

**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES**

# **NURSES FOR PEACE**

**Update - December 2024**



## | A VIDEO MESSAGE FROM ICN CEO HOWARD CATTON



Mr Catton said: “Nurses are at the forefront of the response to tragedies and disasters around the world, running towards them while others stand back or run away. And it is for that reason that ICN established its [#NursesforPeace](#) campaign.

‘Following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, there was a significant outpouring of concern from nurses around the world who wanted to show solidarity with their colleagues on the front lines, nurse to nurse, association to association, in a very personal, practical and meaningful way. Since then, ICN’s Humanitarian Fund has provided financial support for equipment, medical supplies, shelter, clothing, food, training and mental health support.

‘Tragically, tensions have increased in many hotspots around the world in recent years, resulting in an increase in the number of conflicts and humanitarian disasters, and nurses continue to demonstrate their support in ways that provide practical help to nurses on the front lines. ICN has repeatedly called for the cessation of hostilities everywhere and the release of any remaining hostages.



‘Those nurses on the front lines are the people who will, when the conflicts and humanitarian disasters have passed, will take on responsibility for the recovery and rebuilding of health services out of the rubble and ashes that will remain. We know that nurses are health makers, but they are also peacemakers, and that’s why [#NursesforPeace](#) is now an essential pillar of the work of ICN.

'At this year's conference in Bucharest, Romania, marking ICN's 125th anniversary, ICN President Dr Pamela Cipriano and I stood alongside Mircea Timofte, President of the Order of Nurses, Midwives and Medical Assistants of Romania, for a moment of remembrance for all the nurses around the world who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

'This update provides the latest information we have about how our Humanitarian Fund and #NursesforPeace are helping the nurses around the world who are working in the most difficult situations.

'We would like to offer our sincere thanks to the National Nurses Associations, the other organizations and the individual nurses and members of the public who have so generously supported ICN's Humanitarian Fund and our NursesforPeace campaign.

## **I A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE JAPANESE NURSES ASSOCIATION**

ICN thanks the Japanese Nurses Association (JNA) for providing its generous support for ICN's Humanitarian Fund. Its President, Hiroe Takahashi, explains why such support is considered essential by Japan's nurses.

"On behalf of the Japanese Nursing Association I would like to express our gratitude for the continued efforts of ICN in representing, advancing and protecting nurses, in collaboration with its member National Nursing Associations (NNAs). Above all, we sincerely respect nurses who provide care on the frontline to protect health of people in humanitarian emergencies.

'The role of nurses in such difficult situations is essential in identifying and supporting changes in the physical and mental health of populations, and helping people to rebuild their lives. However, nurses who provide care also need support in such situations. Since Japan has experienced many large-scale natural disasters, the Japanese Nursing Association has created system in which nurses support their colleagues who are affected by disasters. From our experience, it is obvious that supporting nurses through the Humanitarian Fund is a meaningful and necessary activity for nurses to fulfil their role.

'We sympathize with the ICN Humanitarian Fund objectives and its activities. It is my sincere hope that the Fund will continue to provide effective support to meet the needs of nurses in the frontline in a timely manner, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of people in vulnerable situations."



## | ICN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH DIRECT RELIEF



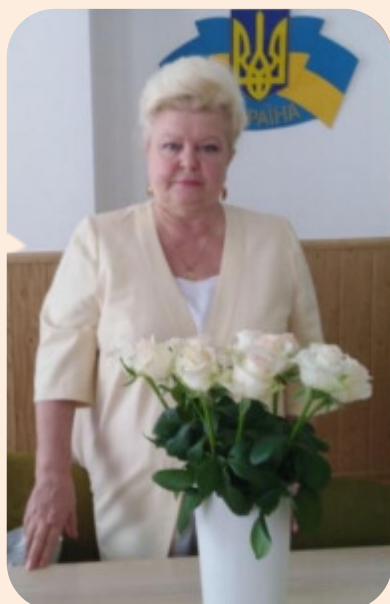
In September ICN formed a strategic partnership with humanitarian organization **Direct Relief**, an established charity that works to equip health professionals in resource-poor communities to meet the challenges of diagnosing and caring for people in need.

