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We Condemn the Russian Aggression in Ukraine and Express our Solidarity with the People of Ukraine

Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University

We could not believe our ears and were left speechless by the clear infringement of sovereignty and territorial aggression by armed forces, that one cannot envision occurring today in the 21st century. What is more, this act of aggression has been committed by a permanent member of the UN Security Council, who is responsible for ensuring the peace and security of the world under the Charter of the UN.

President Putin has declared the “protection of Russia’s citizens” and “local requests for intervention” as reasons for the invasion. While we often heard these expressions in the early 20th century before war was made illegal, it is surprising to hear them used to justify this aggression, which is a clear violation of current international law. It appears that the real reason for this invasion is to prevent the expansion of NATO to Ukraine. While we do not want to see increased military tension due to Ukraine’s inclusion into NATO, the tactics utilized by President Putin, to even hint at the use of nuclear weapons, for whatever reason, is outrageous behavior that shows no regard for international law.

The aggression which is currently taking place in Ukraine, which clearly meets the definition of aggression adopted by the UN General Assembly, is a gross violation of the human rights of the Ukrainian people and a barbaric act that fundamentally denies human security. It must be strongly deplored.

Many anti-war demonstrations have been observed in many parts of the world, including in Russia itself. Although demonstrations in Russia seem to be being crushed immediately, it leaves us with a small glimmer of hope to see that these voices, calling for peace, are also present in Russia. Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University, which rejects war and seeks to demonstrate through its exhibitions that peace can be achieved through the power of civil society, unequivocally denounces the aggression of Russia, and in solidarity with those standing up to restore peace, strongly calls for the prompt withdrawal of Russian military forces from Ukrainian soil, and a return to the rule of law including the punishment of those responsible for the war and the initiation of a reparation process.