



TCI Statement of Solidarity with Ukraine and its People

Dear Colleagues,

We, Transforming Communities for Inclusion (TCI), an OPD of persons with psychosocial disabilities, state that there can be absolutely NO exception to 'No War'. We convey our deep sadness and our solidarity as stand with the people of Ukraine, who are being ravaged by this ongoing devastating conflict. We call upon the aggressive forces to stop this war and give peace its rightful chance.

With the harrowing news pouring in of casualties and lives being affected by the armed conflict in Ukraine, we, as an Organization of Persons with Disabilities, are deeply concerned for the condition and situation of the persons with disabilities in the country. War is hard on everyone and one can only imagine the struggles of fleeing from war affected areas. However, it is harder for people with disabilities, who in spite of being one of the most affected groups in areas of unrest, are hardly considered in humanitarian crisis and security agendas. We acknowledge the herculean efforts being put in by the Ukrainian government and other allies to stop the aggressors and work a peaceful way out. We remind governments to uphold and respect the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with an emphasis on Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies. We also call upon all engaged parties attempting to help the civilian population, to formulate a disability inclusive response. Persons with disabilities should be provided with adequate access to safety places, timely and appropriate help, accessible medium of information, communication helplines and all other needed supports and services. We emphasize including persons with disabilities and OPDs to help formulate disability inclusive relief and rescue plans. Another request to countries hosting refugees from Ukraine is to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the assistance being provided to all Ukrainians. Persons with disabilities affected by the war should also figure in all record keeping relating to war casualties.

The news coverage from Ukraine has largely been silent on the condition of individuals confined in institutions. However, the plight of individuals locked inside institutions can only be imagined with limited supplies, absent staff, heightened distress and detention. [A chilling story of Russian forces taking over a psychiatric hospital in central Ukraine](#) surfaced last week and displayed the helplessness of the authorities when the governor expressed that 'today we do not know how to evacuate the 670 people and help them.' In humanitarian emergencies, it is our experience that persons with psychosocial disabilities are disproportionately affected by prejudice, callousness of the aggressors and the violence. They tend to be identified more in random killings, enforced disappearances, and the risks of being on the streets or homeless, during conflict. People within institutions are more prone to be victims of violence, abuse, exploitation, shackling and the worst of human rights violations, including death.



We demand the authorities to ensure the security and safety of all the institutionalized individuals and to accelerate deinstitutionalization plans immediately. We also take this opportunity to remind governments globally that forced institutionalization is a form of torture ([A/HRC/47/L.18/Rev.1](#)) and deinstitutionalization plans should be put in place along with substantial action for 'building back better'. In humanitarian emergencies, older individuals and women and girls with disabilities are at a heightened risk of 'sexual violence and less likely to be able to have access to recovery and rehabilitation services or access to justice' ([CRPD/C/GC/3, paras. 49-50](#)) and we call upon all the parties to focus their attention on these groups.

War not only leads to loss of life but also affects the memories and psychological state of those directly and indirectly affected by it. We demand urgent and wholesome attention to be paid to people left in Ukraine and those who have left it, who are dealing with the horrors of this conflict, to be provided with the recovery and trauma-informed support of their choice. We advise the organizations and governments to create healing environments for the survivors and supporting their emotional well-being. Opening up helplines, providing peer support, offering creative, non-violent, non-hazardous recovery supports should be prioritized. As an extension, we strongly request concerned mental health organizations, service providers and researchers to be more sensitive towards the people affected by this crisis, acknowledge their lived experiences and their own understanding of it and not over-medicalize and capitalize this natural human response to such sudden and severe humanitarian crisis.

TCI hopes that this conflict is urgently resolved peacefully, the Russian government will take responsible action for reparation and that nobody is ever left behind, in rescue, relief, resettlement and recovery.

Sincerely,
TCI Secretariat.