pray for all those being tested.

The Russian Patriarch officiated at a Divine Liturgy on Sunday at the Cathedral of the Savior in Moscow.



Patriarch Porfirije

The war in Ukraine was also the focus of a sermon on Sunday by the Patriarch of Serbia, His Holiness Porfirije, who officiated at Church services at the St. Sava Cathedral in Belgrade.

His Holiness told congregants that the Serbian Patriarchate has decided to send material assistance to Ukraine, and specifically to the primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate.