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**Ballistic missiles fired over Kyiv. The testimony of Bishop Yazlovetskyi, "explosions in the sky followed by a column of black smoke".**



Auxiliary Bishop of Kyiv-Zhytomyr, President of Caritas-Spes Ukraine, gave SIR his first-hand account of the events. On Monday morning, two powerful explosions were heard in the Ukrainian capital. The Ukrainian defence systems were fortunately effective, but fragments of the downed missile fell in the Pechersk, Solomyansk and Darnytsk districts of the capital. Police, paramedics and State Emergency Service medical teams are still on the scene. The fragments partially destroyed the Mykhailo Boychuk State Academy of Decorative and Applied Arts and Design in the capital. The Emergency Service reported later in the day that seven people had been wounded as a result of the attack in Kyiv's Pechersk district, adding that two of them had been hospitalised. **"As I was walking this morning in the vicinity of Kyiv's Maidan Square," the bishop told SIR, "I heard loud explosions overhead.** Then the air raid sirens went off. Unfortunately, the ballistic missiles fell within two minutes, and the sirens did not sound in time to set off the alarms. I hid under an archway between two buildings, hoping to avoid the debris from the missiles. From there I watched people passing by and I was surprised to see them walking normally, looking up at the sky, and yet no one hiding or taking cover. It was then that I realised that although the people have become accustomed to the war, they also have no experience of it and have no idea of what could happen next. "Immediately after the explosions overhead, debris from the missiles fell hitting some buildings, and a column of black smoke could be seen going up." **Yesterday, was Palm Sunday and we too celebrated the beginning of the Holy Week. "In this Easter season, our wish is to live in peace," said the bishop.** "We are tired of this war. The fact that there is no end in sight is the biggest cross. It's like when a physician makes a diagnosis, but also gives a time frame for recovery. This allows the patient to face the disease with greater peace of mind. But it has been two years

since we were attacked, for two years we have not seen an end to this violent and cruel aggression. This uncertainty weighs heavily on the people.” “We have been under bombardment day after day. Not only Ukraine has grown used to this war and has learned to live with it. What is most painful is that the rest of the world has also become accustomed to this war.” The bishop expressed his concern: “The world is blaming us for things we have never seen or done. What amazes me is that these stories are being spread without any verification.” The bishop said he was referring not only to the accusations made against Ukraine for the terror attack in Moscow, which turned out to be false, but also to the claim that Ukraine was not open to negotiations with the Russians. For this reason, he added, it is important to “beware of propaganda and fake news, to understand who is the aggressor and who is the victim.” Asked if he had a message to share, the bishop replied: “It’s the prayer I’m always asking for, the prayer for us, the prayer that this war will stop.”



**In a message posted online, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reported that over the past week, Russians have used “nearly 190 missiles of various types and almost 140 Shahed drones” against Ukraine.** “Not a single week in over two years of this war has Russia refrained from terrorising. And we are doing our best to ensure that the occupying forces feel our totally justified response to this terror in the same way - every week, every day,” he continued. “I am grateful to all our heroes who are destroying enemy logistics in the occupied territories. Those who are clearing Crimea and the Black Sea of the occupiers' presence. This is a difficult task, but our warriors are accomplishing it step by step,” Zelensky concluded.

M. Chiara Biagioni