



CANADIAN HELLENIC CONGRESS
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΚΑΝΑΔΙΚΟ ΚΟΓΚΡΕΣΟ
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For immediate release

**CHC STATEMENT ON RUSSIA'S VIOLATION
OF UKRAINIAN SOVEREIGNTY**

Montreal, February 23, 2022--- Russian President Vladimir Putin's official recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk Republics – both located in the historical Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine – as independent states, is a blatant breach of Ukrainian territory and a gross violation of the UN Charter and international treaties. The act of “recognition” of these regions is a further aggressive posture by the Putin regime against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine, as it acts as a pretext to militarily invade Ukraine. This creates one of the most dangerous situations for security in a generation, not only for the people of both countries, but for the rest of the world as well. This recognition only serves to exacerbate the tensions between the two countries, the East and West spheres, and does not assist in peacefully resolving the concerns of both Ukraine and Russia.

The Canadian Hellenic Canadian (CHC) calls upon the Putin regime to disengage, to withdraw its “peacekeeping forces” in the territories and to return to the diplomatic table to resolve the ongoing concerns. As well, the CHC urges Canada, the EU and the UN to pursue diplomacy while – at the same time – imposing and implementing intensified economic and financial measures against the Russian leadership, as means of deterring further aggressive, expansionist and military behaviour in Ukraine. Moreover, given Russia's offensive military strength, Canada and its allies should supply Ukraine with the materials and resources necessary to strengthen its ability to defend itself, in the event of failed diplomatic efforts.

Furthermore, the CHC calls upon all parties in this conflict to respect their international obligations – including, but not limited to the 2014 Minsk Agreement – in an effort to safeguard the rights of all minorities, to eliminate the rising hostilities and, to address the concerns of the Russian-speaking population in the Donbas region, as well as, the Greek community that has lived in the region long before the arrival of the descendants of both the Ukrainians and the Russians.

Finally, the CHC believes the Putin regime's behaviour towards Ukraine should be a wake-up call for the West that autocratic or dictatorial regimes – who do not respect the rule of law, nor international treaties – cannot be treated with “kid gloves”. A case in point: in the past, Canada and its allies have tolerated such behaviours, treating events like the invasion of Cyprus – selectively – and taking little or no action to curtail the aggressor's military attacks. For close to 48 years, Cyprus has remained divided and occupied by Turkey, yet the West has tolerated this occupation and has not imposed severe sanctions on Turkey despite its violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a democratic and independent Cyprus. The West's selective treatment of gross violations of national sovereignty of countries like Cyprus has given rise to the Putin and other regimes that – without impunity and through brute force – impose their will on an independent country like Ukraine. The CHC is hopeful that the Ukrainian situation will be a lesson for the West, putting an end to the selective treatment of aggressors, since the next time, their own sovereignty may come into question by the “next-door” autocrat, resulting in humanity being in peril.

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The Canadian Hellenic Congress is a national democratic communal institution that represents, advances, advocates and promotes the interests and concerns of Canadians of Hellenic descent and Hellenism in general. The Congress is the national voice of Hellenes and their communities and/or organizations across Canada.