

## GPPAC Statement on the situation around Ukraine

9 February 2022

**The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) expresses its deep concern about the heightened tensions around Ukraine and the risk of an escalation of the armed conflict taking place in the east of the country, with its possible transformation into a large-scale war against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state of Ukraine.**

The unleashing of such a war would have catastrophic consequences for the citizens of all countries involved, as well as serious negative consequences for the peaceful and prosperous development of the whole world. A new round of escalation of hostilities may lead to numerous casualties amounting to many tens or even hundreds of thousands of victims, both among the military personnel and among the civilian population of the countries taking part in the war. The economies of those countries will suffer enormous losses, leading to a significant decrease in the life standards for the majority of the population. The devastating consequences of the war will also have a negative impact on the world economy, worsening people's well-being in many countries of the world, including those not directly involved in these events. Escalation of hostilities will inevitably result in new, large-scale flows of internally displaced persons and refugees, affecting, first and foremost, those countries that are geographically close to the states involved in the armed conflict.

Confrontation in the information sphere is particularly important in today's "hybrid war" situation. It is extremely dangerous when media sources, engaged in open discussions about possible military aggression against Ukraine, broadcast and propagate the statements of certain high-ranking Russian politicians who directly call for war, strikes against a neighboring country, sometimes even voicing the possibility of using weapons of mass destruction. Huge risks today are also associated with the new forms of aggression - for example, "cyberattacks".

It must be emphasized that the armed actions in the east of Ukraine have been going on for almost eight years, that the war has already claimed the lives of more than 14,000 people, and millions of people continue to be seriously threatened and deprived due to the ongoing confrontation. An escalation of the conflict will inevitably exacerbate this tragic situation.

**Regarding the current situation, we state the following:**

- **We consider necessary to urgently de-escalate the tensions along the Ukrainian borders with the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus.**
- **We call on the authorities of these countries to stop the deployment of troops and various types of weapons, including those of an offensive class, there as well as in Crimea and in areas not controlled by the Ukrainian authorities in the east of the country, and to begin a serious reduction in the armed forces already stationed there.**



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- **Urgent efforts are required to ensure the complete cessation of armed clashes in the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine;** it is also necessary to exclude the possibility of provocations and aggravation of the situation in any other areas of possible armed confrontation.

While understanding the steps of the Ukraine's authorities aimed at increasing the country's defense capabilities against external aggression, at the same time we call on them to:

- **Apply every possible effort to pursue inclusive non-violent ways of resolving existing problems and contradictions, to demonstrate commitment to peaceful, diplomatic means while endeavouring to restore the country's territorial integrity, and to**
- **Take measures to prevent possible provocations and accidents that could lead to uncontrolled developments.**

We consider it extremely important for the people and civil society of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus to take an active position against any possible aggression from their territories against Ukraine, as well as to cooperate with Ukrainian civil society in efforts to ease tensions. Therefore:

- **We urge to inform ordinary people about the catastrophic consequences such a development of events could have for these countries,** about threats to the life and well-being of people from a large-scale war, which could arise as a result of an escalation of armed confrontation in Donbas, or in case of a new, direct invasion of the territory of Ukraine.
- We believe that **the international community should make every effort to support people, especially servicemen, who make a voluntary and conscious decision to refuse to participate in aggression or wars of conquest targeting any other country,** both in the form of an armed invasion and/or other forms. In this regard, we call on UN member states, in particular - on the countries of the European Union, to adopt appropriate declarations and decisions, as well as to develop specific mechanisms providing comprehensive protection for the above-mentioned persons.
- **We call on the international community to support the peacebuilding efforts of civil society** including activities in mediation, confidence-building, public diplomacy and other initiatives aimed to prevent an escalation of hostilities and bring peace to Ukrainian soil.

We believe that for a constructive and long-term resolution of the current extremely dangerous international situation, it is necessary not only to prevent any further escalation of the armed confrontation, but also to **achieve a genuine, sustainable settlement of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine.** The first step toward such a settlement should be the **complete cessation of hostilities on all sides along the existing line of demarcation, as well as the adoption of a set of measures to ensure the rights of people living in the region.**



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We believe that this could be facilitated through a **significant quantitative and qualitative strengthening of the corresponding OSCE observation mission** to a level where it would be able to quickly record, confidently attribute and immediately make public any violation of the ceasefire regime, and carry out effective measures in response to such violations. We are sure that modern technical means and political will of the leaders of the OSCE member states make it possible to perform such a task.

**While we recognize, that the Russian Federation, Ukraine and all other states have legitimate interests related to ensuring their security, we note that such interests must be achieved exclusively by peaceful means, through diplomacy and taking into account similar interests of other countries.** We recognize that over the past decades, different countries and in different regions of the world have repeatedly taken actions that are dubious in view of international law, and often in direct violation of its fundamental principles. But such actions in the past cannot justify new gross violations of the world order established after the WWII and based on the principles of independence and territorial integrity of states.

**Therefore, we call on both the Russian Federation and on other countries of the world to abandon any policies of achieving certain goals in the field of security through the blackmail by force, as well as any economic or other actions involving information attacks and/or different forms of hybrid aggression against other states.** The security of certain countries cannot be achieved at the expense of others, it is possible only on a multilateral basis.

Therefore, in our opinion, it makes sense to **initiate – preferably under the auspices of the United Nations - a broad multilateral forum on the basic principles and approaches in the field of global security.** Such a forum could contribute to the development, on the basis of a multilateral dialogue, of common approaches to security issues, addressing existing "gray zones" of international law. This would allow to further minimize the risks of an arbitrary interpretation of its basic principles in the narrow, self-centered interests of an individual country or group of countries and to prevent a division of the world into new "spheres of influence".