

Dear NCW presidents and sisters,

Different people have different understanding of the justification, or lack thereof, for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The causes of war are always complex. My focus here is not to join what appears to be essentially the global condemnation of Russia's aggression, but to emphasize the growing number of those who suffer.

We cannot help but feel enormous sympathy for all the casualties, particularly for all the innocent women and children whose lives have been turned upside down if not destroyed. As members of the International Council of Women, our hearts ache for them. When we see clips of fleeing moms with babies in arms, it hurts us deeply. We can literally feel their fear and anguish. When we see women hand in hand with their young family, walking mile after mile to safety in tears, we cry with them. Regarding neighboring countries which have graciously taken in hundreds of thousands of refugees, potentially millions, we express our gratitude and appreciation for their kindness.

Our strongest hope is that there can be a peaceful, just and speedy resolution of the conflict. But as we move toward that goal, it is imperative that we remain vigilant to the plight of women and children. They need and deserve our strongest support.

Humanitarian action, we believe, is an important role that national councils of women can play in influencing policy. As members of the global community, we at the International Council of Women will redouble our efforts to enforce the various international humanitarian and human rights laws and conventions that protect the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts. We will also do our best to stop the war and take the lead in establishing permanent peace with the power of women's cooperation and unity.

Jungsook Kim, President of ICW