



ICN

**International
Council of Nurses**

The global voice of nursing



Update 4: ICN #NursesforPeace Campaign **January 2024**



The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is expanding its support of nurses who are caught up in challenging and dangerous circumstances in conflict zones and disaster areas around the world, including in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Sudan, Myanmar, and Israel and Palestine. ICN launched the #NursesforPeace campaign in 2022, initially in response to the war in Ukraine. The campaign has grown to raise funds for nurses working on the frontlines of emergency situations around the world and to draw public attention to the associated threats to health care systems. We are only able to do this thanks to the generous donations we have received. This update describes some of the work ICN has been doing with its member National Nursing Associations across the globe. To donate to ICN's #NursesforPeace campaign click [here](#)

Israel and Palestine: ICN calls for a cessation of hostilities, the return of all hostages and unfettered access for humanitarian relief

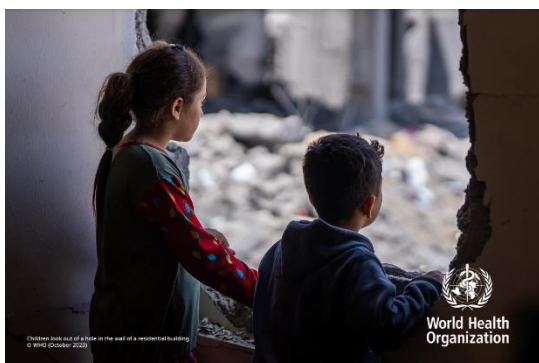
Soon after the start of hostilities in October 2023 ICN contacted the National Nurses Associations of Israel and Palestine sending messages of condolence and support. In a [statement](#) we deplored the terrible acts of violence that had occurred. We condemned the attacks on health care workers and facilities and called for international humanitarian laws to be upheld unequivocally.

The same month ICN [joined with its partners](#) in the World Health Professions Alliance (WHPA) in condemning in the strongest terms the bombing and destruction of medical facilities, again calling for all parties to the conflict in Israel and Gaza to respect their legal obligations under international humanitarian law, to protect and respect access to health care and ensure the safety of civilians and health care workers.

In November 2023 the ICN Board met and issued a [statement](#) in which it expressed our deepest concern for those suffering in the conflict in Israel and Gaza. The ICN Board condemned all acts of violence and terrorism and renewed its demand for safe access to health services for all and the protection of health care workers.

Also in November we issued a [statement](#) which included comments about our contacts with nursing organizations in the region. We again condemned the terrorism and violence and called for the protection of health care workers and all civilians, and for the release of all hostages.

ICN has been in contact with nurses in Israel and Palestine and is providing financial support through our NNAs. We continue to call for peace and for the immediate release of the hostages. Humanitarian workers, many of whom are nurses, must be given safe access to those in need of health care and the basics of human survival, including food and water.



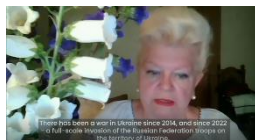
The Geneva Conventions stipulate that the ill-treatment and killing of civilians is prohibited, and the sick and wounded must be cared for. ICN has received multiple and continuing reports of injuries and deaths of nurses and other health workers in the conflict area.

ICN is a founding member of the [Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition](#) whose purpose is to promote respect for international humanitarian and human rights laws that relate to the safety and security of health facilities, health workers, ambulances and patients. ICN also works closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other partner organizations on the [Health Care in Danger](#) initiative to promote the protection of health care in armed conflict and other emergencies.

Wherever they are, nurses bring health and healing, which can be the building blocks for peace. But those who are in war-ravaged areas are having to carry on their nursing duties while at great risk of personal harm.

At the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board meeting in Geneva 22-27 January 2024, ICN delivered an intervention on WHO's Roadmap for the Global Health and Peace Initiative (GHPI), renewing ICN's call for the protection of nurses and health facilities in conflict zones, and the provision of safe passage for humanitarian aid. Earlier in November 2023, ICN CEO Howard Catton presented the #NursesforPeace campaign to more than 70 WHO Member States at a meeting of the GHPI Member State Consultation Group in Geneva, emphasizing the unique role nurses are playing in the promotion of peace.

ICN calls for the end of the war in Ukraine and joins with the World Health Organization in bolstering nursing leadership during the time of crisis



In a recent message, President of the Nursing Association of Ukraine Tetyana Chernyshenko thanked ICN and the global nursing community for their support and reiterated her hopes for an end to the two year-long conflict in her country.

She described the fortitude of Ukraine's nurses as the war continues, causing many deaths and the destruction of essential elements of the country's infrastructure, including homes, hospitals and educational institutions.



