

## **IBBY Statement on the Ukraine Conflict**

Throughout history, war affects the innocent and above all the children. They have nothing to do with the impulses of national leaders. They suffer first and they suffer the longest. We know that when children are in a country at war they suffer great trauma even when they escape physical wounds. The same is true for children who suddenly lose their whole sense of safety and peace. This can be deeply traumatic. We believe that literature, particularly literature for children, has the power to change the future, to teach the next generations not to destroy but to negotiate as there is nothing more destructive than war.

IBBY International is deeply concerned about the current invasion by the Russian military into the sovereign state of Ukraine.

IBBY has a long connection with Ukraine. The IBBY section in Ukraine has been an active member of IBBY since 1997 and we have participated several times in the Arsenal Book Festival in Kyiv, where we have also exhibited the IBBY travelling collections of books.

Our thoughts are with our friends and colleagues at IBBY Ukraine, at the Arsenal Book Festival—all of whom are working to bring children and books together.

We must also remember our friends and colleagues at IBBY Russia in Moscow and in St Petersburg, as they struggle to process this tragic situation.

IBBY stands first, last and foremost with the children whose physical and mental health are at risk because of this war, of which they are totally innocent.

IBBY members everywhere deplore the current situation, and we hope that international humanitarian law can be re-established before there is more loss of life.

Since its inception in 1953 following the devastation of World War II, IBBY has worked around the world to promote international understanding through children's books. When children suffer, we work together to support those who serve children and their families, especially in times of crisis.

IBBY Executive Committee  
26 February 2022