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Global medical and public health organizations call for immediate end to war in Ukraine and critical need to prevent nuclear escalation

Representing doctors, public health professionals and medical students worldwide, we call for an immediate cease fire and the withdrawal of all invading and occupying military forces and an urgent negotiated end to the current war in Ukraine. The alarmingly acute and growing danger of nuclear escalation must be reversed and nuclear war prevented by the urgent elimination of nuclear weapons.

Already, a growing humanitarian crisis has been unleashed. Civilians suffer most from war and the long-lasting harm it causes.

We are deeply disturbed by credible reports of attacks on health personnel and hospitals in Ukraine. Such attacks are an assault against our shared humanity. The obligation to protect health personnel and facilities, enshrined in the Geneva Conventions and international regulations, has been accepted by all nations. We insist that all parties to the conflict respect the neutrality of health professionals whose sacred obligation is to protect lives and provide care for all on the basis of need, without fear or favour. Anyone injured or otherwise in need must be able to access care.

Each of Ukraine's 15 operating nuclear power reactors and the high level radioactive waste stored near them contain massive amounts of extremely hazardous and long-lived radioactive material. Direct attack, cyber or physical damage to their operation, including interruption of the power and water needed for constant cooling of both reactors and spent fuel ponds, would risk fires and explosions that could cause a radiological disaster across Eurasia. The safe operation of nuclear facilities must be guaranteed by all sides, and such facilities must never be targeted.

As the World Health Organisation has stated, nuclear weapons pose the greatest immediate threat to human health and welfare. They are primed to unleash a final epidemic for which there could be no effective treatment.

Russian and other nuclear armed leaders confirmed as recently as January that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Even a limited nuclear war in one region would be a global catastrophe. Russia and NATO must explicitly renounce the use of nuclear weapons in the current war in Ukraine.

Ultimately such catastrophe can only be completely prevented by the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Therefore all nations should join and implement the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

*Our organizations:

- **International Federation of Medical Student Associations (IFMSA)** envisions a world in which medical students unite for global health and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to take on health leadership roles locally and globally. Founded in 1951, it is one of the world's oldest and largest student-run organizations. It represents, connects and engages a network of 1.3 million medical students from 145 national member organizations in 134 countries.
- **International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)** is a federation of health professional organizations in 56 countries dedicated to the eradication of nuclear weapons (Nobel Peace Prize 1985).
- **World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA)** is an international federation of 130 national and regional public health associations, representing 5 million public health professionals worldwide. WFPHA is the only worldwide professional society representing and serving the broad field of public health internationally.
- **World Medical Association (WMA)** is an international organization representing physicians, with 115 national member organizations and thousands of associate members worldwide.