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Суд

OPEN LETTER OF THE LEGAL COMMUNITY OF UKRAINE TO ALL BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF LAW AND LAWYERS OF ALL STATES, INCLUDING THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation commenced a full-scale war in Ukraine. Armed forces of the Russian Federation are attacking the entire territory of Ukraine, leaving destruction, death and suffering behind. Civilians, including children, are dying, civilian infrastructure facilities, among them hospitals and kindergartens, are being destroyed.

We, the lawyers of Ukraine, who represent the west, east, south and north of Ukraine, address the lawyers of the Russian Federation. We are unanimous in our opinion: Ukraine is an independent and sovereign state, territorial integrity of Ukraine is guaranteed by international law, and only we, the people of Ukraine, can made decisions on domestic and foreign policy of our state.

Every lawyer in the Russian Federation who keeps silent now, supports the war. Each of you who turns a blind eye to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, promotes acts of aggression and encourages the aggressive policy of the Kremlin. **International law prohibits military aggression and guarantees the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and every lawyer in the Russian Federation should know this.**

Your political and military leadership justifies their actions by Article 51 of Section VII of the UN Statute, which gives the right to individual and collective protection in the event of an armed attack on a member of an organization. However, you, the lawyers, know better than anyone else that only states have such a right, and so-called "Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples Republics" are not states but territories occupied by the Russian Federation.

The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Article 353) states: "1. Planning, preparing or commencement an aggressive war - shall be punished by deprivation of liberty for a term of seven to fifteen years. 2. Waging of an aggressive war - shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of ten to twenty years."

We, the lawyers of Ukraine – advocates, judges, prosecutors, notaries, both men and women – are fighting against the aggression of the Russian Federation with weapons in our hands.

We urge you, lawyers, to:

- **publicly express your opinion, protest against the military aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine.** Your President claims that the people of Russia support him. It is critically important to show now that this is not the case!
- **disseminate this letter among the legal community of the Russian Federation and publicly support it.** You are the elite of the Russian society, which determines what your country will be like tomorrow. The President of the Russian Federation cannot openly and grossly violate the norms of international law and not be condemned by lawyers who are obliged to protect the rule of law and human rights.

- support and **provide free legal aid to all persons detained during protests** in the Russian Federation against the war in Ukraine.

We, lawyers of Ukraine, also address foreign and international legal associations, organizations and educational institutions and personally every and each lawyer with an urge to stop any cooperation with lawyers and legal associations of the Russian Federation until the complete termination of the war in Ukraine!

We call on Ukrainian and Russian lawyers and legal associations to join this appeal. Together our voice is stronger! Now is the time to unite more than ever, both the lives of your citizens and the future of your country are at stake!