

2022 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize]

## **Values of life or death**

(Original)

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*(Age 14, Ukraine)*

February 24, 2022. A cold winter day that changed me, my worldview and what was most important to me. At the moment, when my watch was showing about 5 o'clock in the morning, and outside the window there were terrible sounds of explosions, I seemed to become someone else. "The war has come", words that will never be forgotten. I realized that the most important thing for me now is life. Not only my own life, but also lives of people dear to me. All other values have receded into the background, and the problems, that bothered me before seem to have disappeared. Everything changed in one day, in one moment. I am the child of war. What? Why? Even the ordinary words "I love you" have taken on a different meaning... I was ready to give everything to bring peace back to my country.

Life values are different. For some people, it's a career success, an expensive car, or an amazing villa near the ocean. For someone, it's first love, family and friends. But for someone it's important only to receive a message with the text "I'm alive".

Why do so many people have to die to protect the lives of millions of others? It's not fair. Soldiers, sitting on the military front, want only one thing – to survive and return to their families. And it was the war that took hundreds, thousands of innocent lives. Someone's heart will never beat again, someone's smile will never appear again someone will never feel the beauty of life again. Never. Instead of bloody bodies only red poppies will grow and will rustle in the wind, as if saying their last words.

Peace in the world and mercy for others must be a priority. People need to know about the horrible consequences of war. We can change everything. Let our children never know what "war" is. Make love, not war.