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## **Ukraine: Nordic bishops call on Putin to stop unjust war. Message also to the people of Russia**

“This war touches us deeply” because “some of our Nordic countries share a border with Russia and we have strong historical ties with Ukraine”. This is an excerpt from a statement on the “war against Ukraine” written by the bishops of the Bishops’ Conference of the Nordic Countries who have concluded their plenary assembly in Tromsø today. In the statement, the bishops express their “deep communion with the Ukrainian people” and their “outrage at the war of aggression by which the Russian Federation is showing contempt for Ukraine’s sovereignty and is causing unspeakable suffering to millions of people”. They condemn the attack on Mariupol hospital, “geographically distant from any military target”, which is a “terrible symbol” of this war. The bishops make an appeal to the Russian President – “Stop this unjust war!” – and to the Russian people: “Do not allow this iniquity to be perpetrated in your name”. The bishops also express their sadness for “recent statements from certain circles of the Russian Church”, which “present this war of flagrant aggression as a combat for Christian values. Speaking in these terms means to engage in mere rhetoric, to hold moral values hostage to a political agenda”. The bishops pray not only for all those who are suffering because of the war, but also that “the hearts of the powerful may be open to the prompting of the Prince of Peace”, that this time of Lent may be a time for conversion for ourselves, for our Churches, for our countries, and for “our whole beloved Europe, so that this fratricidal war does not take on more terrifying dimensions”.

Valentina Bombelli