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Press release

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Stop War Against Ukraine

Neighboring countries should receive refugees from Ukraine

The war between Russia and Ukraine has already begun. Many people had thought that this conflict was only abstract tension; but unfortunately two weeks ago Russia invaded Ukraine. This attack has already killed many people, destroyed infrastructure in Ukraine, and forced more than two million to flee the country.

We are very concerned that many civilians and innocent people will suffer heavy consequences from this illegal and violent act; many people will lose their lives, their property, and all their rights and freedoms. It would be better for conflicts to be resolved through peaceful communication, with respect for each nation's sovereignty.

Nearly 50 years ago, the people of Timor-Leste were invaded by Indonesia, which occupied our territory for 24 years. This illegal invasion and occupation killed nearly 200,000 Timorese people, destroyed the people's wealth, and forced inhuman treatment against many civilians. Finally, the people of Timor-Leste won their independence and forced the invader out of this country.

Until today, Indonesia, as well as other countries and companies which benefited from this invasion and occupation, have not been held to a credible level of accountability; they have also failed to fulfil the obligations to pay reparations for the damage they did during the war.

La'o Hamutuk appreciates the declaration from Timor-Leste's Permanent Mission to the United Nations during the eleventh extraordinary session of the UN General Assembly. This declaration appeals to every nation to respect international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the sovereign integrity of every nation.

Throughout the world, many people are trying hard to achieve peace. The UN is strongly invested in peace-making and security efforts, but in many places war continues, and militarism and dictatorships undercut human rights and freedoms. In Yemen, Western Sahara, Palestine, Myanmar, West Papua and elsewhere, people are dying by the thousands, and human rights are routinely violated.

Timor-Leste is one nation which has been invaded by a much larger neighbor. Our scars have not yet healed; we have not forgotten the violations of our fundamental rights. Therefore, we suggest to the UN and powerful nations to help the Ukrainian people – while not increasing the intensity of the war.

We demand that Russia immediately withdraw from the territory of Ukraine to end the serious suffering of the civilian population, who have done nothing wrong.

We demand that NATO and Western powers put pressure on Russia without enlarging the war, which would create even more serious impacts on humanity and global security.

We also ask neighboring countries to receive refugees from Ukraine, to reduce their heavy suffering from this military violence.

Thank you.