



Gdańsk, 9 March 2022

Przewodniczący Komisji Krajowej  
**Piotr Duda**

**Sharan Burrow**  
**General Secretary**  
ITUC  
Brussels

Sharan,

We are observers to a horrifying war. A war in which the most vulnerable are dying – children, women, the elderly and the sick. Our friends from KVPU, who asked us to be their voice on the international forum, constantly inform us about the omnipresent suffering in Ukraine, fear and uncertainty of what will happen next. All rules of war are being violated.

The Western world has given a clear signal that this will not be tolerated. Political and economic sanctions have been imposed on Russia. Business has also made it clear who should be condemned. Numerous circles have immediately decided to exclude Russian members from their ranks and are isolating them in their activities. Our societies expect this and support these actions knowing that they come with inconveniences. This time they are not sweeping the problem under the carpet and waiting for the smoke to clear in order to business as usual and share positions.

In disbelief and with great regret I see that this is not the case for the trade union world. These actions are not taken by those who consider peace to be one of their fundamental principles, those who reject war and defend the weakest. This hurts all the more as one of the member organizations, FNPR, has openly supported this war, while the Ukrainian members of the ITUC are experiencing a war hell.

I had hoped, and I was not alone in my hopes, that the discussion at the ITUC General Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March would make it possible to take the first steps to purge our group of people who violate our principles and compromise on our values. I was wrong. Not for the first time. The topic of war was disregarded and ignored by you even though it is hard to imagine anything more urgent. Moreover, during the discussion, the floor was given to a representative of the oppressor's country and not a representative of the KVPU. The participants were not spared Russian war propaganda, but they could not listen to all the testimonies of what is happening in Ukraine. There was also no time for any debate on the subject.

I spoke with Mikhail Volynets and he feels betrayed by you and by the global trade union movement. I share his feelings as the leader of NSZZ "Solidarność" – a union that successfully fought for peace and freedom, not only for Poland, but for all of Central and Eastern Europe. The independence from Russia, which we gained then, has been undermined again and I, just like the entire free world, cannot stand by and watch.

The General Council of ITUC is to be held in late March/early April. Is this some kind of grim joke? What message are we sending to everyone observing the union movement? What is the reason for your indolence? Where is your sensitivity to human suffering and harm so visible during other conflicts? These and other questions come to mind and it is difficult to find any reasonable answer. We have come to the edge. Russia will not stop until it is cut off from every possible sphere where decisions are made and which it can influence. Any signal that its policies are not acceptable is important. There is no room for long-term reflection and calculation. The time for action is NOW.

In view of the above, I demand the immediate initiation of the procedure leading to the exclusion of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia from the International Trade Union Confederation. Any decision other than this will put the union movement on the same side as the perpetrators. This cannot be allowed to happen.

Let us give a testimony of solidarity to Ukraine and to the world!

Yours faithfully,  
