



## **ICVA Statement on the Ukrainian Humanitarian Crisis: A Call for a Principled and Coordinated Response**

**Deeply concerned by the war in Ukraine and its escalating consequences, ICVA calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians, and adherence to international law.**

With every passing day the situation in Ukraine becomes graver, with a rising toll on civilian lives and infrastructure. Sick and injured civilians trapped in active conflict zones are running out of food and water and cannot reach vital medical care. The continued destruction of civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, is impeding humanitarian response and will have severe implications for recovery. This war must stop now. Civilians must be protected and be able to safely access essential services and evacuate.

***ICVA calls for the respect and protection of humanitarian access and space, which will enable all people in need to access effective and principled humanitarian assistance.***

At the forefront of the response in Ukraine, individuals, community-based organisations and local partners are overcoming enormous challenges to ensure people's basic needs are met. Local and national authorities, the UN, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international and local NGOs, among whom many ICVA members, are providing essential services to civilians affected by the violence.

In the face of enormous needs, ICVA members are scaling up the humanitarian response across neighboring countries. Respecting our values as a globally distributed and locally rooted network, ICVA is building upon local capacities for humanitarian assistance and investing in the coordination architecture to prevent gaps or duplication in the humanitarian response. Our members are working with refugees and host communities, and ensuring the response remains shaped by and accountable to crisis-affected populations.

***ICVA calls on all humanitarian responders to engage in coordination mechanisms, to be inclusive and foster participation of local and national actors and prioritise accountability to affected populations.***

Over 3 million people have already fled Ukraine, the majority of whom are women and children. If this conflict continues, another 2 million could flee in the weeks ahead, with millions more displaced from their homes. To escape the conflict many refugees were forced to leave loved ones behind. While deeply resilient, they are worried about the future and face new risks. There are concerns regarding safeguarding especially for children and on risks of trafficking in human beings.

The response to the crisis has been tremendous. We applaud all who have welcomed and supported the refugees. We commend the solidarity shown by governments and citizens across Europe and further afield towards those fleeing from the crisis in Ukraine. The decision by the EU to apply the temporary protection directive to refugees leaving Ukraine provides the necessary legal safeguards on status and shows that together it is possible to uphold commitments to international refugee and human rights law.

ICVA's members immediately deployed to welcome and support refugees hand in hand with local communities, national civil society and authorities. ICVA members are providing food, shelter, health services, mental and psychosocial care, protection services, including child protection, anti-trafficking and



protection from gender-based violence. NGOs are working hard to ensure that these services are inclusive of the needs of a broad range of individuals and diverse groups escaping the conflict, taking the significant gender, age and disability dimensions of this crisis into account and ensuring safeguards against exploitation, abuse and trafficking are in place.

***As we stand together in solidarity with all people impacted by the war in Ukraine, let's extend the same welcome, guarantee the same protection and support to all those escaping conflicts, violence and other serious human rights violations, regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.***

Together we are responding to the Ukrainian crisis, but we should not divert resources and attention from millions of people in other countries across the world with enormous unmet and under-funded humanitarian needs.

The war in Ukraine threatens to further disrupt the global supply of wheat and other vital crops critical to meet the needs of people across the globe. Food security experts have raised the alarm over the dire implications for countries that depend on wheat imports and food aid. Some 20 million additional people will go hungry globally due to rising food prices driven by the crisis.

Compounding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis, the conflict in Ukraine will further exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized communities worldwide who are struggling to meet basic needs.

***ICVA calls on governments to extend the same leadership and solidarity shown in response to Ukraine across all humanitarian crises globally, ensuring aid reaches all those in most need, without discrimination, unmet humanitarian needs are financed, and adequate investment is made in preparedness and mitigation.***

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2022**