

# **BWA condemns invasion of Ukraine and coup in Myanmar**

July 16, 2022

The Baptist World Alliance general council condemned the “unprovoked and unjustified” Russian invasion of Ukraine and the military coup in Myanmar that has led to “a campaign of terror and violence.”

At its annual gathering in Birmingham, Ala., the BWA general council adopted resolutions calling for “peace with justice” in Ukraine and “the establishment of a true democracy that respects the rights of religious and ethnic minorities” in Myanmar.

## **Calling for ‘peace with justice’ in Ukraine**



Bethany Baptist Church in Mariupol, known in peacetime for its active social and evangelical

ministry, now bears the scars of bombardment. Though charred, the cross remains. (From BWA Facebook Page)

The resolution on Ukraine states the BWA general council is “horrified by the huge loss of life, especially the targeting of civilians, and the destruction of property and infrastructure—including the wanton destruction of undefended houses of worship—that has resulted from indiscriminate Russian attacks on Ukraine’s cities, towns and countryside.”

It expresses grief for soldiers—both Ukrainian and Russian—who have been killed or injured, and it laments the more than 14 million people who have been displaced forcibly from their homes.

The resolution voices concern about the “ongoing restrictions on freedom of religion or belief occurring in Russian-held territories of Ukraine,” and it “rejects the nationalist ideology in Russia that has led to its aggressive action in Ukraine and its threats to other neighboring states.”

At the same time, it commends those religious leaders and others in Russian “who have condemned their country’s war in Ukraine as contrary to the values of the gospel.”

It calls on the European Union, G7 and other intergovernmental entities “to redouble their efforts to support Ukraine” and voices support for “a peaceful resolution to this war.”

However, it insists “it must be a peace with justice and that this must include the restoration of all pre-2014 Ukrainian territory and reparations made for war damage.”

The resolution states the BWA general council “prays that all who are concerned about truth today will be given the grace to be courageous in

standing up for what is right and condemning the suffering and injustice caused by this war and the expansionist nationalist ideology that gave rise to it.”

The resolution commends the Ukrainian Baptist Union and other Christian groups in neighboring countries “for their generous hospitality, humanitarian aid and spiritual help for refugees, supported by the European Baptist Federation, the Baptist World Alliance Forum for Aid and Development, and the generosity of the global Baptist family.”

Finally, the resolution “assures the leadership, pastors and churches of the Baptist union in Ukraine of the continuing solidarity, support in prayer, practical help, and giving of the global Baptist family in all that they are dealing with in this time of war.”

“With them, the global Baptist family, trusting in God’s promises, looks to a time when ‘war will be no more’ and true peace and reconciliation between nations can prevail,” the resolution states.

## **Condemning the military coup in Myanmar**



Pastor Cung Biak Hum was shot dead in the Chin state of Myanmar.  
(Facebook Photo / Asia Pacific

Baptists)

The resolution on Myanmar condemns the Burmese military—the Tatmadaw—and the State Administration Council junta for dismantling civil and religious freedoms after the February 2021 coup.

“Since the coup, the military has terrorized communities in Kachin, Karen, Kayah State, Chin State and Sagaing Region by burning villages, destroying churches, and detaining pastors and religious leaders,” the resolution states.

The resolution offers support for “the November 2021 call of the United Nations Security Council for an immediate end to the violence” and prayers for “Baptists and other Christians ministering in persecuted communities and among displaced persons.”

## **The BWA general council also:**

- Presented the Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award to global peace activist and justice advocate Daniel L. Buttry, global consultant with International Ministries of the American Baptist Churches.
- Accepted the application of membership from the Missionary Baptist Conference, USA.
- Elected Samuel C. Tolbert, president of the National Baptist Convention of America, as a vice president.
- Inducted Emmanuel McCall, who worked for the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board and served as national moderator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, to the General Secretary’s Leadership Council.
- Approved a change to the bylaws and considered for approval next year changes to the constitution that would alter language

regarding membership in BWA and ministry partnership with BWA.