



## **IHLA Statement on safeguarding peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

**The International Health Literacy Association appeals to STOP WAR and BUILD PEACE.**

**War violates human rights.**

**War leads to oppression.**

**War is an avoidable cause of human suffering.**

The International Health Literacy Association (IHLA) worryingly observes that European neighbors with centuries of shared history, culture, and development are currently engaged in an armed conflict where there will be no winners and humanity will lose.

As health literacy advocates, we express solidarity with the Ukrainian people and all human beings who suffer from this war. IHLA notes that among the first casualties of war are children, families, the elderly, and the innocent. Those who have the least and whose health is already compromised suffer the most from armed conflicts.

Ukrainians are losing their homes, livelihoods, the joy of life and dignity, and most importantly, their loved ones and lives. Ukraine's civil, social, health, educational, and economic infrastructure may be destroyed, creating a daunting challenge for a post-war generation to rebuild their nation. The health and civil services in some neighboring countries are already stretched significantly by the needs of millions of refugees. In addition, Russia is losing soldiers and bearing significant military and socio-cultural costs.

IHLA hopes that the collective memory of the world's citizens considers the impact of 21<sup>st</sup>-century armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Yemen, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Mali. The lessons learned from these (and prior) wars elucidate the need to end armed conflict for the good of humankind. IHLA, therefore, calls for the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and other nations to bring this crisis to an immediate end.

Let's show the world that human beings are better at making peace than war. IHLA calls for "Health for All" to be recognized and shared by all countries involved in conflict and used as a motivator for peace and safety. IHLA urges all involved in war to save lives, prevent further war, and use alternative and diplomatic measures to reestablish peace and dialogs, to avoid further casualties and diseases.

IHLA thanks all the individuals, organizations, and countries involved in humanitarian efforts to support, shelter, and otherwise assist innocent civilians who are displaced or caught in the crossfires of the war.

The International Health Literacy Association (IHLA) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit, member-based organization dedicated to advancing health literacy for all people. IHLA believes enhancing health literacy establishes a therapeutic underpinning for human welfare, social development, prosperity, and peace.

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