

## ICN hosts bilateral talks with Ukrainian Ministry of Health during World Health Assembly



**Geneva, Switzerland, 27 May 2022** – International Council of Nurses’ Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton today hosted a bilateral meeting with Ukraine’s Deputy Minister of Health, Oleksii Iaremenko, joined by the World Health Organization’s Chief Nursing Officer, Elizabeth Iro.

During the bilateral talks, which took place at the ICN head office in Geneva during the 75th meeting of the World Health Assembly (WHA), Mr Catton briefed Deputy Minister Iaremenko on ICN’s #NursesforPeace campaign and the support ICN has provided to the Ukrainian nurses via the Ukrainian Nurses Association to date.

The #NursesforPeace campaign has reached more than 100 million people around the world through social media and seen thousands of nurses sharing message of solidarity with the nurses and people of Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict almost 100 days ago. The #NursesforPeace campaign also initiated a petition calling for peace, signed by thousands and has raised donations, some of which have already been shared with individual Ukrainian nurses in Ukraine via the Ukrainian Nurses Associations and other associations in neighbouring countries.

Deputy Minister Iaremenko, who was in Geneva as one of the leaders of the Ukraine delegation to the WHA, updated Mr Catton and Ms Iro on the situation on the ground in Ukraine and indicated the huge pressures nurses and other healthcare workers were still under both physically and mentally in the country’s war zones.

The discussions then focused on exploring ways to provide mental and psychological support to Ukrainian nurses and other healthcare workers affected by the war. During the WHA earlier this week Ukraine’s First Lady, Olena Zelenska, had launched a new mental health initiative for the country and called for international support.

After the meeting, Mr Catton said: “We thank Deputy Minister Iaremenko for his engagement, we were pleased to be able to brief him on the #NursesforPeace campaign and our work in Ukraine, along with our colleague WHO Chief Nursing Officer Elizabeth Iro.

‘What our talks underlined was that there are still many nurses and other health workers in Ukraine working under incredible pressure, enduring daily attacks. As well as the physical dangers, their mental and psychological health is being affected both in the short and long term. Building on the First Lady of Ukraine’s announcement of a new health initiative, ICN is exploring ways to work with the Ukraine Health Ministry and the WHO to respond to Ukraine’s urgent need for more mental and psychological support .’

WHO Chief Nursing Officer Ms Iro added, “We were pleased to meet with Deputy Minister Iaremenko and look forward to continuing to work with ICN to provide support to nurses and all healthcare workers in Ukraine.”

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#### **Note to Editors**

The **International Council of Nurses** (ICN) is a federation of more than 130 national nurses associations representing the millions of nurses worldwide. Operated by nurses and leading nursing internationally, ICN works to ensure quality care for all and sound health policies globally.

For more information please contact Gyorgy Madarasz, Press Officer at [madarasz@icn.ch](mailto:madarasz@icn.ch)  
Tel: +41 22 908 01 16

[www.icn.ch](http://www.icn.ch)