

PRESS STATEMENT of the Federation of German Scientists (Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler, VDW) and German Pugwash

The VDW condemns the attack on Ukraine in violation of international law !

Berlin, February 25, 2022

Since its foundation, the VDW has always been committed to peace and security and has repeatedly developed, discussed and published proposals for a sustainable peace and security order. In recent months, members of the VDW Study Group on Security and Peace have again advocated military restraint, a resumption of arms control talks and a diplomatic solution against the background of the acute threat to security and peace in Europe.

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched an unprovoked and illegitimate military attack on Ukraine, including from the territory of Belarus and the annexed Crimea. This is an attack on a sovereign state in violation of international law, in brutal violation of the UN Charter's prohibition of the use of force (Art. 2 para. 4), and even occurred during an ongoing UN Security Council meeting in the early hours of the morning on February 24, 2022. We strongly condemn the Russian aggression. The attack undermines the confidence needed to realign the European security order. It demonstrates a grave disregard for the post-World War II international order and violates related Russian commitments to renounce violence and respect existing borders. This dramatically endangers peace and stability in Europe and the world. President Putin's attempts to justify Russian actions lack any credible basis. There is still a chance to call off this comprehensive military action and withdraw Russian troops. Further military escalation in the entire area surrounding Ukraine must be stopped immediately and no further loss of innocent human life must be accepted.

Deeply troubling, President Putin also threatens actors who stand in Russia's way in its current actions with consequences "they have never seen before in their entire history", a clear reference to the use of nuclear weapons. This rhetoric risks further escalation with catastrophic results, violates principles of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, and may have unforeseeable consequences.

The expected human, economic and security consequences of Russia's violent advance and the "subjugation of Ukraine" make all parties losers, above all the people in Ukraine but also those in Russia, through sanctions and further NATO armament. But this must not lead to cutting off all threads of talks with Russia on arms control and disarmament. As long as nuclear deterrence is continued, it must remain linked to the readiness for dialogue even in difficult times, as it was during the Cold War.

Furthermore, we appeal to the international community to do everything possible to return to the path of diplomacy in this conflict - as difficult as that may be to imagine at present. Especially in view of the current escalation of the conflict by Russia, it is important to keep the political space open for dialogue on a common European security and peace order, on the renewal of arms control and disarmament and on the creation of robust conflict resolution mechanisms with the help of the OSCE and the United Nations. The VDW study group is ready to contribute its expertise to this process.

Contact:

Vereinigung Deutscher Wissenschaftler e.V.
Marienstraße 19/20, 10117 Berlin
Phone: +49 (0) 30 21 23 40 56
E-Mail: info@vdw-ev.de