

STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS, REFUGEES AND VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

ITFLOWS is committed to the improvement of the situation of migrants and refugees, and deeply concerned with the current and potential future asylum seekers and refugees resulting from the conflict in Ukraine.

Over the past week, two million people have been forced to flee their homes, one million internally and more than a million to neighbouring countries, in freezing conditions and leaving behind families, livelihoods, dreams and hopes. They face the fear and despair that all forcibly displaced persons and refugees face all over the world.

We join our voices with the European Union, the United Nations and people around the world condemning the flagrant disrespect of the international rule of law, the prohibition of the use of force and state sovereignty. The events to date have already caused a devastating loss of life and destruction of property, heritage and the environment. The consequences will be profound and lasting.

In the horror of the events, the welcoming reception that neighbouring countries give to the refugees from Ukraine has been heart-warming. We note how neighbouring EU states, some of them previously reluctant to follow the international and EU norms on migration and asylum, lead the accommodation of people fleeing the conflict. They have reacted immediately, providing food and water, accommodation in reception centres and places in local schools. Local communities are also very welcoming and sensitive to the traumatic situation of the refugees. Other EU states are sending masks, blankets, and medicine. Within the crumbling pillars of international law and the rule of law, the EU solidarity has finally become practice.

We urge all EU states to extend this welcome to all those fleeing conflict, regardless of their citizenship, ethnicity, migration or other status. There have been disturbing reports of discrimination against African and Asian nationals while fleeing. We are particularly mindful of the dire situation that marginalised individuals face in seeking asylum, experiencing yet again heightened discrimination and exclusion. We are of particular concern for the specific needs of refugee women. We urge EU states to extend the respect of EU asylum law to all situations and to welcome all refugees fleeing all conflicts, on European soil or otherwise. Finally, we want to vocalise our solidarity with victims of the current situation, again regardless of nationality, citizenship, ethnicity, migration or other status.

We have already started using our expertise and experience to find further ways within this project to help the accommodation and integration of refugees. Our eyes and hearts remain with people on the move from Ukraine, and from around the world.