Direct Relief's expertise in logistics, planning and coordination, enables it to respond quickly, effectively, and efficiently to get medical resources where they need to be to save lives. That expertise, combined with ICN's knowledge of healthcare and our National Nurses Associations' (NNAs) deep understanding of local health care needs and services, makes for a dynamic partnership that will enhance our ability to support nurses in crisis situations, and provide rapid, focused assistance to where it is needed most.

The partnership with Direct Relief has significantly expanded ICN's humanitarian initiatives through the appointment of a dedicated Humanitarian Liaison Officer. It has enabled regular engagement with NNAs in crisis-affected regions, providing valuable insights into the challenges faced by nurses and healthcare systems, and enabled ICN to target support with positive results. Our efforts have centred on addressing the immediate needs of nurses and health care systems, while laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term resilience.

## MESSAGES FROM THE FRONT LINE

### | UKRAINE: A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE NURSING ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINE, TETYANA CHERNYSHENKO



"Thank you ICN for your cooperation and support of Ukrainian nurses. This brutal war continues: the enemy is trying to destroy our energy system, and mercilessly sends rockets and other weapons to destroy the civilian population and our hospitals, educational institutions and residential buildings.

'Over the past two years more than 1,800 medical facilities have been attacked, with 214 destroyed beyond repair. Amid the ongoing war, work to restore these facilities continues in a bid to ensure that every Ukrainian has access to the high-quality medical care that they need. So far, Ukraine's Ministry of Health and its partners have fully restored more than 500 medical facilities and partially restored a further 358.

'While facilities can be replaced, Ukraine's nurses mourn the deaths of their colleagues, including:

- Tatyana Nikolaevna Tikhonova, who died at work in Sumy when her hospital was bombed.
- Maria Churikova, who died in Kharkiv, two weeks after she had received a wound while volunteering on the front lines, where she had received many awards.
- Svitlana Shmyga, a primary care nurse from the Gulyaypillia District, who was killed in a Zaporizhzhia regional hospital by a guided aerial bomb.
- Marina Kaplun, an infectious diseases specialist nurse, died along with her daughter as a result of shelling in the village of Kurakhivka, in the Donetsk region.



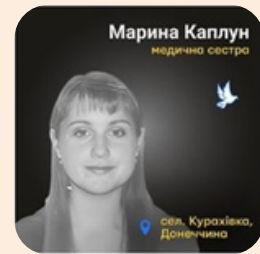
Tatyana Nikolaevna  
Tikhonova



Maria Churikova



Svitlana Shmyga



Marina Kaplun

'The Ukrainian people continue the sacred struggle for their country, for the right to its independence, for their native land. Ukrainian nurses, together with doctors, paramedics and combat medics, united in the medical front, honourably do their duty and bring back to life soldiers, civilians, all people who need medical help.

'Ukrainian nurses know the price of peace and a peaceful sky like no other. Ukrainian children dream of a life without sirens, without having to hide and sleep in basements to escape enemy bombs, drones and rockets.

'We received with great pleasure the news that Ukrainian nurses may be able to join ICN in the future. Recently, we held a meeting of heads of regional associations of nurses, where these issues and ICN's #NursesforPeace campaign were discussed: everyone agreed that, for now, the main thing for us is our victory in this cruel war. Many thanks to the International Council of Nurses for its help and support.'

## **| PROJECT KESHER UKRAINE**

Meanwhile, ICN has expanded its support [AKI] for Project Keshet Ukraine by funding a second tranche of 25 electric bicycles for health care workers in conflict-affected regions. This initiative builds on the success of the first donation of 10 e-bikes, which significantly improved health care delivery in Kramatorsk, a frontline city in the Donetsk region.



The additional bikes will expand the project's reach to underserved areas in the Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Dnipro regions, enabling health care workers to provide critical care to vulnerable populations in remote and high-risk zones. With the support of the first tranche, health care workers reduced travel times, increased patient visits to 3,600 per month, and alleviated physical strain on nurses.



