



A Call for Action in a Time of Crisis

Rotary Peace Fellows and Rotarians Working Together for Peace in Ukraine and Russia

March 5, 2022

Dear Rotarians and friends from all over the world!

Like so many of you, the Rotary Peace Fellow community is deeply concerned about the war and ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The armed confrontations initiated on February 24, 2022 have led to disastrous consequences for so many people who call this part of the world home. This violence devastates us all.

As Rotary Peace Fellows, we have been reflecting together about what could have been done to prevent this conflict and the terrible loss of lives and trust. Nevertheless, the crisis is here now, and the impact of it will be felt for a long time to come. In moments like this, we are reminded that RI founder Paul Harris once said, Rotarians prefer actions to words. **So, let's act together for peace now.**

Rotarians have generously invested in our development as peacebuilders and it is time we reciprocate in every manner we can. Peace Fellows from all over the world have expressed their readiness and willingness to offer their expertise to Rotarians/Rotaractors in this moment of crisis.

It is time to harness the potential of Peace Fellows for the well-being of all.

In this spirit, we draw your attention to three areas of immediate action that can help address the current crisis and work towards preventing more atrocities in future. We seek your active

cooperation as Rotarians and conscious citizens to help make this work possible in your Clubs, Districts, and within your wider communities and networks.

Trauma healing circles

We are ready to organise community healing circles in Ukraine, Russia and other parts of the world as and when needed. This work is based on trauma-informed methods and led by professionally trained Peace Fellows. Reconnecting people to each other in safe spaces, where “voices can touch voices”, is a critical step in recovering from collective trauma and rebuilding a nation after a tragedy such as this.

Dialogue and mediation

We are prepared to facilitate dialogue and mediation sessions amongst various stakeholder groups, including Ukrainian and Russian Rotarians and Rotaractors, to support the rebuilding of relationships and trust and to help prevent repeated escalations. Structured dialogue and mediation, guided by professional Peace Fellow practitioners, can support group healing and the co-creation of new ideas for better communities, countries, and our world.

Peace education

We are equipped to teach peace education programs relevant to the crisis in Ukraine, the underlying causes of war and violence in our world, and the ways in which we can all be peacebuilders. Peace education needs to be mainstreamed as a way to create conflict-sensitive citizens in the future. Towards this, we need to work with formal and informal education institutions to integrate peace education into their curriculum from an early age so that children grow up with tools for non-violent transformation of conflicts in their lives, thus creating a ripple effect of peace.

In each of these initiatives, we wholeheartedly welcome participation from Rotarians who are qualified in the relevant areas. And importantly, we request your active engagement in organisation and resource mobilisation.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss ways to make this work possible, contact us at connect@rpfaa.org. Please visit our speakers’ database for more information as well: <https://rpfaa.org/online-speaker-database>.

This letter and request is to you as Rotarians, but we are also happy to extend these peacebuilding initiatives to include any Rotary partners, communities and government/non-governmental agencies who you believe may benefit. Further, while this initiative has emerged from the context of Ukraine and Russia, there are many parts of the world currently experiencing varied degrees of conflict. We encourage you, regardless of where you are located, to reach out to us and begin proactive measures towards positive peace.

In closing, Rotary has taught us that peace is not just an idea or a dream. Peace is an action that we must work towards together. As John Lennon sang, "Peace is not something you wish for; It's something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away." **Dear Rotarians, we believe together we are stronger, and we can make this world a better place.**

Who are Rotary Peace Fellows?

Each year, Rotary awards up to 130 fully funded fellowships for dedicated leaders from around the world to study at one of its peace centers. Through academic training, practice, and global networking opportunities, the Rotary Peace Centers program develops the capacity of peace and development professionals or practitioners to become experienced and effective catalysts for peace. Since the program began in 2002, the Rotary Peace Centers have trained more than 1,400 fellows who now work in more than 115 countries. Many of us serve as leaders in governments, NGOs, the military, education, law enforcement, and international organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank.

The Rotary Peace Fellowship Alumni Association (RPF AA) works to organize Rotary Peace Fellow alumni, increase networking opportunities among Peace Fellows, and better facilitate collaboration with Rotary through club and district partnerships in order to expand the promotion of peace around the globe.

More information:

<https://rpfaa.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/rpfaa.org>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/rotary-peace-fellowship-alumni-association/>