

## Concern at human rights violations in the context of the war in Ukraine and the escalation of the conflict

Peace Brigades International expresses its deepest concern about the serious violations of Human Rights that are occurring in the context of the war in Ukraine and the escalation of the conflict.

***"As an organization committed to peace, nonviolent conflict resolution and an end to militarization, we add our voice to those calling for an immediate end to this war."***

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 1,761 civilian casualties (636 killed, 1,125 injured) in Ukraine from February 24 (when the Russian aggression began) to March 13. The OHCHR has stated that it *"believes that the real figures are considerably higher"*.

### **The provision of military aid and the legitimization of a warmongering discourse are causes for extreme concern**

Despite the call of the UN Secretary Antonio Guterres for the "immediate cessation of hostilities and serious negotiations based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law", many countries have responded to the crisis by exporting weapons and military equipment to Ukraine, and promising to increase military spending. We are concerned that this initiative could perpetuate armed conflict and suffering for the civilian population worldwide. Likewise, we are concerned that under the slogan of "security", countries and armies that perpetrate serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity are recognized as "important allies" of NATO.

***"From PBI we call on all parties, in particular political leaders and the media, to take extreme care in their language during public speeches, and in particular, to explore all possible diplomatic channels for the construction of peace."***

### **In a scenario of international polarization, the stigmatization of pacifism is alarming**

We deplore that over 14,000 anti-war protesters have been arrested in Russia since the war began. We also hold concerns around the March 4th passing of a new Russian law making anti-war demonstrations and independent reporting on the war and army illegal, with sentences of up to 15 years in prison. We are also troubled by the punishments applied by both Russia and Ukraine to conscientious objectors and fear for the situation of human rights defenders both in Ukraine and in Russia.

***"PBI stands in solidarity with Ukrainian and Russian civil society initiatives providing mutual support and nonviolent alternatives in the midst of war, particularly women's organizations and movements."***

## **In a global scenario marked by the climate emergency, the desire to stop financing the Russian military by stopping Russian oil and gas exports to Europe must not result in more extractivism instead of climate action**

For example, the Canadian government has stated that it could increase its oil production by 200,000 barrels per day to offset Russian oil exports to Europe. At the same time, the Canadian company TC Energy continues to build the Coastal GasLink pipeline in the Wet'suwet'en territory without free, prior and informed consent. Notably, the steel for that pipeline came from Evraz PLC, whose largest shareholder is a Russian oligarch.

***"PBI call for binding legislation that requires companies to fully respect Human Rights throughout their supply chain and guarantee sustainable economic, social, and environmental investment."***

## **The dominant security discourse associated with the militarization of societies is a setback. Billions more spent on weapons will not make the world safer**

In 2020, the world military spending grew over 2.5% to almost \$2 trillion. Russia spent \$61.7 billion, while Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Canada spent a combined \$246.6 billion. The United States spent \$778.0 billion, bringing NATO spending to more than \$1 trillion in 2020.

Since the war has initiated, countries including Spain, Germany, France and Canada have all stated they will increase their military spending. Spain currently spends 1.4% of its GDP on the military; its government now says it will increase that to 2%. Canada intends to go from 1.39% of its GDP spent on the military to "exceeding the two per cent level" according to the Minister of Defence – likely an increase of \$20 billion per year.

***"At PBI, we are committed to a concept of security linked to protecting human rights and respecting life, ecosystems and common goods. The intensification of the conflict in this war, and all wars occurring across the globe, calls for the urgent need to strengthen civil and development cooperation instruments aimed at conflict management and the promotion of an effective and lasting peace."***