



Buenos Aires, September 2, 2023

**STATEMENT BY THE UKRAINIAN CENTRAL REPRESENTATION IN THE ARGENTINEAN
REPUBLIC REGARDING POPE FRANCIS REMARKS TO YOUTH IN SAINT PETERSBURG**

The Ukrainian Central Representation in the Argentinean Republic deeply regrets the unfortunate statements made by Pope Francis regarding Great Russia in the context of the 10th All-Russian Catholic Youth Assembly in St. Petersburg, Russia.

His assertion was worsened by the remarks that these young people should be proud of the cultural legacy of that empire, which precisely, in the city of Saint Petersburg, was built upon the bones and ruins of enslaved Ukrainian Cossacks by Tsars Peter I and Catherine II and displayed one of its most cruel phases.

It is with deep surprise and pain that the Argentines of Ukrainian descent who inhabit this soil hear these words that endorse the genocide currently being perpetrated by Vladimir Putin, who declared himself a profound admirer of that Empire, pronounced by an Argentine currently in the Vatican, a profound defender of the human rights of all, except Ukrainians.

We have painfully witnessed his hesitant attitude in never condemning Russia for its armed aggression against peaceful people who did nothing to deserve it, nor have we heard him condemn Vladimir Putin and point him by name, who denied the very existence of the country and the right of Ukrainians to use their language and overwhelmingly choose the religion that the Roman Pope represents as the spiritual leader.

Nor did he condemn a bloody war criminal who destroyed entire civilian towns, committed attacks against humanity, raped women, and kidnapped thousands of children in complicity with the silence of a part of the world that does not believe in democracy or human rights. Where are the human rights of the victims?

What is the Great Culture that His Holiness claims to defend? Is it the same one that persecuted the Catholic Church in Ukraine in Soviet times? which starved to death approximately 7,000,000 Ukrainians with artificial starvation at the Holodomor, and invaded the eastern part of Ukraine with Russian citizens and currently caused thousands of deaths and millions of refugees throughout Europe.'

Is it the same one that the Russian Today propaganda advocates in the Argentine Republic, showing Swan Lake while sending supersonic missiles to attack and devastate entire cities in Ukraine, destroying hospitals and schools?

For the Argentinean-Ukrainian Christians, hearing these statements has been a great disappointment, we would have liked him to speak of the pain of an ancient people, of immense courage, of great resilience of those attacked in this war, of the Ukrainians and not exalt the values

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of the cowardly aggressor, a serial violator of international treaties that the Church knows is an essential pillar of the rule of law that regulates coexistence between peoples and states.

We are on time your Holiness, to recognize the aggressor and the attacked, the perpetrator and the thousands of victims of this unjust and unwanted by the Ukrainian people war.

We hope that future gestures will be oriented towards the goal of ending this war, and that future political statements will be more just and serve to ease the suffering of the victims and not to raise the spirits of the savage aggressors.

For the Ukrainian Central Representation in the Argentinean Republic

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