

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General
United Nations
New York

15 April 2022

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

As former staff members of the UN system, we, the undersigned, are taking the liberty to address you directly in your capacity as chief executive of the one and only global body that our world possesses. We are a small sample of the thousands of dedicated staff who have worked and are still working for the ideals enshrined in the UN Charter, believing in the UN's mission and, at times, risking our own lives to advance the UN's good work around the world.

We have decided to raise our voice out of concern for the existential challenge that the United Nations is facing in this historic juncture. The Russian invasion of Ukraine severely undermines the post-World War II global order. It is the pinnacle of a series of threats to humanity's peace and security, shared prosperity and respect for human rights that the UN embodies.

No longer working for the UN, we are not privy to the behind-the-scenes initiatives that you and other senior Secretariat officials may be pursuing. We have heard your appeals to stop the conflict. What we and the broader public want to see, though, is a political UN presence and public engagement, in addition to the UN's notable humanitarian response to the Ukraine crisis. We want to see a clear strategy to re-establish peace, starting with a provisional ceasefire, and the use of the UN's capacity for good offices, mediation and conflict-resolution. That could include visits to the conflict-stricken areas, discussions with the opposing sides, even moving your own office temporarily to Europe, closer to the urgently needed negotiations and, thereby, indicating the UN's resolve to address this major crisis head-on.

We know that you care deeply about ensuring a positive impact of our United Nations on humanity and the planet, which will also mark your legacy at the helm of the world body. We therefore implore you to intensify your personal efforts, deploying all capabilities at your disposal and acting upon lessons learnt from previous conflicts, for the cessation of hostilities and conflict resolution through peaceful means.

This is the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, which is being tested again in this case. We are horrified at the alternative, the UN becoming increasingly irrelevant and, eventually, succumbing to the fate of its predecessor, the League of Nations, with the human losses and material destruction that went with it.

We stand ready to help in whatever way we possibly can, amplifying the UN's message, raising resources, even volunteering to serve again for a certain period. We are already doing a lot in this regard, but we and the world need your clarion call, strategic vision and catalytic actions, as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

We greet you in solidarity and await your practical response in the spirit of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and all the achievements in international law and global governance of the past several decades that should not be diminished nor lost.

Yours truly,

*(Signatories to be added in alphabetical order of surnames –
signatures may keep coming and the list of signatories can be updated)*