



IFMSA

International Federation of
Medical Students' Associations

PRESS RELEASE

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Joint statement of the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA), the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) Students, the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA), the International Association of Dental Students (IADS), and the International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF)

Peace and health are closely interlinked, one cannot exist without the other. The very basic principles of living together in healthy societies are strongly linked to a peaceful environment. Good health is the basic condition that enables people to contribute and participate in a society and their everyday activities. Violence, aggression and warfare are among the greatest risks not only for sustainable peace, but also for health and the economic welfare. Health systems and their development can contribute to peace and peacebuilding by promoting justice, ethics and humanitarian values. In order to promote peace and explore its deeper components, we must understand and address the underlying reasons of its disruptions - such as violence, conflicts and human rights violations.

The IFMSA, the IPPNW Students, the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) and the International Association of Dental Students (IADS) and International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) share a common value and a strong stance on principles of peace and peacebuilding. We understand peace as both the absence of conflict (negative peace), and the presence of equality, equity and harmony (positive peace). We understand that a peaceful environment is not only important for safe and full access to health care for our communities, but also essential for the continuity of education as well as the sanctuary of health services. On the International Day of Peace, we would like to present you a joint statement on several issues, which are of a particular concern for all organisations:

On nuclear disarmament:

We are currently living in very fragile times, demonstrated by rising tensions, prolonged insecurities and violent conflicts. Diplomatic disputes and military actions involving nuclear armament are of particular concern for the international community, keeping in mind the possible frightful and disastrous consequences of such conflict. The magnitude of nuclear weapons' power is unparalleled, with the International Court of Justice stating in 1996 "the destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They

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have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet.“ A single nuclear warhead, if detonated on a large city, could kill millions of people, with the effects persisting for decades, affecting generations of people living in surrounding areas. Despite the tragic historical events and catastrophic potential, nuclear weapons still remain a key attribute in the security policies for many countries, and possessing them has become a perverse status symbol.

On prolonged crises:

We are deeply concerned about several prolonged crises around the world, which diminish individual country's development. These crises leave behind economic, social, environmental, and medical repercussions. It is disturbing to have civilians in strife for decades and children growing in such conditions. Despite global attempts to save lives, alleviate suffering and decrease the burden of such crises through humanitarian and development aid, the underlying determinants of these crises remain unsolved. Continuous gun-exports into conflict zones account for long-lasting armed conflicts. Regardless of global efforts to improve humanitarian coordination, a substantial amount of medical and humanitarian aid remains inaccessible to those in need. In addition to challenges in access to medical and humanitarian aid, attacks towards civilians, and among them the humanitarian and medical personnel in conflict zones, have become a tragic reality of the modern era. Despite the fact that International Humanitarian Law (IHL) explicitly states that civilians and personnel engaging in provision of humanitarian aid must always be respected and protected, such attacks occur on a daily basis. We have witnessed frequent and repeated attacks against health services, in some cases even of systematic nature. Measures to strengthen protection of civilian populations in conflict and non-conflict situations must be implemented at the national levels, and an effective system for bringing responsible perpetrators to justice must be installed.

On peace, peacebuilding and the role of youth:

The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development puts people and their well-being at the center of all actions, following the principle to “leave no one behind“. The aim of the SDGs goal number 16 is to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.“

Youth and adolescents are among the most vulnerable, and often most affected, during periods of violence and conflict. Despite this, youth-led peacebuilding initiatives are the important and positive contribution of youth in efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

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On 9th of December 2015, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted legally binding resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security to increase representation of youth in decision-making and peacebuilding at all levels. This was a historic step of the United Nations towards recognition of an active role of young people in building and sustaining peace. As health sciences students, youth, and future health care professionals, we have an undisputed duty to promote the ideas of peace and peacebuilding. We understand that for sustainable peace, a long term action, education and community work is of an imperative importance. This should not only be reflected in education of young people on the role of peace in our lives, but also in the professional code of conduct and practice of health care workers.

Finally, noting the importance of political will and particularly political action to achieve sustainable and long-lasting peace, we consider it most important to call for world's governments to:

- Develop and implement all their policies and activities with guidance and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, advocate for peace through prevention and removal of threats to peace, whilst refraining from engaging in acts of violence
- Comply with the principles of international law and manage all forms of conflict through democratic resolution
- Sign and implement Nuclear Ban Treaty, with a target of their total abolition
- Sign and ratify relevant international documents, treaties and conventions which aim to regulate usage, trade and all other activities related to weapons of mass destructions, conventional weapons and other types of weapons with the overall aim to reduce their usage
- Ensure the protection of civilians, specifically youth and children at times of armed conflict and emergencies including post-conflict periods and protection from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, reject all forms of violence, especially against vulnerable groups and civilians

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About the [IFMSA](#):

The International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA) envisions a world in which medical students unite for global health and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values to take on health leadership roles locally and globally. Founded in 1951, it is one of the world's oldest and largest student-run organizations. It represents, connects and engages every day with an inspiring and engaging network of 1.3 million medical students from 136 national member organizations in 127 countries around the globe.



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About the [IPPNW Students](#):

IPPNW Students is the official students group of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear (IPPNW) non-partisan federation of national medical groups in 64 countries, representing tens of thousands of doctors, medical students, other health workers, and concerned citizens who share the common goal of creating a more peaceful and secure world freed from the threat of nuclear annihilation. IPPNW was awarded the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize for performing "a considerable service to mankind by spreading authoritative information and by creating an awareness of the catastrophic consequences of atomic warfare."

About the [IVSA](#):

The International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) is a non-profit organization for veterinary students across the globe. The association was founded in 1953 in Germany and is voluntarily run by veterinary students since then. The mission of IVSA is to benefit the animals and people of the world, which is accomplished by promoting and enabling international application of veterinary skills, education and knowledge. IVSA has approximately 30.000 members, who study at more than one-hundred different universities in over fifty different countries, representing 6 different continents of the world.

About the [IADS](#):

The International Association of Dental Students (IADS) was formed in 1951, to unite the dental students of the world and allow them to exchange knowledge and experiences about dentistry at an international level. Representing the interests of more than 200,000 dental students in 50 countries worldwide and having its headquarters at the FDI World Dental Federation headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland), the Association strives for dental educational and scientific excellence throughout the international student projects and initiatives it manages.

About the [IPSF](#):

The International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation (IPSF) represents approximately 380,000 pharmacy students and recent graduates in 84 countries worldwide. IPSF is the leading international advocacy organisation for pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences students promoting improved public health through provision of information, education, networking, and a range of publications and professional activities.

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For more information, please contact us at:

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