This second tranche aims to further enhance the mobility and efficiency of medical teams, enabling an additional 9,000 patient visits monthly across these regions. ICN remains committed to ensuring that health care workers on the frontlines have the tools they need to continue their life-saving work.

## | PALESTINE

In July 2024, the Palestinian Nursing and Midwifery Association (PNMA) received critical financial support from ICN, which significantly helped nurses living and working in Gaza during the ongoing conflict. This initiative was designed aimed to alleviate the immense pressures faced by nurses, ensuring they could continue their vital health care work.

Using ICN funds, the PNMA distributed 150 food parcels, valued at \$100 each, to nurses and their families in Gaza. These parcels, delivered via local traders, were crucial for sustaining nurses, who have continued working in hospitals despite not being paid since the current war began in October 2023. This aid addressed immediate food insecurity, allowing nurses to focus on their demanding health care duties without queuing for food aid. However, many more nurses still require assistance.

The initiative's primary aim was to enable nurses to continue delivering health care in dire circumstances. Most nurses are working unpaid in war-torn hospitals, while also struggling to support their dependents. The initiative is also supporting the families of nurses who lost their lives while serving, providing much-needed relief in their grief.

The financial support has benefited 150 nurses so far, with plans in place to expand it to others when possible. It fostered solidarity and reinforced the message that the global nursing community stands alongside the nurses of Gaza. The initiative delivered tangible support and uplifted the spirits of Gaza's nurses, offering hope during a time of immense hardship.

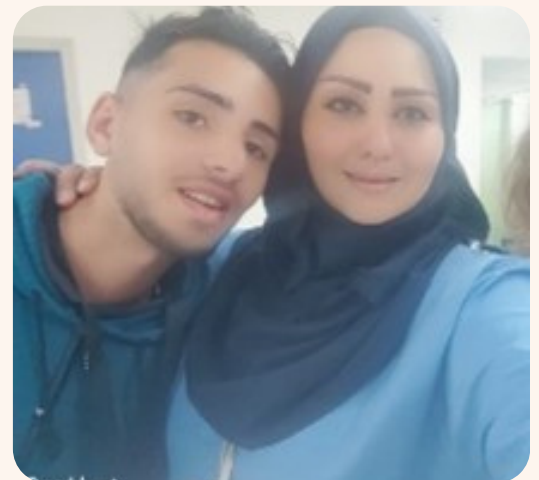
The PNMA faces significant obstacles in reaching nurses in Gaza from the West Bank due to logistical barriers. The association's financial instability further limits its ability to expand aid. Nurses in Gaza endure extreme danger, exhaustion and personal tragedies, compounding the logistical struggles they continue to face as the conflict continues.

The PNMA seeks increased financial support to assist more nurses and amplify their calls for help. These efforts underscore the urgency of global solidarity and advocacy to end the ongoing crisis, ensuring nurses can continue their life-saving work with the safety and dignity that they deserve.

### | A NURSE AND MIDWIFE'S STORY

Nurse and midwife Wafaa Hamdan was providing nursing services to patients at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza, Palestine. When the hospital was invaded, she was hit in the face by shrapnel. She was evacuated and received treatment in a makeshift tented facility without medicine or food.

Three months later, her son Raif Ibrahim Lafi (pictured with Ms Hamdan above) was killed in the city of Nuseirat. To this day she has been unable to give him a dignified burial because despite contacting the Red Cross, she has been unable to locate his body.



### | LEBANON

The President of the Lebanese Order of Nurses, Ms Abir Kurdi Alame, has reported to ICN on the devastating impact of the ongoing crisis, which has severely strained Lebanon's health care system. The Order is playing a critical role in supporting nurses and the organizations they work in amid a severe humanitarian crisis. It is focused on addressing the dire conditions in affected areas, assisting unemployed nurses, responding to internally displaced persons (IDPs), and addressing nurses' social and mental health needs.

