



PRESS RELEASE

1. African Diaspora Council of Switzerland has been following with dismay and sadness the outbreak of armed conflict between the Federal Republic of Russia and Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022. The ongoing war has regrettably led to wanton destruction of lives and properties.
2. We believe that armed conflicts are never the best solution to any disagreement and security concerns, but on the contrary exacerbate insecurity. Thus, we do hereby call on all parties to the conflict to exercise restraint and ask for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and resort to diplomacy. On this note, we salute the current efforts of the leaders of the Federal Republic of Russia and Ukraine in initiating negotiations. Only diplomacy can bring a lasting peace.
3. Armed conflicts un-necessarily bring devastating effects on the civilian population. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the immediate neighbouring countries that render assistance to the many civilian population caught up in the exchange of fire, and urge them to open up their borders wider to all fleeing refugees to find a refuge in their countries.
4. We call on the international community, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of Red Cross and other major stakeholders to immediately put in motion and make available the necessary resources at the disposal of the receiving countries to be able to comfortably accommodate the refugees. Other European countries could also send aircraft to the neighbouring countries to airlift the refugees and accommodate them in their countries.
5. Meanwhile, it is with utter dismay that the African Diaspora Council, Switzerland, has witnessed through credible reports available to it, that some People of African Descent, including Students in Ukraine who are equally caught up in the crisis are discriminated against at train stations, border crossings as well as at the Emergency camping centers!
6. It is profoundly disgusting and totally unacceptable, that in difficult times like this, State officials still find a place in their hearts to discriminate against fellow human beings. It is particularly disheartening and repulsive the reported cases of train controllers and security officers who forcefully took African migrants out of the trains just to make space for domestic animals owned by the white refugees creating what could be seen as segregation even in such an emergency and sorry situation! In war and crisis situation like it is presently in Ukraine and albeit at all times, all refugees **MUST** be protected and treated equally irrespective of race, colour, creed, sex, country of origin etc. This should be the case for all refugees from Ukraine.
7. Switzerland has enjoyed a lasting peace, stability and prosperity. This is not unconnected with its long valued neutrality and solidarity established in 1947 by the Ex Federal Councilor Max Petitpierre as well its long standing humanitarian policy since 1944. However, we feel Switzerland should not stand by and just be watching. It is our valued opinion that Switzerland can offer, in such a crisis, its long standing *BON OFFICE* to reconcile the warring factions through diplomacy.
8. We therefore call on Swiss authorities to put all in motion towards initiating negotiations as a third party aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Any contrary approach that may undermine a peaceful approach and solution should be discarded forthwith.

Berne, 01.03. 2022

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