

IPB Statement of Solidarity with the Peace Activists in Russia and Ukraine

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The International Peace Bureau voices our strong condemnation of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine – there is no justification for their aggressive actions and the impact it has had on the Ukrainian people. Russia's actions over the past 8 months – above all the threat to use nuclear weapons – have brought the world to an unprecedentedly precarious state and the brink of annihilation.

Since the beginning of the invasion in February, the conflict has continued to escalate, causing massive Ukrainian and Russian casualties, forcing countless refugees to flee their country, and creating economic shockwaves felt around the world – most of all in Africa and Latin America. Europe will also face a deep challenge in the coming winter months with possible shortages in energy. Even worse, the world is under increased existential threat both by climate change and nuclear weapons:

Breakdown in global cooperation threatens to reduce the effectiveness of international efforts to prevent the worst effects of climate change, such as the Paris Climate Agreement. Likewise, the besiegement and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia powerplant, Russia's overt nuclear threats, and NATO's nuclear sharing and "Steadfast Noon" nuclear exercises all pose a dangerous escalation with fatal consequences. We must be clear: any threat of the use of nuclear weapons is illegal and puts the entire planet at risk.

It must be acknowledged that while Russian aggression is the sole cause of this war, Western countries' and particularly the US and NATO's hardline stance to Russia has made increasingly difficult the possibility of a timely resolution to the conflict. We underline former US Ambassador Jack F. Matlock's argument that there were missed opportunities to reduce tensions before the start of the war, through adherence with the Minsk agreement and a reevaluation of NATO expansion (<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/10/17/on-ukraine-the-us-is-on-the-hook-to-find-a-way-out/>). Rather than fueling the fire of the conflict by sending arms and taking hardline positions, all individual nations and the UN must push for a ceasefire and negotiations.

It is therefore more important than ever to have a strong peace movement voicing opposition to the war and pushing for immediate resolution to the conflict. This must include the voices of war resisters and conscientious objectors in Russia and Ukraine who refuse to fight this senseless war. IPB stands in strong solidarity with the peace activists in Russia, Ukraine, and all those around the world in opposition to the war.

With the mobilization in Russia, we have seen the strong resistance by many parts of civil society. In the North and Arctic regions, indigenous groups' federal and UN rights on deferral and exemption from military service are being violated as they are targeted in the mobilization. Likewise, the Russian resistance by individuals and communities across the country, including the national feminist network, the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia, and other pacifist war resisters – met by an increasingly severe repression – deserves our strongest support and solidarity. We also support all conscientious objectors in Ukraine who are increasingly pressured to wage or support the war and find their voices silenced or feel the pressure from society to support the ongoing fighting. The right to conscientious objection is a human right.

Those fleeing the war or mobilization in both Russia and Ukraine must be equally accepted as asylum seekers in Europe and beyond. It is part of the work of the international peace movement to push for policies of asylum for refugees from both sides.

The war in Ukraine only brings death and destruction. IPB continues to lift up the voices for peace in Ukraine and Russia and calls on the support from the international peace movement to take action to stop the war on a variety of fronts and promote policies of disarmament and common security. This means solidarity with the resisters and activists in Ukraine and Russia, but also taking action in our own countries to push our leaders to support diplomatic solutions to the war immediately. IPB calls for actions against the war, nationally and internationally, and for activities in support of the war resisters in Russia and Ukraine. In this role, a global peace movement can support those who are suffering the most from the continuation of the war in Ukraine.

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