



President of the Nursing Association of Ukraine speaks of nurses' determination and gratitude, one year after the invasion of her country

Geneva, Switzerland; 28 February, 2023 - ICN Chief Executive Officer Howard Catton has had a video call with the President of the Nursing Association of Ukraine, Tetyana Chernyshenko, on the day marking one year since the invasion of Ukraine, Friday, 24 February.

Ms Chernyshenko expressed her gratitude to the ICN for its continuing support for nurses in Ukraine, and thanked the many Ukrainian nurses who had consented to have their accounts of their lives since the invasion mentioned in ICN's recent [update](#), which included a call for peace and the immediate ending of hostilities.

Ms Chernyshenko said: "We have a lot to do, and we are still working hard. Today is a big day: we are marking the tragedy Ukraine faced one year ago, but also the accomplishments we have achieved. War is very cruel, and we have lived in this state for the whole year: sometimes we have had no power, sometimes no internet connection, and we have endured all of this. But Ukrainian people have been dying.

'As you know, the Ukrainian armed forces have grown this year because a lot of peaceful Ukrainians joined the army: they were doctors, engineers, teachers and artists, people who had never held a gun before. And as of today, every second or third soldier is a university graduate, including many nurses.

'There are no words to describe what we have been through and the war is still not over. We have many nurses and doctors on the front line, and we are supporting all of them. Despite everything that we have been through, they are doing an excellent job, saving lives. And with such strong people on our side, we are definitely on our way to a great victory.

'We are extremely grateful to everybody who has supported us this year, especially the ICN and the National Nursing Associations. This support is very valuable, and we are very grateful for it. We are absolutely sure that Ukraine is going to win.'

'As of today, our official statistics show that 106 healthcare workers have been killed, 33 of them at their place of work. The real figure will be much higher as currently we only have those that are confirmed by officials: the true numbers will only be available when the war is over.

'Many hospitals and buildings have been ruined and they will have to be rebuilt from scratch. And as you saw in the comments from our nurses, many of their houses were destroyed or badly damaged: they used the support from ICN to repair what they could. It's a very common thing for our people right now to be left homeless and without any belongings: but our communities are coming together to help those people and relocate them.

'It's very difficult to focus with all this going on, and it's difficult to work, but we are strong and that's what we are doing. Unfortunately we cannot meet face to face like we did before. We have a lot of online conferences and meetings. Recently we had a big online conference on infection control with 1,000 nurses, and we are planning the next one, which will be on post-registration education. We are also planning for our participation in an International Medical Forum in the exhibition centre in Kyiv at the end of March. Many, many nurses want to meet

face to face – probably everyone – as they really miss personal interaction. The main goal for all of us is to bring our victory closer.”

Mr Catton thanked Ms Chernyshenko for her time and her comments, and he also expressed his gratitude to the many Ukrainian nurses who had sent in their stories, which so starkly showed the difficult lives they are living, and their professionalism, fortitude and courage.

He said that ICN and its member National Nurses Associations were as determined as ever to support the nurses of Ukraine and express their solidarity.

Mr Catton said: “We have been very concerned about the attacks on health facilities and health staff. We attended the World Health Organization Executive Board meetings in January and there was a report on this issue that highlighted such attacks in Ukraine. ICN has publicised that report and expressed our concern. We have also called for the International Criminal Court to investigate and, if necessary, prosecute those responsible.”

He said that before Christmas, ICN had sent additional funds to Ukraine in preparation for the winter, and that it would continue to support nurses in this way and by, for example, funding them to attend conferences where possible.

Mr Catton also spoke about ICN’s close contacts with the World Health Organization’s European Office, where the situation in Ukraine was high on the agenda, and said that ICN would carry on supporting nurses in Ukraine throughout the war and in its aftermath, when its health services will have to be rebuilt.

He said that the Ukrainian nurses who have perished as a result of the war would be commemorated at this year’s ICN Congress, which is going to be held from July 1-5 in Montreal, Canada.

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