



4 March 2022

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Graduate Women International (GWI) was founded in 1919 as worldwide organisation uniting university women, fostering friendship, and understanding to help prevent another catastrophe such as World War I that had just ended. GWI has been promoting peace between all nations in the world.

However, alas more than 100 years later, just last week the world woke up in shock as the threat of armed conflict once again was actual put into practice and a sovereign nation was, once again, invaded by another sovereign nation. Especially women and children, and the elderly are the victims of armed conflict and have no other choice but to flee their homes and try to reach safety. Thus, the worldwide displacement of people once again increases. GWI is also deeply concerned that women (and girls) will again be the ones who will face violence and rape, as they are in all their diversity always disproportionately affected by armed conflict. Armed conflict i.e., war is never gender neutral.

GWI would like to reiterate the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres to the General Assembly on the Ukraine-Russia conflict: "President Putin, stop your troops from attacking Ukraine. Give peace a chance. Too many people have already died."

We urge Russia to uphold the UN Declaration of Human Rights which both nations have signed to. In particular, Article 28 of the declaration: "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized". No State, group or person have any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration.

GWI therefore, urges the respective parties to end this conflict peacefully and negotiate peace between the two nations. Involve women* at the negotiating table as thus far we have mainly seen men at the first attempt of negotiation between the two nations. And promote the active participation of children and women in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.

Give** high priority to the promotion of international acceptance of the principles contained in the 2001 Report to the United Nations by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty entitled "The Responsibility to Protect" outlining the responsibility of states to protect their citizens, namely:



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- the responsibility to prevent: to address both root causes and direct causes of conflict;
- the responsibility to react: to respond to compelling human need with appropriate measures;
- the responsibility to rebuild: to provide assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation; and,
- advocate for an international protocol for humanitarian intervention under the aegis of the United Nations.

Respectfully,

GWI Board 2020-2022

* The importance of which is emphasized in The Machel Report (para. 90, 241-242) and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security.

** GWI Resolution 2004/11