

Russian patriarch responds to WCC general secretary's plea for peace

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [April 6, 2022](#) issue



Patriarch Kirill. (Photo by Alexei Nikolsky, the Presidential Press and Information Office used via Creative Commons License)

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has responded to a plea from Ioan Sauca, acting general secretary for the World Council of Churches, that he use his influence to stop the war in Ukraine.

In a letter dated March 10, Kirill, who is known to have a close relationship with Russian president Vladimir Putin, praised Sauca for being a “faithful steward of the Church of Christ and tireless worker in the field of education and formation of younger generations.”

Kirill then went on to blame the current violence on the relationship between the West and Russia.

“The political forces which make it their aim to contain Russia were not going to fight against it themselves. They were planning to use other means, having tried to

make the brotherly peoples—Russians and Ukrainians—enemies,” he wrote. “They spared no effort, no funds to flood Ukraine with weapons and warfare instructors. Yet, the most terrible thing is not the weapons, but the attempt to ‘re-educate,’ to mentally remake Ukrainians and Russians living in Ukraine into enemies of Russia.”

Kirill also called the current economic sanctions against Russia “Russophobic” and a “blatantly obvious” attempt to bring suffering specifically to the Russian people as opposed to Russian political and military leaders.

He also seemed to indicate that in asking for peace, Sauca was betraying the WCC’s commitment to remain an unbiased fellowship of churches.

“I pray unceasingly that by His power the Lord help establish the lasting and justice-based peace as soon as possible,” Kirill wrote. “I express my hope that even in these trying times, as has been the case throughout its history, the World Council of Churches will be able to remain a platform for unbiased dialogue, free from political preferences and one-sided approach.”

The Russian Orthodox Church has been a member of the WCC since 1961. Sauca’s plea for peace is one of several letters faith leaders around the world have sent to Kirill urging him to help end the violence in Ukraine.