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World Religious Leaders Travel in Emergency Just Peace Mission to Pray in Kyiv (24–25 May 2022)

WARSAW, POLAND– A high-level delegation of religious leaders will travel to Kyiv in an emergency intervention seeking to contribute to ending **aggression against Ukraine**, the bombing of Ukrainian cities, and to pray for a just peace. The leaders will meet in Warsaw, Poland, and travel 14-hours by bus to Kyiv, Ukraine, on May 24 and return to Warsaw on May 26.

In March, **Mayor Vitali Klitschko of Kyiv, Ukraine’s besieged capital, issued a call to the religious leaders to come to Kyiv:** “I make an appeal to the world’s spiritual leaders to take a stand and assume the moral function that is incumbent upon them, and to proudly assume the responsibility of their religions for peace,” said Klitschko. “... Come to Kyiv to show their solidarity with the Ukrainian people. To show their compassion, and to join together in a spirit of harmony that my country and the whole world needs. Let us make Kyiv the capital of humanity, spirituality, and peace.”

This May, religious leaders from around the world have answered Klitschko’s plea. More than a dozen leaders and people of faith from the major world religions will arrive in Kyiv on Tuesday, 24 May to engage in prayer, pastoral accompaniment, and distribution of humanitarian aid, as well as key encounters with peacebuilders, religious leaders, and political leaders.

“We are here to demand that bombing of Ukrainian cities must stop,” said **Dr. Mateusz Piotrowski**, one of the lead organizers and president of Europe, a Patient, “We want to contribute to strengthening humanitarian corridors. We also hope that interventions of religious leaders, in the form of recurrent vigils for just peace in other cities endangered by bombing, could provide an important instrument of peacebuilding – in Ukraine and elsewhere.”

The delegation plans to hold public outdoor prayer services on Tuesday, 24 May at 9:00 AM at Babyn Yar and on Wednesday at 12:00 PM (noon) in Kyiv (location TBD).

Rt. Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells, Anglican bishop of Dorking in the U.K., joins the delegation as a representative of the Church of England supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury. “I am honoured to accept the invitation to go to Kyiv to pray for peace. Voicing our deepest longings in dependence on God – and then acting with initiative and solidarity in response – is the way Jesus taught us to pray for ‘Thy Kingdom Come’. I have no bigger prayer on my heart just now than for peace with justice in Ukraine. I shall count it a huge privilege if I can offer that prayer in the very ‘eye of the storm’ alongside an interfaith group of religious leaders who – despite our differences, even because of our differences – are utterly determined to stand together for the sake of peace,” said Bishop Wells.

Imam Yahya Pallavicini, president of COREIS (Islamic Religious Community-Italy) and coordinator of EULEMA, the European Muslim Leaders’ Majlis, will join the delegation. “We need to learn together how to develop a reliable model and the added value of an interreligious cooperation for the injured soul of Europe. Jews, Christians and Muslims in the West visiting together the blessed land and people of Ukraine need to share the sacred quest for truth and peace, through the humble service of justice, in order to prevent atrocity and the lack of honesty in our fraternity”, said Imam Pallavicini.

The host partner of delegation visit to Kyiv is Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center, a non-governmental organization that formed the first modern Holocaust museum in Eastern Europe and is the center for tragedy study. The delegation is organized by Europe, a Patient Association, a pan-European advocacy initiative to respond to humanitarian crises based in Warsaw. And in collaboration with several organizations including Sojourners, a Washington, D.C.-based Christian NGO dedicated to articulating the biblical call to social justice and peace, and members of Georgetown University (USA).

Mr. Maksym Rabinovych is CEO Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center, the host organization for the delegation in Kyiv. “For five years our Memorial Center has been studying the history of the Holocaust to prevent genocides and promote human dignity. We are committed to this aim today in particular, when peaceful Ukrainian cities are suffering from shelling, a lot of houses of civilians are destroyed and so many people are tortured and killed in barbaric manner. We truly believe that bringing together the leaders from different fields – religious, politics, science, culture – can show the way how to stop Putin’s aggression, save lives and restore peace,” he said.

Participating leaders are making this visit on behalf of a broader international community of faith leaders of all religions. They also plan to **appeal to the Russian authorities that a prayer vigil for a just peace takes place in Moscow.**

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

Members of the delegation will include:

Rt. Rev. Dr. Jo Bailey Wells, Anglican bishop of Dorking, U.K., representative of the Church of England and supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury

Imam Yahya Pallavicini, president of COREIS (Islamic Religious Community-Italy) and coordinator of EULEMA, the European Muslim Leaders' Majlis

Sr. Sheila Kinsey, FCJM, Executive Co-Secretary of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Union of Superior Generals (male religious congregations) and of the International Union of Superior Generals (female religious congregations), Catholic Church, Rome

Lord Maurice Glasman, Labour peer (UK) and director of the Common Good Foundation

Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon, Executive Director of Churches for Middle East Peace (USA)

Ms. Michele Dunne, OFS, Executive Director of Franciscan Action Network (USA)

Imam Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Religions for Peace (UK)

Ms. Rose Marie Berger, senior leader, Sojourners (USA)

Prof. Jose Casanova, senior fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, Georgetown University (USA)

Ms. Sara Prandi, member of Stophthewarnow (Italy)

Ms. Maura Galati, member of Stophthewarnow (Italy)

Prof. Eli S. McCarthy, Georgetown University (USA)

Prof. Barbara Wien, American University (USA)

Mr. Alberto Capannini, member of Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII - Operazione Colomba (Italy)

Mr. Aleksander Temkin, cofounder of Europe, a Patient Association (POL)

Dr. Mateusz Piotrowski, President of Europe, a Patient Association (POL).

Source links:

Mayor Klitschko's appeal: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=673481810637538>

Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center: <https://babynyar.org/en/about>

Europe, a Patient Association: <https://www.europeapatient.com/>