

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Paris, June 12<sup>th</sup> 2022**

Gathered in Paris for the annual meeting of the European branches of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), representatives from Austria, England, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Wales express their profound concern for the increasing of armament and military expenditures in response to the ongoing war fare.

History teaches that militaristic response leads to the increase of the armed conflict and that war is a disaster for humanity and for the entire planet. This attitude is dangerous and creates the illusionary assumption to maintain peace using the violence of weapons.

The war in Ukraine demonstrates once more that violence creates more violence and we need an efficient alternative way to transform conflict and ensure lasting peace. Active nonviolence is the alternative which can ensure a future for our community. We acknowledge the several nonviolent efforts by people in Ukraine as well as by those peacefully protesting against war in Russia and being jailed.

IFOR started in 1914 with an explicit commitment to refuse to engage in WWI. As members of IFOR we invite to learn from the past and support nonviolent resistance, dialogue, peace negotiations, civilian intervention, reconciliation process in order to de-escalate the violent conflict.

We stand in solidarity with those who refuse to engage in the war in Ukraine and in all other wars, and with those who object and look for protection in other countries.

We call on all European countries to work for peace, through nonviolence and not to search for peace through arms. We urge the European Union to genuinely pursue peace in practice and deeds. We need peace alliance not military alliance.

We extend our warm invitation as well to Church leaders and religious groups to expressively join efforts in supporting peace and refusing war.

We call on our governments to urgently engage in peace efforts and refrain from supporting the military system and the war through military expenditures, weapons production and trade.

In particular, one week ahead of the historical Conference which will take place in Vienna concerning the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), we urge all remaining European countries to sign the UN Treaty, participate into the Vienna Conference at least as observer members and commit to free the world from this pending threaten to life on earth.