

Statement from Nordic bishops visit to Ukraine September-October 2025:

3. October, 2025

The joint delegation of Nordic church leaders, representing the Orthodox Church of Finland, Church of Iceland, Church of Norway, Ev. Lutheran Church of Finland, Church of Sweden and Ev. Lutheran Church of Denmark visited Ukraine 30. September to 2. October to express support and solidarity with the people and churches of Ukraine. We thank our hosts for the invitation and the warm welcome.

The ongoing aggressive war and occupation of Ukraine by Russia continues to cause severe and terrible damage, fear and suffering, every day and with long term consequences. The efforts to defend the integrity of the territory, the national state and infrastructures, for the sake of the future peace of the people of Ukraine, comes with enormous costs of human lives and suffering. The many names and photos we saw on Maidan Square represent the victims, but also their spouses, children and friends. Many have sought refuge and have been welcomed in our home countries, in the local communities and in our local churches.

We have listened to the stories and learned about the constant stress of the whole population. The visit to the memorial in Bucha demonstrated how terror, torture, and indiscriminate killings of civilians is used as a weapon in the war. We are particularly concerned about the long-term effects of the war for children growing up in war and strongly support the work done for trauma healing presented to us.

We are encouraged by the signs of trust and unity among the churches and communities of faith. The church leaders we have met deserve our respect and they are in our prayers. Representing our churches, we have expressed our commitment to continue to support the people of Ukraine.

We acknowledge the great efforts of our Nordic governments to support Ukraine, as well as the many initiatives from civil society and churches. It is necessary to continue and increase the many dimensions of support, and to increase the efforts from the international society to bring the war to an end with a sustainable and just peace for the people of Ukraine. Ukraine is fighting not only for themselves, but for stability and security in Europe and in the world.

Peace is a gift as well as a calling. Our trust is in God, the creator of heaven and earth, who calls all human beings to live in peace, building trust, caring for the dignity and rights of all and the wellbeing of our common planet. Building trust within societies and between nations and peoples is a significant task and requires constant work. Our visit and the way we have been received express the high degree of trust between the Nordic and Ukrainian peoples, nations and churches. We share our faith in the triune God, who calls us to be one in faith and to love of our neighbor. In times like these, we need to give our response to this common call with new commitment, strengthening the bonds between the churches in the Nordic region and the churches in Ukraine.

Archbishop Tapio Luoma, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Archbishop Elia, Archbishop of Helsinki and All Finland, Orthodox Church of Finland

Archbishop emerita Antje Jackelén, Church of Sweden

Presiding bishop Olav Fykse Tveit, Church of Norway

Bishop Guðrún Karls Helgudóttir, Church of Iceland

Bishop Peter Skov-Jakobsen, Diocese of Copenhagen, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark