

NFPB and Ukraine, two months after the invasion by Russia

The Trustees, staff and members of Northern Friends Peace Board have been keeping in close touch since tensions mounted between Russia and Ukraine in February 2022. This note records some of the considerations and actions arising and was agreed by trustees on 28 April 2022.

The war in Ukraine continues to be devastating in its immediate and longer term impact. NFPB staff and trustees have been keeping under close review how our work could and should develop in the light of the war.

We are mindful that this is not the only brutal war that has taken place and continues to take place in the world, but also that the scale and nature of this war in the continent of Europe create a great danger for the world as a whole. We have been challenged by the need to extend our empathy and compassion for all, and challenged too by a sense of having little power or opportunity to shape events in the midst of war.

We are committed to continue to promote reflection, discussion and awareness of paths to peace and creative alternatives, however difficult it is for these to be realised. We continue to gather information on Quaker, other faiths, and other peace and justice voices and initiatives, sharing these through our website, social media and our Peace Round-up bulletin. These are valued as important resources by Friends and others in Britain and further afield.

Our work priorities on promoting nuclear disarmament, reduction in military spending and of rethinking security remain central to our work. The war has brought them into sharper focus whilst also making them both more even more important and yet harder issues on which to work. The urgency of the climate emergency as a peace concern is an area we continue to publicise and promote action on. We value our collaboration with other peace partners in taking these areas of work forward.

In collaboration with QPSW, our Coordinator is part of Britain YM's 'Ukraine Cluster' and is contributing to that group's work on working with Friends in reflecting on the challenges/hard issues arising for the peace testimony at this current time. We are also supporting particular Quaker Meetings through our participation in their reflections, providing resources and disseminating information about activities and responses at the local level.

As with all wars, this one is already changing, and will continue to change, Friends' understanding of the peace testimony. However and whenever it ends, it is also leaving a terrible legacy in terms of human lives, societal and international tensions, direct and indirect impact on the world's action to address the climate emergency, and a dramatic shift towards a more polarised and more militarised world. We shall need to be ready to both respond quickly when needs and opportunities arise, but also take time to reflect, to care for one and support another, and all those striving for peace.

NFPB Trustees, 28 April 2022