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Date: gio 3 mar 2022 alle ore 16:16

Subject: KompasGuide against war

Dear fellow publishers and partners,

Since February 24, 2022, the Russian armed forces have been attacking the territory of Ukraine. A “peacekeeping operation” according to official Russian propaganda. No, it's war.

KompasGuide is against war.

With my whole team, as editor and founder of KompasGuide publishing house, I want to denounce this war. We support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

We demand an end to this war without delay.

Despite the increasingly strict censorship - Facebook is almost inaccessible today, as are many independent media - we publicly expressed our opposition to the war from Friday February 25 on all available social networks. KompasGuide, with other independent publishers, has signed a protest petition, which says:

“...We, publishers of Russian books, protest against the war unleashed by the authorities of the Russian Federation in Ukraine. The war must be stopped immediately and the initiators and participants of military aggression must be stripped of their ranks and brought to justice...”.

War is against the fundamental humanist and democratic pacifist values that we have been defending since 2008. I created KompasGuide with the idea that books can be a bridge between peoples, and the human has always been at the heart of my editorial thinking. The texts published by KompasGuide speak honestly to children and adolescents about their past, their present and their future, tackling all subjects, even the most difficult. Denouncing and explaining ancient or contemporary wars with another perspective have always been central concerns of KompasGuide at the heart of many books and strong texts published in recent years as evidenced by many others “Brown Morning” by Franck Pavloff, “Sugar Child” and “Walchen” by Olga Gromova or “Hiroshima no pika” by Iri and Toshi Maruki.

For 14 years, KompasGuide, not without risks, has been offering to young Russians a possibility to think over their Soviet history but also contemporary tragedies. Thus, in 2012 we published a realistic novel on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan “Photographs to remember” by Maria Martirossova, unfortunately still relevant ten years later. In 2018 we released “Vovka Who Rode the Bomb” which tells the story of two Ukrainian friends separated by death during the Crimean War in 2014, and “The Scorpion Kick” depicting a

Ukrainian teenager losing his father and his leg in a bombardment. Knowing that these tragedies occur again hurts and revolts us.

Today, in Russia, few independent publishers dare to take a free and critical look at modern Russia and its Soviet past. Despite the risks, independent Russian publishers are mobilizing to ensure that this voice is heard. Alas, this small space of freedom and truth is fragile, a whole new generation of independent publishers is in danger.

Our work as publishers is precious. Books preserve and transmit human experiences. And these experiences teach us that war is a crime and that human life is an unconditional value. Children's literature must be able to speak honestly, but in today's Russia, with the propaganda, it becomes impossible. The future of Russian independent publishers looks dark.

Very sincerely, I do not know today how long KompasGuide, like my colleagues, Russian independent publishers, will be able to continue this other fight for freedom.

We thank you for your support and for your fight alongside us as publishers.

Being heard is important to us. Don't hesitate to spread our message around you.

Let's stop the war.

Vitali ZIUSKO  
founder and publisher  
KompasGuide Publishing House Moscow, Russia

