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“Closing the sky over Ukraine is a matter of international security” (Volodymyr Zelensky, 02.03.22)

Lviv, March 3rd, 2022

Dear Partners of UCU and Ukraine!

From the first day of the invasion of Ukraine, the Russian occupiers violated numerous norms of international law, including the United Nations Charter, the Hague Convention, the Minsk Agreements, not to mention the Budapest Memorandum, which Russia violated 8 years ago.

Acting insidiously, the Russian invaders continue to use civilians as human shields, taking hostages and bombing civilian infrastructure of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Odessa, Mariupol, and other big cities. Contrary to the norms of International Humanitarian Law, high-power cluster munitions and fragmentation munitions are used in bombings **mostly** residential areas, kindergartens, transport infrastructure, and even hospitals. During the last 24 hours of March 3rd dozens of civilian objects were destroyed in one city of Kharkiv, including the Karazin University building and the Kharkiv Regional State Administration. None of these buildings are military and not even located nearby. Now it's clear that meeting fierce opposition from the Ukrainian army, Russians changed their tactics to what they practiced in Chechnya and Georgia - acts of terrorism against civilians. It will take years to rebuild the aftermath of the bombing but no one will restore human lives.

The Russian invaders are not only destroying our cities, homes, educational institutions, and hospitals - they are destroying culture and history, and this affects not only every Ukrainian but the entire international community. On March 1, Russian troops launched a rocket attack on the territory where the Babyn Yar memorial complex is located, where thousands of innocent souls were killed by the Nazis. That day the new Russian Nazis not only insulted the monument but shed new innocent blood on the bones of the martyrs. During the artillery strikes on the settlements, the occupiers actively used the "Hrad", "Tornado" and "Hurricane" multiple rocket launchers. Such hostilities are prohibited by international law and result in large-scale civilian casualties! Some cities are on the verge of a humanitarian crisis!

We can already see the Russians bombing residential areas, hospitals, cultural monuments, but they do not stop there. They have already occupied the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, bombing oil pipelines in Vasylkiv. Russian Su-30 and Su-35 systematically fly into the safe zone of our nuclear power plants. And this is the so-called "safe zone" - a quiet

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harbor where no one is allowed to fly. These objects are likely future targets for attacks, which will be an environmental catastrophe for the whole of Europe! On March 3rd, Ukraine officially appealed that the IAEA must call on NATO to close access to the airspace over its nuclear facilities and intensify efforts to prevent acts of nuclear terrorism, such as the seizure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the exclusion zone by Russian troops. The Russian Federation completely ignores the principles of peace, security and unity for which the IAEA was created within the UN. Therefore, it is proposed by Ukraine to exclude Russia's access to the Agency's intellectual and technical resources while strengthening control over the use of nuclear material in this country.

Closing the sky over Ukraine, as President Zelensky said on March 2nd, is not only an urgent need of Ukraine but of the whole world. Closing the sky over Ukraine is a way for the world to protect itself. Geopolitical, security and humanitarian consequences inevitably await Europe. In just seven days, we have witnessed the departure of almost 1, 000, 000 refugees from Ukraine to neighboring countries, and hundreds of thousands of people have no home left to return to due to the bombing. According to UNFPA almost 80 000 Ukrainian women will give birth in the next 3 month under the risk of not receiving necessary medical care. **Shall Europe expect another migration crises in the coming months? Are our economies and societies ready for it?** There is no confidence Russia will stop the bombing. That affects more and more cities, more and more territory, and more and more people will be forced to flee. Their houses will be destroyed and they will not have a safe place to return. The humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine is a matter of nearest time with no action done to stop it.

How can we unite our efforts to prevent this?

Ukraine needs help to shelter its sky now!

We call on all our Partners and Friends to declare March 5th - a Day of International Solidarity with Ukraine!

The main appeal for the whole global academic community is to **CLOSE THE SKY** over **UKRAINE!** Therefore, let us together, on Saturday, March 5, call on the whole world to come out on the streets with beautiful blue and yellow flags in support of Ukraine and protest against the treacherous attack of the Russian Federation! Let's demand NATO and all decision-makers to **CLOSE THE SKY OVER UKRAINE!**

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Ukraine is able to save the world from the Russian threat, **but we need support, we need You!** So please be with us, support us before it's too late!

Help Ukraine to have a peaceful sky over its head!

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/>.

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

If you want to support UCU students' volunteering projects, you can use the following account for money transfers:

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