



**49th Session of the Human Rights Council (28 February – 1 April 2022, Geneva)
Item 10: Interactive Dialogue on HC oral report on Ukraine
30 March 2022**

Joint Oral Statement delivered by Caritas Internationalis

Mr. President,

Caritas and the co-signing NGOs thank the High Commissioner for her update on the dramatic conflict unfolding in Ukraine and its devastating impact on the human rights of millions of people. We are gravely concerned by the ever-growing threat to the lives of women, children, the elderly and all those vulnerable people trapped in active conflict zones. International humanitarian law and human rights law must be respected and protection of civilians, civilian infrastructures, as well as humanitarian aid workers guaranteed. Humanitarian corridors must be effectively implemented to guarantee safe voluntary evacuation of vulnerable people, but most urgently, we call for a cessation of hostilities and return to dialogue for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

As faith-based and humanitarian organisations with a grassroots presence and despite the security challenges, we continue to provide critical life saving assistance across the country. Hence, it is of utmost importance that unhindered safe access for delivery of principled humanitarian aid is guaranteed.

Mr. President,

We also are gravely concerned for the safety of women and children displaced in Ukraine and fleeing to seek refuge elsewhere, especially unaccompanied minors, who are at great risk of sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons. Through our local partners we have mobilized already to monitor the situation and protect vulnerable people.¹ We urge transit and destination countries to put in place effective prevention and protection systems, including at all border crossings, to prevent and reduce risks of trafficking and exploitation.

Thank you Mr. President

¹ <https://www.coatnet.org/>