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Dear sisters and brothers,
Dear friends and colleagues,
Dear partners in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries,

We cannot imagine your situation at the moment. And we lack words to express our feelings as we witness the immeasurable amount of suffering in these days. War is incredibly horrible and cruel, war leads to destruction and death – war contains everything which we wanted to overcome together in common service and in our partnership for life in dignity. War is a terrible attempt to cut connections and to divide humans, it is carried out to destroy close and longterm relations.

At the moment our means to change this situation are limited. But we would like to reassure you that we want to do for you whatever is possible. We want to support you and stand with you as much as we can. Please tell us what you need, what is happening, what we can do for you now – because situations and needs change quickly. We build on information from your side when we take decisions. We try to react as fast as we can and to be as flexible as possible. Our humanitarian branch Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has installed an emergency fund, and we receive donations in order to expand this fund . We are also closely connected to political and ecumenical processes of dialogue, we are engaged in building bridges between countries and groups and conflicting parties. We raise our voice together with churches and civil society organizations – and we speak out also for those who at the moment have no chance to raise their voices. We put as much resources as possible into disaster relief, and by doing so we want to express active solidarity with our partners in

Ukraine and with all refugees in the neighbouring countries, as well as with the refugees who come to Germany in these days.

We also want to stand in solidarity with our partners in Belarus and in Russia who now experience repressions, heavy restrictions and hostility. We admire all of you who give care, who work incredibly hard to support others in very dangerous situations, and all who risk their freedom and have to fear punishment because of their public protest against this war and their request for peace.

We share with you the great fear, the desperate cry for an end of this violence, the longing for life in peace and in freedom. We pray for you, we ask God to protect you wherever you are and to send his Spirit of Peace in all hearts, in all countries. We trust that one day this Spirit will be stronger than all evil plans of destruction. Therefore, nothing is in vain that is done to rescue lives, to give help and to speak out for peace.

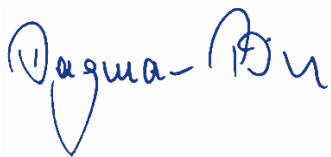
We encourage our partner organizations and churches in Eastern and in Central Europe to remain in open dialogue with all people of good will, to try to find creative ways for peace building, not to succumb to enemy thinking and distorted stereotypes of the others and to appreciate the role of so many people from both Russian and Ukrainian background to give witness for solidarity, peace and reconciliation in these extremely difficult circumstances.

We greet you with words of blessing from the Bible and commit your souls, bodies and spirits into the hands of God. May God protect you and all people you love, and may he help us all to find a way for peace! As we are in the season of Lent in these days that will lead us all the way to Good Friday and Easter, we would like to remind each other again that the power of violence and death has been overcome and will not last. May the God of life be with you wherever you are!

*I lift my eyes up to the mountains –
Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
The Maker of heaven and earth.*

*The Lord will keep you from harm –
He will watch over your life;
The Lord will watch over your coming and going
Both now and forevermore.
(From Psalm 121)*

Warmest regards



Reverend Dr. Dagmar Pruin
Präsidentin Brot für die Welt and
Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe