

#NURSESFORPEACE



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International Council of Nurses condemns attacks on healthcare facilities and health workers in Ukraine

Geneva, Switzerland, 10 March 2022 – The International Council of Nurses (ICN) strongly condemns yesterday’s attack on a children’s and maternity hospital in the port city of Mariupol, Ukraine. The attack follows 18 attacks on health facilities, health workers and ambulances, which have been verified by the World Health Organization (WHO).



Dr Pamela Cipriano, ICN President said:

“These attacks on healthcare facilities, transport and healthcare professionals are profoundly shocking. It is unacceptable that innocent people, including children and pregnant women, have been targeted in this war. This represents a serious violation of human rights and international humanitarian law. Health professionals and patients must be given special protection and respect.

We are also aware that crucial healthcare supplies, such as tourniquets and key drugs, are lacking, and that water and electricity cuts are putting patients at great risk. We have heard direct reports from nurses who are living in the basements of hospitals in order to provide 24/7 lifesaving care. It is sickening to learn that their lives are still at risk even in hospitals.”

Howard Catton, ICN Chief Executive Officer, also condemned the attacks saying,

“The news of the attack on the maternity and children’s hospital in Mariupol and the reports ICN has heard from nurses in Ukraine in recent days means that these incidences are very likely increasing.

Nurses and other healthcare professionals working in conflict zones provide care, treatment and comfort to all sides in war zones, as well as to the innocent people who have been targeted or caught in the crossfire. Civilians, medical personnel, transport and facilities are protected under International Humanitarian Law; any attacks are therefore in grave breach of these laws and need to be investigated.”

In reaction to the attacks on healthcare, WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said:

“The only real solution to the situation is peace. WHO continues to call on the Russian Federation to commit to a peaceful resolution to this crisis and to allow safe, unimpeded access to humanitarian access to those in need.”

[Insecurity Insight](#) has reported on the impact of the conflict on the Ukrainian health system saying, “Curfews and roadblocks make it very dangerous – if not impossible – for patients to reach hospitals. Ambulances have been shot at...healthcare workers are at risk of being injured and killed when hospitals are attacked.”

ICN is a member of the [Safeguarding Healthcare in Conflict Coalition](#) (SHCC) which has released a [statement](#) condemning the attacks, and the [Health Care in Danger Initiative](#) from the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose [video](#) on the principles of international humanitarian law outlines the rules to protect civilians and which targets may be legally attacked. The SHCC has also published a [timeline](#) of attacks on healthcare and public health in Ukraine which shows the shocking frequency of these assaults.

ICN has launched a **#NursesforPeace** campaign to join nurses across the world in solidarity with the nurses of Ukraine. The [campaign webpage](#) contains banners, social media tiles and other campaign resources for download. ICN encourages campaign supporters to post photos of themselves holding the banners on social media using the tag #NursesforPeace. A joint statement with European nursing organisations condemning the invasion of Ukraine can be signed [here](#), and donations to the ICN Humanitarian Fund can be made [here](#).

What can you do?

[Sign](#) the ICN-EFN joint statement [here](#)

[Download](#) the #NursesforPeace images and show your support by sharing on social media

[Donate](#) to the ICN Humanitarian Fund

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Note to Editors

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

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