

We, the undersigned groups, are writing to share our concerns regarding the situation for people with disabilities and older people as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and to urge you to implement the recommendations below to ensure consistent and comprehensive inclusion of people with disabilities and older people in the ongoing protection and humanitarian responses.

Millions of Ukrainian civilians have experienced and continue to face threats to their lives, safety, health, and well-being. Older people and people with disabilities are among the many who have been killed and injured in the repeated indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by Russian forces causing serious harm to civilians and civilian objects. Russian forces have also carried out unlawful killings of older people and people with disabilities and held them in cruel and inhuman detention conditions that lead to deaths. Older people and people with disabilities have experienced torture, humiliation, arbitrary detention, destruction and looting of their property; life-threatening shortages of food, water, medicines; limited access to healthcare and other essential services; and displacement at the hands of Russian forces.¹

Older people and people with disabilities are very often at particular risk due to the lack of accessible shelters, transportation, information, and evacuation methods. In addition, family and other support networks which provided essential goods and support services to people in their homes are severely disrupted. Electricity outages can leave people who rely on electric medical devices in mortal danger. People living in residential institutions experiencing risks and deprivation may be unable to leave to protect themselves, including due to confinement in the institution or the absence of community-based supports. For those displaced and arriving in unfamiliar locations, identifying and accessing essentials, services, and necessary support can be daunting.²

We therefore urge governments, UN agencies, humanitarian actors, donors, and others involved in protection and humanitarian response in Ukraine and in countries hosting refugees from Ukraine to ensure:

- Humanitarian support, including food, water, sanitation, medicine, healthcare, gender-based violence survivor services, and psychosocial support services is inclusive of people with disabilities and older people and is responsive to their specific needs, including those who cannot access centralized aid distribution and services.

¹ See, for example, Human Rights Watch, "[Older People No Longer Invisible Casualties](#) of War in Ukraine," May 2, 2022; Carlotta Gall, "[Bucha's Month of Terror](#)," *The New York Times*, April 11, 2022; Human Rights Watch, "Ukraine: [Russian Forces Trail of Death](#) in Bucha," April 21, 2022, Human Rights Watch, "Ukraine: [Apparent War Crimes](#) in Russia Controlled Areas," April 3, 2022.

² Amnesty International, "Ukraine: [Old People Confronted with War](#) Rely on the Support of Volunteers," June 21, 2022; Nonviolent Peace Force, "Kharkiv Snapshot: [Civilian Protection Needs and Responses](#) in Ukraine," June 2022. HIAS, "[At Risk and In Need](#): Recommendations to Help the Most Vulnerable People Displaced from Ukraine," June 8, 2022; HelpAge, "Ukraine: Rapid Needs [Assessment of Displaced Older People](#)," June 2022; Iryna Fedorovych, Kostiantyn Avtukhov, Marharyta Tarasova, Olena Prashko, and Olena Temchenko, "Preliminary Review: [Places of Deprivation of Liberty](#) in Ukraine in the War," Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union; Ukraine Without Torture; Human Rights Expert Center; Social Action Centre; and Fight For Right, June 2022. Disability Rights International, "Left Behind in the War: [Dangers Facing Children with Disabilities](#) in Ukraine's Orphanages," May 5, 2022.

- Accessible information, including in a variety of formats, about evacuations, humanitarian assistance, local services, and legal aid.
- Evacuation efforts that are accessible for older people and people with disabilities, including those with high support needs; targeted outreach for as long as necessary should seek to ensure all people with disabilities are reached and those who wish to participate can.
- Subject to data protection standards, regular collection and publication of data disaggregated by age, gender, disability, and other relevant characteristics. Age data should include specific older age cohorts.
- Regular consultation with people with disabilities, older people, and their representative organizations and incorporation of their views and recommendations into policy and programs.
- Consistent monitoring and reporting on inclusion of older people and people with disabilities in programming, including in donor-funded programming.
- Financial support to and collaboration with international and local non-governmental organizations representing older people and people with disabilities who have knowledge and expertise in protection and humanitarian assistance to these groups.
- Training in and implementation of expert guidance such as the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action; UNHCR's Need to Know Guidance on Older Persons in Forced Displacement; and the Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for Older People and People with Disabilities.

Sincerely,

(Alphabetical by Organization)

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Autistic Self Advocacy Network, R. Larkin Taylor-Parker, Legal Director

Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network, Sharon daVanport, Executive Director

Blue Ridge Independent Living Center, Karen M. Karney, Executive Director

Center for Dignity in Healthcare for People with Disabilities, Kara Ayers, Ph.D., Director

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Central Washington Disability Resources, Central Washington Disability Resources, Disability

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Disabilities Resource Center of Siouland, Don Dew, Executive Director
Disability Action Center - Northwest, Mark Leeper, Executive Director
Disability Rights International, Eric Rosenthal, Executive Director
Disability Rights Center, Janine Bertram, Community Organizer
DQIA: Disabled Queers in ACTION, Zan Thornton, Chief Executive Officer
Epilepsy Foundation, Laura Weidner, Vice President, Government Relations & Advocacy
European Disability Forum, Yannis Vardakastanis, President
FHI 360, Christine Nyirjesy Bragale, Director of Communications
Fight For Right (Ukraine), Yuliia Sachuk, Head of NGO
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N2ND Native to Natives with Disabilities, Zan Thornton, Co-Director / Chief Operating Officer
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HelpAge International, Justin Derbyshire, Chief Executive Officer
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Human Rights Watch, Rachel Denber, Deputy Director, Europe and Central Asia Division
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International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), Susan B. Somers, President
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LILA, Sheila Thomas, Executive Director
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National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), Donna Meltzer, Chief Executive Officer
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United States International Council on Disabilities, Isabel Hodge, Executive Director
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World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), Dr. Joseph J Murray, President
World Institute on Disability, Marcie Roth, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Wyoming Statewide Independent Living Council, Amber Alexander, Chair