

1 March 2022

Statement

From the desk of the General Secretary, Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana

## **SACC SUPPORTS CALL FOR POPE FRANCIS TO MEDIATE WITH RUSSIA AND UKRAINE**

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) heartily supports the prospect of Pope Francis providing mediation for lasting peace and security between Russia and Ukraine. As the talks between the two countries ended with no breakthroughs except the good intention to keep talking, our churches in South Africa stand in full support and encouragement for the divinely inspired initiative of His Holiness to offer to mediate on an urgent basis, a peace settlement that will guarantee lasting peace between Moscow and Kyiv.

The SACC also echoes the Pope's call for Christians to observe a fast tomorrow, Ash Wednesday, and take time praying for peace and the success of the efforts for an unconditional ceasefire, earnest negotiations for guarantees of lasting peace and security for both Ukraine and Russia, for the wellbeing and prosperity of God's people in both countries.

In this regard the SACC President, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, has written to Pope Francis to express the support and encouragement of the SACC and its member churches, which include the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa.

Announcing the [SACC letter](#), SACC General Secretary Bishop Malusi Mpumlwana said, "The SACC was able to contribute in a small way to the creation of a relatively peaceful and democratic South Africa through the solidarity of the global church; it is our duty to care for the plight of others anywhere in the world. We appreciate the historical complexities in the relationship between Ukraine and Russia, Russia and the rest of Europe; but none of these could not be satisfactorily addressed in a genuine engagement as would be facilitated by Pope Francis, who has made a global name for himself as a fair and compassionate leader of faith."

Added Mpumlwana, "Over the weekend we wrote to the representative as ambassador of the Pope in South Africa, Archbishop Peter Wells, expressing the SACC's appeal for the Vatican to lead a mediation mission. Our request was not necessary after all, as the Vatican was already in preparation for such a mission. Hence Archbishop Makgoba's letter is now to support and encourage the Pope with a pledge of a prayerful 'cloud of witnesses' from the South African churches, especially on Ash Wednesday tomorrow."

—ENDS—

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### About SACC

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) is an ecumenical association of affiliated Christian Churches, and blocks of churches such as The Evangelical Alliance and the Council of African Independent Churches, and the International Federation of Christian Churches, with a mandate to lead common Christian action that works for moral witness in South Africa. SACC does not exist for the propagation and the advancement of its doctrinal position, but is the place where our diverse interpretations of our faith come together in action for **social justice**. It therefore seeks to achieve a visible, just socio-economic and ecological impact, enabled through engaged churches-in-community for a reconciled South Africa and our sub-continent.

