



PUB 16

Together for Justice: Our Collective Action on Ukraine

COVER NOTE

The ACT Structure responsible for this statement is the ACT Alliance Ukraine Forum. We have consulted the content and language of the statement with the members of said forum. The statement addresses the key humanitarian and development concerns in Ukraine caused by the ongoing war. The proposed commitments largely concern respect for international humanitarian law, support of accountability mechanisms, localization and the operationalization of the HDP-Nexus.

TOPIC

The statement addresses the impact of ten years of war in Ukraine on the civilian population. Key issues include international humanitarian law, national and international accountability processes, inadequate support for Ukraine's national and local actors, early recovery and reconstruction efforts, and the operation of the HDP Nexus.

This statement calls on states to uphold international humanitarian law, ensuring protection for civilians and humanitarian workers in Ukraine. It urges support for accountability mechanisms addressing violations of humanitarian and human rights law. It calls on donors to increase direct funding to local Ukrainian organizations and put Ukrainian civil society at the center of early recovery and reconstruction efforts. It also calls on humanitarian, development, and peace actors to leverage local expertise when implementing the HDP-Nexus.

STATEMENT

Together for Justice: Our Collective Action on Ukraine

Ten years of war have left no Ukrainian life untouched. The brutal Russian attack on and annexation of Crimea, followed by the full-scale invasion and continued Russian war effort, have led to untold suffering. People have been killed, maimed, and tortured, millions displaced, communities torn apart, buildings and infrastructure destroyed, and development gains lost. Too many Ukrainians are facing health and mental health needs that will impact them for the rest of their lives. The ACT Ukraine Forum presents this statement to the ACT General Assembly to maintain support for principled humanitarian action, international humanitarian law (IHL), the work of local and national actors, and the operationalization of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP)-Nexus in Ukraine.

The daily targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine is a stark reminder of the lack of respect for fundamental norms of IHL. Humanitarian workers and their infrastructure are also denied their lawful protection. Echoing the ACT Assembly’s theme “Together for Justice,” we strongly support national and international accountability mechanisms for violations of IHL and international human rights law. We highlight and welcome the important role of Ukrainian civil society organizations in enabling these processes.

Ukrainian civil society, volunteer networks, faith-based actors, and local officials together with INGOs and other stakeholders have delivered aid across Ukraine since 2014. Ukrainian civil society and humanitarian organizations must play a central role in informing, implementing, and overseeing principled humanitarian action, recovery, and reconstruction efforts in Ukraine. Only by putting civil society at the center of such efforts can the diverse views and needs of the Ukrainian population be appropriately reflected.

ACT Alliance can play a key role in facilitating capacity sharing among local NGOs, in recognition of their knowledge and capacity. ACT Alliance members should explore the interest among local faith-based actors to engage strategically with the ACT Alliance.

Discussions around early recovery and reconstruction efforts for Ukraine, including at the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2025, take place against the backdrop of hostilities. With the ongoing risks of further infrastructure destruction, early recovery and reconstruction efforts should focus on investments in social protection programmes. Additional clearing and educational measures in relation to mines and unexploded ordnances are also key to allowing the continuation of social, economic, and agricultural life in Ukraine.

Strengthening Ukraine’s health and social protection systems is an important and urgent task given the growing war-related needs and reduced international funding. Humanitarian and development efforts should aim to provide financial and technical support to these systems. Special attention should be paid to the needs of particularly vulnerable groups in society, including displaced persons, orphans, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, elderly individuals without family support, and people with war-induced health and mental health needs and/or disabilities.

The effective and efficient early recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine warrant the coordination and collaboration of actors across the HDP Nexus. Under the “Do-No-Harm” principle, all actors must ensure that their efforts are conflict-sensitive to avoid causing or increasing social tensions. Increasing the

participation, leadership, and representation of women and women-led organizations and strengthening local peace capacities are key to the sustainable success of peace and reconciliation efforts.

Commitments and Recommendations

The 2024 ACT General Assembly is an opportunity to reaffirm ACT Alliance’s commitment to international humanitarian law, principled humanitarian action, localization and the operationalization of the HDP-Nexus in Ukraine.

- We call upon all states as signatories to the 1949 Geneva Conventions to fulfill their general obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, especially the protection of the civilian population and humanitarian workers in Ukraine.
- We call upon all states to provide support to national and international accountability mechanisms for violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine.
- We call upon all states to ensure access to quality services and protection to refugees and displaced people in neighbouring and other countries.
- We call on the international community to substantially continue funding humanitarian and development actors including principled humanitarian action in partnership with local and national organizations in Ukraine, recognizing their unique position and ability to reach and support civilians in all areas of Ukraine.
- We call on all stakeholders involved in the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine to include the Ukrainian civil society at the center of such discussions and to prioritize investment in social protection and societal resilience programs.
- We call on all humanitarian, development and peace actors operating in Ukraine to support the operationalization of the HDP-Nexus by drawing on local capacities when planning and implementing nexus initiatives and strategically utilizing the unique value of each actor’s mandate, expertise, and resources for a just and lasting peace.
- We call on all stakeholders involved in response, recovery and reconstruction to ensure collaboration that facilitates social cohesion.

A majority of the assembly has declared itself in agreement with the opinions expressed in this statement. While many ACT members agree with the public statement, there are members who have expressed differing perspectives on the content or tone. Their decision reflects the diverse viewpoints within our alliance, and we respect their choice to abstain or vote against. As always, we value the collective dialogue and encourage continued discussions on the matter at hand, recognizing the strength of our unity in diversity.