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Mr. Bruno Oberle, IUCN Director General
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Mr. Boris Erg, IUCN Director, Eastern Europe
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Dear partners,

Ukraine is currently the epicentre of global fight for democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Russia attacked Ukraine and is bombing Ukrainian cities, demolishing residential areas, hospitals, kindergartens, killing hundreds of civilians.

Environment that we all hold so dear is the silent victim of the hostilities. Contamination of air and soil as a result of heavy missile bombing, devastation of huge territories including protected areas and Ramsar wetlands, pollution of rivers and lakes aggravated by nuclear and chemical contamination risks all pose a tremendous hazard for the environment of Ukraine and Europe as the environment knows no borders.

The intentional occupation of the Chornobyl nuclear disaster site creates profound and potentially long-term risks to the people of Ukraine and to nations throughout Europe. Already, Russian military operations at the Chornobyl site have mobilized radioactive dust and increased detectable radiation, raising serious concerns that Russian troops and equipment may spread radioactive material into new areas. Moreover, missile strikes near two radioactive waste disposal facilities. There are 15 nuclear power units at 4 nuclear power plants (NPPs) on the territory of Ukraine and the war in the country with this nuclear potential poses unprecedented risks, which could jeopardize the environment and public health of Ukraine and large swaths of Europe for generations.

The war in a heavily industrialized, densely populated nation containing numerous refineries, chemical plants, and metallurgical facilities further compounds the threat of these hostilities for Ukraine's people and their environment, both now and for years to come. Attacks on civilian and military sites have caused major fires in fuel storage areas threatening serious air, ground, and water pollution, while a gas pipeline was ruptured during fighting in Kharkiv. There are also fears that contamination from Russian depleted uranium munitions will add to the toxic legacy of the invasion.

Widespread attacks on civilian infrastructure, including targeting of water infrastructure without a definite military advantage, are clear violations of international law. Moreover, fighting near hydroelectric dams risks catastrophe.

All mentioned above is the evidence of the fact that Russia is an audacious violator of international humanitarian law and environmental law creating the biggest over the century humanitarian and environmental crisis.

Therefore, International charitable organization "Environment-People-Law" (EPL) as an IUCN member demands that IUCN terminates membership of Russian Federation, organizations and institutions in IUCN, IUCN bodies as a result of Russian aggression that goes against principles, goals and values of IUCN.

In case there is no procedure for terminating membership in IUCN, we propose to develop one in view of the catastrophic situation that the whole world has to face and the need to fight with aggressor by all means, including at the diplomatic level.

We also urge IUCN to suspend all the projects, financial and other kind of support, assistance and cooperation with or to Russian Federation, Russian organizations and institutions.

Sincerely yours,
Olena Kravchenko

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olena Kravchenko', written in a cursive style.

Executive director of EPL