

Resolution of the Synod of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau on the war in Ukraine

striving for truth, justice, and peace

The Synod of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau looks upon the war in Ukraine with horror and great concern. We pray for the people who are experiencing such great suffering because of the war, and we pray for a swift end to the war. We pray for peace. And we call for doing everything politically possible to end the war and to strive for truth, justice, and peace.

The attack of the Russian army on Ukraine for which President Putin is responsible is a breach of international law, the central basis for peaceful coexistence in this world. The attacks on the civilian population and news of obvious war crimes demonstrate the brutality with which the war is being waged on the part of Russia. Russian security interests are no justification for this aggression.

Our thoughts and prayers are especially with the people of Ukraine who are experiencing horrific violence of war. They are rightly defending their lives, their country, and their freedom. We believe that it is legitimate to support them in their defense through economic sanctions against the aggressor and through arms deliveries. The goals must be a ceasefire and negotiations that allow peaceful coexistence.

At the same time, the aim must be the avoidance of further escalations. It is therefore imperative to carefully examine and weigh the possible consequences of decisions. The danger is very concrete that other countries will be drawn into the war and that military violence will escalate to a much more dangerous level. Already, this war threatens global food security, especially in Africa and Asia. Assistance is absolutely necessary here. We know that there are no easy solutions. Nonetheless the multiple dilemmas in which guilt and new dangers are inherent in every decision that is made do not absolve us from struggling to make the most ethically responsible decision.

Current developments and military options lead to a loss of focus on the issues of climate change and social injustice in our country and worldwide. The Letter to the Ephesians calls truth, justice and peace an "armor of God" in the fight against evil that destroys life (cf. Ephesians 6:13-17). This admonishes us not to lose sight of God's horizon for good and peaceful coexistence in the decisions that are now necessary. This also includes the freedom of conscience and faith. Soldiers who refuse to serve with weapons in this war need protection and asylum. We are convinced that the mere force of arms does not create real and sustainable peace. As a synod, we want to continue to promote peace ethics reflection and work in our church.

We are grateful for the multifold commitment in our congregations in prayers for peace and in the reception and support of refugees. We would like to further promote this commitment. We welcome the unbureaucratic and generous reception of refugees from Ukraine in most cases, but we also recognize that refugees are currently treated in a very unequal manner, depending on their country of origin. We urge coordination and networking between state

governments, municipal and civil society actors, the promotion of full-time structures to coordinate voluntary engagement, and the most consistent practice of responsible competent authorities. Assistance and support systems must apply the yardstick of justice in their practical work.

"War shall not be according to God's will" - this clear message of the 1st General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 has lost nothing of its validity. We therefore firmly reject all Christian justifications of the Russian aggression.

*Joint resolution proposal of the Church Board
and the Church Synodical Board of the Twelfth Church Synod*

*Unanimously adopted during the constituent session of the Thirteenth Church Synod on
20th May 2022*