

PHM statement on Ukraine

Against War and Militarism

9 May 2022

Since the war in Ukraine began at the end of February, we are once again witnessing the harm and strife caused by armed conflicts. PHM's [People's Charter for Health](#) clearly recognizes that violence and militarism devastate communities and destroy human dignity, and the war waged in Ukraine demonstrates that harsh reality.

We unequivocally condemn the Russian aggression and demand a quick and peaceful end to it. We likewise condemn NATO countries' drive for military expansion and their supply of arms to the armed forces of Ukraine, which is turning this conflict into a prolonged proxy war, just like it has done in the past by fuelling conflicts in Donbas, East Ukraine. The people of Ukraine have the right to live in peace, without fear that their lives and the lives of their communities will be sacrificed in the name of geopolitics. Both the Putin and Ukraine administrations and the leaders of NATO have chosen not to respect that right.

While living under the Covid-19 restrictions for more than two years, people all around the world have been calling for a rebuilding in the spirit of global solidarity and unity, instead of the nationalism and division that the former colonial powers in Europe and North America have been imposing for decades on the whole world.

The aggressions that the United States, backed by their European allies under the NATO umbrella, have imposed on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Somalia, and the armed conflicts and occupations that it continues to support by providing arms and other resources for conflict in African countries, Palestine and Yemen, shows how hypocritical their current condemnation of the war is. These wars show us the extent of the detriment and suffering that the world's women and men, workers, children and carers, can expect if the conflict in Ukraine does not stop soon. The only acceptable outcome to the war is peace, followed closely by a revision of existing mechanisms for international cooperation and conflict resolution in order to build a truly people-oriented, peaceful and democratic world.

The NATO allies are using sanctions to punish and blackmail countries for not endorsing their line. We have seen this in the very first days of the war, when Lithuania decided to cancel its promised donation of Covid-19 vaccines to Bangladesh because of the country's neutral vote on the UN resolution condemning the intervention. Equally unsettling is the knowledge that the war in Ukraine is perceived by rich countries, particularly the United States, as an opportunity to ensure dominance over food and energy markets.

Sanctions will never pave the road to peace. The waves of sanctions imposed by the United States and their allies are not hurting those responsible for the aggression on Ukraine. Instead,



they are leading to catastrophic consequences for those whose food supplies depend on Russian production, like the people in Central Asia and the Middle East, and ordinary people living in the Russian Federation. On the other hand, armed fighting is undermining agriculture and food production in Ukraine, which only adds to widespread food insecurity concerns.

Peace cannot be achieved without fair and responsible reporting on the conflict, free of the warmongering we have witnessed from some of the biggest media outlets in the world. The outright racism and chauvinism that have been expressed towards migrants from third countries and Russians alike are a reason for serious concern. Moreover, we are dismayed by the lack of attention people's suffering in other parts of the world is getting in comparison, even as other wars continue to rage in parallel to the one in Ukraine.

We commend the peoples of Europe for opening their doors to people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. We ask their governments to open their borders to the many other people who have been displaced from their homes in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, yet have been left to wait for years on the borders of Europe and the United States.

We call on all governments involved to work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict as soon as possible, by committing themselves to negotiations and dialogue. The negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation should be conducted free of outside pressures to further escalate the situation, and other countries that are actively supporting Ukraine should make such bi-lateral negotiations their priority.

We call on all parties involved in the conflict to respect the life, work, workplaces and dignity of health workers at all times, according to international law. Health facilities and health workers play a crucial role in safekeeping people's dignity and life in times of conflict, and it is key to ensure they can continue to do so.

PHM remains committed to supporting disarmament and building lasting peace. Health for all can never be achieved through, or during, war.