In red zones, where 30% of hospitals are non-operational or partially functioning, nurses face unsafe conditions, often living on-site and enduring mental health challenges due to separation from their families. The Order is prioritizing support for these nurses, ensuring they have the resources needed to continue providing care. Additionally, it is addressing job losses, as a result 1,500 nurses having been displaced due to hospital closures, by advocating for financial aid and finding job opportunities in safer regions.

The crisis has led to a surge in IDPs, straining hospital facilities in safer areas. The Order is supporting efforts to help these facilities manage increased demand and open new units by providing hospitals with CVs of appropriately trained nurses who have been displaced from dangerous areas. It is also partnering with the Ministry of Health to

provide essential training in burns and trauma care, addressing the growing need for such specialized skills.

The Order is committed to addressing the social needs of Lebanon's nurses, particularly those who have been displaced by the ongoing crisis. The Order plans to use donation made by ICN to support nurses' social needs, and they are identifying these needs through a survey. It has revealed that out of 900 responses, the majority require additional assistance, including medications and basic necessities, and an alarming 45% indicated that they need urgent financial support.

In October 2024, ICN provided funding which will be distributed by the Order, on the basis of a survey of the needs of nurses who are all working in extremely stressful circumstances. The findings reveal severe financial hardships caused by destroyed infrastructure, the soaring cost of living and limited resources.

Despite these immense challenges, nurses continue to serve their communities with unwavering dedication. The Order has addressed several critical needs: medication shortages have been resolved through collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, and nurses requiring psychological support were connected with resources through the Lebanese Order of Psychologists.

Additionally, two webinars on mental health and managing stress and violence were attended by more than 220 nurses, providing much-needed guidance and support.

The Lebanese Order of Nurses has expressed their deep gratitude to the financial contribution from the ICN #Nursesfor Peace fund, which has enabled it to provide direct financial assistance to nurses in urgent need.

While the ICN Humanitarian Fund has made this assistance possible, additional funding is crucial to ensure all affected nurses can rebuild their lives, cope with the emotional toll of the crisis, and sustain their essential work.

## **| SOUTH SUDAN**

The South Sudan National Nurses Association (SSNMA) is working to support nurses and address significant challenges in the country's fragile health care system. Nurses face harsh conditions and a lack of equipment, minimal resources, and frequent disruptions caused by conflict, climate events, and an influx of refugees. Amid these hardships, nurses play a critical role in providing care, often managing alone without doctors and pharmacists on site, especially in remote areas.

A major issue is the shortage of essential medical supplies and medications. Delayed deliveries, supply chain inefficiencies and a complete lack of certain essential supplies severely hamper health care delivery. Nurses require training to manage limited resources efficiently and avoid wastage due to expired supplies. ICN, in partnership with Direct Relief, is working to address these shortages by identifying specific needs and amplifying nurses' voices.



The country's healthcare system remains underdeveloped, with chronic emergencies, underfunding, and systemic weaknesses persisting since independence in 2011. ICN's Organizational Development of National Nursing Associations (ODENNA) Programme is helping with leadership training and professional development, but further training in clinical skills and supply chain management is urgently needed. Integrating nurses into the Ministry of Health's structure could empower them to advocate for critical changes.

At Al Saba Children's Hospital, the nation's only paediatric facility, resource gaps are acute. Families must often buy basic medical items themselves, leaving many children untreated if they cannot afford them. With previous funding from the Health Pool Fund no longer available, the hospital struggles to meet demand. ICN and the SSNMA aim to address these challenges by securing donations of essential and specialized medications, including paediatric cancer treatments.

In conclusion, South Sudan's healthcare system is strained by economic, logistical, and environmental factors. Nurses remain resilient, working under extreme conditions to provide care. The SSNMA and ICN are committed to supporting them through advocacy, partnerships and resource mobilization to strengthen the country's health care infrastructure.

## **| SUDAN**

During the war in Sudan, nurses have witnessed the destruction of their once well-functioning health system. Numerous facilities have been destroyed, including specialist facilities, and many health care workers have been displaced. The ongoing conflict has left countless individuals without access to essential medical services amid an extensive humanitarian crisis.

The Sudanese Nurses Organization (SNO) has been making significant efforts to support their members during this crisis and to advocate for the needs of the population.