Ms Chernyshenko said: "Despite the war, nurses of Ukraine stand with their medical colleagues and continue to fight for people's lives every day, every minute, providing medical assistance."

She said that the deprivations caused by the war had not stopped nurses' efforts to

keep up to date by accessing online courses and seminars.

ICN is working with Ukraine's Ministry of Health Centre for Nursing Development and the World Health Organization Europe Regional Office to strengthen nursing leadership to respond effectively to the current situation.

A week-long programme will provide leadership training for up to 25 mid-career and senior nurses who are fulfilling crucial roles in leading the country's nursing community during this time of crisis. The programme is intended to enhance nursing leadership skills during times of uncertainty, improve strategic planning abilities, strengthen mentoring and succession planning, increase involvement in policymaking, and expand participation in disaster planning, response and recovery initiatives. In the future, participants will be able to continue

their leadership development through ICN's other leadership programmes, including the Leadership for Change™ and Global Nursing Leadership Institute (GNLI™) programmes.

ICN calls on Myanmar's leaders to protect and support its nurses who are providing health and humanitarian help to all of Myanmar's people

It is now three years since the military coup in Myanmar and the situation continues to be very dangerous for civilians and health care workers. In 2021 ICN issued a



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[statement](#) about the threats, intimidation and violence that was being perpetrated on nurses and other health care workers in Myanmar following the military coup. We said that nurses must be free to care for people, whichever 'side' of the conflict they are on, in line with the nurses' ethical code. The need for nursing is universal, and therefore it is offered to everyone, irrespective of their age, colour, creed,

culture, disability or illness, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, politics, race or social status. It goes without saying that this also applies to the delivery of impartial health care services to the entire population of Myanmar.

ICN continues to be in contact with Myanmar's nurses through its National Nursing Association and we have supported education initiatives in Myanmar. We reiterate how important it is that the international community continues to focus its attention on the situation there and provide assistance to help meet people's health needs.

ICN provides clinical, leadership and management training to Afghanistan's Nurses



WHO

The situation for nurses and women in Afghanistan continues to be uncertain, following the changes that have happened since the return of Taliban rule in 2020. The weakness of Afghanistan's health system has been exacerbated by severe weather and natural disasters, compounded by the deadly

earthquake in June 2022. In a [statement](#) we reiterated our call for international humanitarian aid to support Afghanistan's health systems and health workers, and our concerns about women's progress and the threat to delivery of health services.

In December 2022 we expressed our concern in a [statement](#) about the Taliban's decision to ban women from university education, calling it a giant step backward for gender equality and health and economic development in Afghanistan. We said the ban would be both a personal blow to the aspirations of a generation of girls, and gravely affect the future of the Afghan health services, which our nurses report is already in crisis.

ICN remains in contact with the Afghanistan Nurses Association, and we have funded a ten-day Effective Teaching Skills education programme to enhance the teaching and management skills of its nurses. ICN has also provided funds to run Basic Life Support training and to further develop nursing leadership.

ICN continues to support Sudan's nurses who have told of the disastrous effects of the war on the country's health care systems



In June 2023, the Sudanese Nurses Organization (SNO) joined ICN at a very difficult time in that country's history. In a [statement](#) ICN said the ongoing civil war meant that nurses were working under extremely difficult circumstances. We condemned the targeting of nurses, other health care workers and health facilities, and repeated our call for an immediate ceasefire to end the misery that Sudan's nurses and the people they care for were suffering.

We are in frequent contact with the President of the SNO Mowafag Hassan, who says the situation in his country is still very bad, with an almost total collapse of the Sudanese health system and hospitals being looted and vandalised. Mr Hassan says large numbers of people, including nurses, have been displaced and at least one nurse has been killed and another kidnapped along with a medical colleague. Their whereabouts are currently unknown.

Japanese Nursing Association's response to New Year earthquakes in the Noto Peninsular

The Japanese Nursing Association (JNA) has told ICN of its response to the serious earthquakes in the Noto Peninsular region of Japan on January 1 2024.

The JNA set up a local emergency management headquarters and liaised with the local nursing associations, the Ministry of Health and other official bodies. It



dispatched expert disaster relief nurses to the area who are helping the situation by assisting and relieving local nurses and by providing care for disaster victims in hospitals and evacuation centres. The situation has been made more difficult because of adverse weather

conditions and damaged buildings and infrastructure, but the JNA has continued to collect vital information to assess local needs and help to organise the disaster response.

ICN congratulated the JNA for its incredible response to the needs of those affected by the earthquakes and thanks the nurses involved for their commitment, which demonstrates the importance of nursing in such difficult situations.