

Statement of support for Ukraine following the Russian invasion

We, doctors and researchers of **The Global Alliance Against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD)** joined the **Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS)** stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine as the unfolding humanitarian disaster created by Russia's invasion continues. We are deeply concerned about the impact on the health and wellbeing of communities in Ukraine and pledge our strong support to frontline workers, affected members, partner organisations, and the 1,7 million people who have had to flee their homes.

The displacement of thousands of people and the barrage of shelling that damages sanitation and health infrastructures create a humanitarian crisis with devastating health consequences, including exacerbating respiratory diseases that have already escalated due to COVID-19.

Ukrainian doctors and nurses have to postpone other care to focus on treating the wounded, despite the desperate shortages of essential hospital supplies, medicines and healthcare staff. [WHO](#) has warned that dangerously low oxygen reserves make it difficult to treat severe respiratory illnesses such as pneumonia and growing numbers of patients with COVID-19.

Compounding the risk to patients, critical hospital services are also jeopardized by power shortages, and ambulances transporting patients are in danger of getting caught in the crossfire. Thousands of lives are at risk.

As we witness the escalation of atrocities, we call on our members and the wider respiratory community to support humanitarian aid initiatives for the Ukrainian people wherever possible.

Our FIRS partner, the European Respiratory Society, has collated a list of initiatives giving support to refugees, providing medical aid packages, supporting paramedics and doctors on the front line, and offering emergency responses to children.

Please consider supporting one or more of these active humanitarian aid initiatives:

- [International Committee of the Red Cross](#)
- [Ukraine Humanitarian Fund – United Nations](#)
- [UNICEF – Emergency support to conflict in eastern Ukraine](#)
- [UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency](#)
- [Médecins Sans Frontières \(MSF\)](#)
- [International Medical Corps](#)
- [Polish Medical Mission](#)

Links to external sources of medical advice can be found in the ERS **disaster medicine** resource.

Alongside this call for support, the European Respiratory Society is currently taking steps to suspend collaborations with Russian and Belarusian societies.

The Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally. The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

FIRS comprises the American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST), American Thoracic Society (ATS), the Asian Pacific Society of Respiriology (APSR), Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax (ALAT), European Respiratory Society (ERS), International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (The Union), Pan African Thoracic Society (PATS), the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), and the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD).

The Global Alliance Against Chronic Respiratory Diseases (GARD) is a voluntary alliance of national and international organizations, institutions, and agencies committed towards the common goal to reduce the global burden of respiratory diseases.

This statement was prepared by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and joined by GARD. The opinions expressed may not represent, reflect or align with the view of every GARD affiliated organization, institution, group, or individual member.