

## Women Interest group and Human Rights & Social Justice Committee Appeal for Peace

IASSW is expressing a deep concern and condolences to all people who are suffering current armed conflicts in different parts of the world and who suffer displacement, deaths and disability.

IASSW condemns violence, whether perpetrated by states waging war on neighbours with total disregard for the civilians that become trapped in the crossfire of warring groups, by the so-called lone wolf or individual that goes on a murderous rampage, or by groups who claim to defend their people and commit atrocities in their name without ever consulting them.

Currently, there are 32 major armed conflicts disturbing the peace of the world. Key amongst these which are destroying the lives of ordinary civilians who simply want to raise their families in peace and security, are Russia's Aggressive Assault Against Ukraine, the decades long cycle of vengeance and counter-vengeance perpetrated in Israel and in the occupied Palestine, and neighbouring countries dragged into what has become constant war, the Sudan in which war has opened up arenas for infectious diseases including cholera to spread. 100.000 people from Nagorni Karabah fled their homes in fear for their lives. Then there are internal civil wars in countries where civilians demand freedom and peace – Iran, Syria, Afghanistan. These a just a few of these peace-destroying situations. Then there are internal civil wars in countries where civilians demand freedom and peace – Iran, Syria, Afghanistan. These a just a few of these peace-destroying situations. They must all stop, and they must stop now. The waste of lives, destruction of resources and betrayal of our beautiful planet that nurtures us all must stop now. People with disagreements and grudges against their neighbours must sit down at the peace table and dialogue.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is beyond time that the Charter of the UN which aims to promote peace among all nations is observed. **People need peace, and they need it now. The world needs peace.** The many places (and they seem to grow daily) where conflict, war and annihilation occur must be brought around the peace table to find and promote peace and protect the environment. Discharging military arms costs people's lives even if they are not involved in a particular war through air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, soil contamination, water contamination, physical destruction of the housing, hospitals, schools and other critical infrastructures essential to carrying out everyday life. **Together, we must work to restore, and then maintain peace sustainably. We owe it to ourselves as human beings, to our neighbours and to the planet to do this immediately!**

We implore the statesmen and stateswomen and all politicians to rise in the name of peace and to hold their counterparts for supporting and fuelling war and disharmony in other countries, fully accountable.

They did it in the Northern Ireland Peace Accord (Good Friday Agreement). This process must be accelerated and repeated across many tables across the world, and beginning that process must not be delayed.

The IASSW also emphasises that in most current armed conflicts, civilians, especially women and children, as well as the elderly and persons with disabilities, are disproportionately affected. They often have fewer economic resources to flee violence, face restrictions on the use of safe spaces that are inaccessible to people with various impairments, are victims of sexual violence, and face shortages of basic needs, food, water, and medicine. In addition, there is immeasurable trauma imposed on a generation of children in the world, which as social workers we know leads to historical trauma as children develop into adolescents and adults. Entire generations are either becoming extinct through death, separated from their kin or being scarred physically and emotionally in the process of war!

IASSW based on social work human rights principles emphasises that international laws during war times and international humanitarian laws must be upheld at all times. There cannot be exceptions to this despite the power certain countries hold.

IASSW has dedicated educators, communicators, and practitioners skilled in bringing people and communities together, mediating conflict and providing trauma support. Many would be more than willing to offer their services to get to advance peace making initiatives.

Board of Directors

International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW)

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