



SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE
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Statement of His Eminence Card. Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State - High-level Summit on peace for Ukraine, Switzerland (15-16 June 2024)

From 15 to 16 June 2024, the Holy See, accepting the joint invitation from the President of the Swiss Federation, Viola Amherd, and the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, participated as an Observer in the High-Level Summit for Peace in Ukraine, held in Switzerland, represented by Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, accompanied by the apostolic nuncio in Switzerland, Archbishop Martin Krebs, and Msgr. Paul Butnaru, official of the Section for Relations with States and International Organizations of the Secretariat of State.

In line with the very nature of the Holy See and its quality as Observer, and following the praxis of not signing joint statements, the Holy See Delegation abstained from signing the final Statement, although it expressed support for the conclusions of the Summit, as stated in the address delivered by Cardinal Parolin during the final plenary Session.

The Holy See welcomes the convening of this High-level Summit on peace for Ukraine, co-hosted by Switzerland and Ukraine. It is an event of global importance, carefully prepared by Ukraine, which, while making enormous efforts to defend itself from aggression, has also worked continuously on the diplomatic front, eager to achieve a just and lasting peace.

In the face of war and its tragic consequences, it is important never to give up, but to continue to seek ways to end the conflict with good intentions, trust and creativity. This is the message Pope Francis conveys, particularly to the rulers of nations, with his ongoing appeals for peace in Ukraine. It is important to reiterate that the only means capable of achieving true, stable and just peace is dialogue between all the parties involved. The Holy See expresses its hope that the diplomatic effort currently being promoted by Ukraine and supported by so many countries will be improved, in order to achieve the results that the victims deserve and that the entire world is hoping for.

In accordance with its nature, the Holy See is participating as an Observer, paying particular attention to the respect for international law and humanitarian issues. With regard to the first aspect, it wishes to reaffirm the

validity of the fundamental principle of respect for the sovereignty of each country and for the integrity of its territory.

The Holy See expresses great deal concern for the tragic humanitarian consequences and is especially committed to facilitating the repatriation of children and encouraging the release of prisoners, especially seriously wounded soldiers and civilians.

The reunification of minors with their families or legal guardians must be a paramount concern for all parties, and any exploitation of their situation is unacceptable. It is therefore imperative that every available channel is strengthened to facilitate this process. In addition, the Holy See participates as an observer in the work of the International Coalition for the repatriation of Ukrainian children from Russia. Furthermore, it maintains direct contact with both the Ukrainian and Russian authorities with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the ad hoc mechanism created following the visit of Cardinal Matteo Zuppi to Kyiv and Moscow, with a view to resolving concrete cases.

With regard to prisoners, both civilian and military, there is a great of concern over the periodic reports of non-compliance with the Geneva Conventions. In particular about the Fourth Convention, which most directly concerns civilians, and the difficulty of creating, together with the International Red Cross Committee, a Joint Medical Commission that could assess the situation of prisoners of war in need of urgent medical care. Despite all the challenges, the Holy See remains committed to maintaining regular communication with the Ukrainian and Russian authorities, and remains prepared to assist in the implementation of potential mediation initiatives that are acceptable to all parties and benefit those who have been affected. At the same time, the Holy See encourages countries and other members of the international community to explore ways of providing assistance and facilitating mediation, whether of a humanitarian or political nature. We trust that by supporting these efforts, we can help to find consensus and ensure the timely implementation of these projects.

On behalf of Pope Francis, I wish to confirm his personal closeness to the tormented Ukrainian people and his unwavering commitment to peace.
