



April 8th, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson,

We are thankful for your leadership in this critical moment in America and pray for you as you face complex and difficult challenges. We believe that God has put you in this position “for such a time as this.”

As you consider efforts to support Ukraine, we humbly ask that you consider the plight of Christians. The Russian government’s decision to invade Ukraine and to target Baptists and other evangelical Christians in Ukraine has been a tragic hallmark of the war.

Despite Russian efforts to paint Ukraine as intolerant of Christians, it is the Russian government that has aggressively harmed peaceful law abiding faithful Christians in the occupied areas of Ukraine. This includes, but is not limited to, threats, torture, and the removal of pastors from their positions. Russian soldiers have even gone after retired Baptist pastors who they believe are part of the “West” and not sufficiently pro Russia.

The Russian army has destroyed hundreds of Baptist churches where evangelical Christians once exercised their faith freely in Ukraine. One story involves a youth pastor, Mark Sergeev, who was a worship pastor in Melitopol. When the Russians took control in February of 2022, his church was destroyed and he and his fellow members were interrogated and tortured. As of this moment there is not a single Baptist church left in Melitopol.

Baptist organizations have been the largest contributors to relief in Ukraine since Russia’s illegal and unprovoked war against Ukraine. The Southern Baptist Convention’s Send Relief ministry has poured millions of dollars into helping Ukrainian refugees in the surrounding countries and continues to assist Baptists in Ukraine.

We desire peace. But more than that, we desire a peace that is based on the principles of justice. Our God is both perfectly just and the author of perfect peace.

We appreciate your leadership, are praying for your wisdom and courage as you consider support for Ukraine.

Sincerely,

Daniel Darling,  
Director, Land Center for Cultural Engagement, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Dr. Yaroslav Pyzh,  
President of Ukrainian Baptist Theological Seminary

Dr. Valerii Antoniu  
President of The Baptist Union of Ukraine

Dr. Richard Land,  
Former President, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission,  
Former Commissioner, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

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