



WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE

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## WAVE Statement on the war in Ukraine

Vienna, 24 February 2023

The WAVE Network condemns Russia's invasion of the Ukraine on 24 February 2022 resulting in extensive and gross human rights violation. We call for the protection of all women and children, as well as the overall civilian populations and urge respect for international humanitarian law.

This war, like all wars, represents many of the most destructive forms of violence affecting humanity. Furthermore, it demonstrates (once again) how women and girls are, in addition to all forms of war related destruction, enormously affected by gender-specific forms of violence, such as sexualised violence as well as the risk of being forced into human trafficking.

Hereby WAVE reminds that wars exacerbate all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) which are not prevented and tackled in times of peace.

Crises negatively and disproportionately impact women, particularly those coming from marginalised or low-income communities, as well as the elderly, youth, and children, while also aggravating the situation of particularly vulnerable women and persons. As women continue to experience violations and abuses of their human rights, governmental bodies, public institutions and civil society organisations aimed at preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women are key actors responsible for protecting and empowering women during and after the war<sup>1</sup>.

WAVE commends, and would like to give special thanks for, the outstanding efforts of its members in the Ukraine and other countries heavily impacted by this war, as well as members in other countries at war and in serious humanitarian crisis, for continuing to provide life-saving services to women and children, whilst risking their own lives in these incredibly dangerous and painful times.

As a feminist network of Women's Specialist Services, dedicated to preventing and combatting all forms of VAWG, WAVE and its members will continue to take action to defend the human rights of all women and girls, and tirelessly advocate for their right to live a life free from violence.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information: Toolkit "Preventing and responding to gender-based violence during the war and in post-war settings – Experiences and recommendations of women's NGOs" (<https://wave-network.org/toolkit-prevention-response-gbv-war/>)