

LETTER TO THE G20 SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

13 NOVEMBER 2022

Dear G20 Summit Participants,

***Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and World Peace***

We are a group of former international civil servants (UN system staff), concerned at the inability of the international community to rapidly address and resolve the extremely serious threat to regional and world peace posed by Russia's aggression vis-à-vis Ukraine. Based on our worldwide UN experience we would like to send the following appeal to all of you, in view of the upcoming G20 summit.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 and what has followed since, is taking us in the opposite direction of the spirit and letter of the UN Charter, and from the fundamental values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which all UN member states have pledged commitment. We therefore suggest that G20 members do their utmost to correct this breach by initiating immediate common actions to that end.

A super-majority (140+) of the UN General Assembly have repeatedly condemned the military aggression against Ukraine as a direct violation of the UN Charter. Furthermore, the Human Rights Council has launched an independent investigation that so far roundly documents Russia's egregious war crimes, and on March 16, 2022, the International Court of Justice ordered Russia to "immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced". Thus, it becomes incumbent on *all* Member States to urgently correct this deviation from international law, by securing an immediate ceasefire to allow Russia's immediate peaceful and full withdrawal from Ukraine and following which there should be recourse to the instruments for the peaceful settlement of disputes foreseen by Chapter VI of the UN Charter.

Only strict adherence to the UN Charter, the rule of law and human rights will bring about the transformational change required to address the other serious systemic challenges, such as our global climate crisis and loss of biodiversity, needed for our first truly global civilisation to survive. The UN's 2030 Global Agenda recognizes the urgent need to build and maintain peaceful and inclusive societies – societies that provide equal justice based on respect for human rights (including the right to development), effective rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions. The invasion of the sovereign country of Ukraine is totally at odds with this Agenda and all its parts, as well as with what the United Nations and all other multilateral cooperation frameworks, international laws and treaties, are meant to uphold.

The G20 Summit is occurring at a crucial moment and offers an unprecedented opportunity for true global leadership, that would turn around the current catastrophic course of events. Russia may not be the first prominent member of the international community to violate the UN Charter, but past errors by others are never rectified by new, escalating transgressions. Restoring global stability requires immediate return to the framework of the UN Charter and adherence by countries big and small to all international legal instruments, including the

International Criminal Court. Tackling impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity requires strengthening that world court to avoid double standards and geostrategic exceptionalism. The G20 could help by ensuring full ratification of the Rome Statute and advancing those essential international conventions that still lack universal support.

The world entered a period of de-colonisation after World War II. The dissolution of the Soviet Union, born of the Russian Empire and its later revolution, and its successor transitions to post-Communist nations, is certainly not a justification for Russia or any other country to return to the hegemonic imperialism of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

We understand that the Russian Government is participating in this G20 summit. Our hope is that the other G20 members will succeed in making Russia's delegation understand that Russia can reinstate itself as a worthy member of the international community only through *immediate corrective measures under international law*, which the G20 and the UN will help ensure they occur in a safe and effective manner. The world needs Russia to be once again thoroughly committed to the UN Charter. But first, there must be an immediate ceasefire and complete withdrawal of all Russian forces from Ukraine, along with the UN-supported safe and voluntary return of all Ukrainian IDPs and refugees to their home communities.

Stifling of civil society deprives people of their rightful freedom of expression, of debate, of coherence, including the human right to peaceful protest. Ironically, during the worst period of the Covid pandemic, various networks of civic society with enlightened ideals and social innovators have gone online with expanding audiences around the world. Today they represent a well-spring of ideas and practical wisdom to also nurture good governance, public service, accountable leadership and participatory democracy, including in a reforming Russia.

Civic participation is indispensable for all to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and necessary for a global normalising of international relationships with Russia, in tandem with its return to full compliance with the UN Charter, Human Rights, and all its other international obligations. The G20/C20 should therefore also focus attention on conflict resolution processes that end war, empower women, and enable civic engagement. Getting Russian civil society to converge on peaceful alternatives and a different narrative than warmongering is the key to de-concentrating political power and incubating real participatory reform. It may also be the key to preserving world peace.

We appeal to you to make the principles of the UN Charter the guiding principles of your actions, *overriding all other interests and as a basis for solving grievances and conflicts as well as preventing them* in order to give humanity our best opportunity for a liveable future.

Cognizant of the shortcomings of the current global governance system we appeal to the G20 members to ask the UN Secretary-General to prepare a General Conference of all UN members to take stock of peace and security in the world and to consider the means by which such global peace could be best preserved. As the Russian invasion of Ukraine needs the quick resolution noted, improved global governance is long overdue.

Yours sincerely,

[ List of signatories as of 13 November 2022 follows – updated list available online at <https://www.foggs.org/letter-to-the-g-20-summit-participants-by-former-un-system-staff-nov-2022> ]

NAME			UN SYSTEM ORGANIZATION(S) WORKED FOR	HIGHEST POSITION TITLE OR LEVEL
FAMILY	FIRST	MIDDLE		
ASKWITH	Michael		UNDP, UN Secretariat	UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative Representative, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA)
BEIGBEDER	Yves	Bayard	WHO	Assistant Chief of Personnel
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BHALLA	Karunesh		UNDP	Director, Ethics Office
BRUDON	Pascale		WHO	WHO Representative in Vietnam
BURLEY	John		UNDP, UN Secretariat, UNCTAD	Director
CHHIBBER	Ajay		UNDP	Assistant Secretary-General
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DE LA FUENTE	Brenda	R	UN Secretariat	Meetings Services Assistant
DICK	Alain	E R	UN HEADQUARTER NY, UNOG	Chief of Staff
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GARDNER	Douglas		UNDP	UN Resident Coordinator in Ukraine
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GRAFFIGNA	Carlotta	Maria	WIPO	D2
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GULUMA	Esther	L	UNICEF	Regional Director (D2), West and Central Africa
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KENT	Randolph	Charles	UN Department for Humanitarian Affairs	UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia
KOEHLER	Gabriele		UNESCAP, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNICEF	P5
KOLLIES	Ute		OCHA	D1
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PHAM	Minh	Hoang	UNDP	UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

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