The SNO has spoken of its concern about the cholera outbreak and the urgent need for intravenous fluids, oral rehydration solutions (ORS), personal protective equipment (PPE), and the other consumables necessary for infection prevention and control. ICN is working with Direct Relief to identify areas where they may be able to provide material support, for example to treat growing malnutrition among children. Women are experiencing difficulties in obtaining hygiene products, and water, sanitation, health care waste management (WASH) facilities for much of the population are very poor.

The health care infrastructure in Sudan is in a state of collapse, with no electricity supplies and a desperate need for generators to power hospitals. Many specialist services have been affected by this: haemodialysis is critically needed but is impossible to run without electricity, and much of the specialist equipment has been destroyed.

destroyed. The SNO is looking for partners who may be able to support the reestablishment of these services. The conflict has rendered the 7 oncology hubs non-functional, due to a severe shortage of oncology medications. The MoH is aiming to reestablish one of the previous seven centres in the near future, and the SNO is searching for partners who may be able to support this essential work.

The SNO has been actively involved in these efforts, demonstrating remarkable resilience and dedication. It has been instrumental in coordinating emergency response efforts and has established rapid response teams with the support of ICN.

The war in Sudan is not receiving as much attention in the media as could be expected, and donations and fundraising efforts of many organizations have focused on other issues that have taken prominence in the media of the Global North. The [United Nations food agency](#) has emphasised that the "Sudan crisis must not be forgotten by world leaders."

The solidarity and support from the global community are vital in these times of extreme hardship, and although ICN's initial support has provided a lifeline to many, the need for expanded support is evident.

The challenges faced are immense: reaching affected areas is difficult, the financial instability of health care associations limits their capacity to provide support, and healthcare workers are operating in extremely dangerous conditions. Increased financial assistance and global advocacy are crucial to support a larger number of health care workers and to amplify their voices in calling for assistance.

## | TESTIMONY FROM A NURSE WORKING IN SUDAN

Enas is a dedicated nurse working in Omdurman in the middle of the ongoing war in Sudan. Despite opportunities to work in less demanding settings abroad, he has chosen to stay in Sudan and serve in one of the most challenging clinical environments in a city that faces daily shelling and overstretched medical services. He says that he "felt that it was my duty to provide care and support to those who needed it most in my country."

At Omdurman's intensive care and emergency departments, Enas is on the front line of emergency and trauma nursing care. He describes a situation of multifaceted challenges, where unprecedented numbers of emergency admissions are met with shortages of essential medical supplies.

The work is physically demanding, as he and his colleagues provide care to patients with complex, life-threatening injuries in the intensive care unit and respond at all hours to



mass casualty situations in the emergency department. Enas says witnessing his patients' suffering and the personal insecurity he feels when armed soldiers enter the hospital is taking a toll on his psychological health.

"Dealing with daily war scenes has a major impact on mental health, but mutual support between the medical team, patients and their families played a greater role in alleviating this pressure."

Despite the personal danger and psychological challenges, Enas continues to serve his patients.

One of the biggest challenges in Omdurman is the shortage of essential resources meant that nurses had to be creative in using what was available to provide the best care possible.

"Nursing is not just a profession for me, it is a humanitarian message that requires courage and dedication. In this war, nurses played an important and significant role, as we were on the front lines to provide medical care and psychological support. My experience in Omdurman was evidence that nursing can make a big difference in people's lives, even in the most difficult of circumstances.

'I learned that courage and determination can overcome difficulties, and that nursing is a noble mission that requires dedication and humanity.

'Destiny will find you, no matter where you are.'

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO ICN'S #NURSESFORPEACE CAMPAIGN

ICN launched the #NursesforPeace campaign to raise funds for nurses working on the frontlines of emergency situations and to draw public attention to the associated threats to public health care systems. ICN is reaching nurses in a number of countries through the Humanitarian Fund. Over the past year support has been provided to NNAs in Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, Sudan and Ukraine.

To support ICN's #NursesforPeace  
Campaign [Donate here](#)

