



## STATEMENT ON WAR AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

March 21, 2026

The International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) shares the global community's deep concern about the devastating human consequences of war in our world today. More than eighty years ago, in the aftermath of World War II, a group of prominent psychologists issued the *Psychologists' Manifesto* (1945), affirming psychology's responsibility to apply scientific knowledge of human behaviour, cooperation, and conflict to prevent future wars and advance human welfare. Today, that responsibility remains urgent. Around the world, ongoing conflicts continue to produce immense human suffering and deep disruption of societies.

War is organised violence that produces profound and enduring harm. It constitutes not merely a geopolitical or military event but a severe human crisis with long-lasting, and sometimes irreversible, effects on individuals, communities, and societies.

In addition to the destruction, displacement, extreme poverty, physical disability, and loss of life, the trauma of war also has direct and indirect effects on psychological well-being. It weakens individuals' sense of meaning and control over their lives. Further, it fractures social connections and can generate lasting fear, hopelessness, and hatred. It ultimately undermines human rights and human dignity. These catastrophic psychological effects persist across the lifespan and across generations long after hostilities have ceased.

The profound and multifaceted impact of war disproportionately affects the most vulnerable populations, including children, women, displaced persons, the elderly, and communities already facing limited opportunities. War both exacerbates existing inequities and creates additional barriers to social cohesion, well-being, and development.

As the Global Voice of Psychology, IUPsyS has a responsibility to contribute to a shared vision of a peaceful world. It includes the ethical duty to speak on behalf of communities affected by war, extended conflict, and structural conditions that create and perpetuate injustice and dehumanising violence. Psychologists also have a critical role in addressing the psychological consequences of war by supporting individual, organisational, and community recovery, promoting reconciliation, and rebuilding social ties in post-conflict contexts.

Psychological science provides critical insight into the roots of conflict, the dynamics of intergroup hostility, and the conditions that can help prevent war by promoting cooperation, reconciliation, and peace. In addition, researchers have identified ways to improve intergroup understanding, reduce prejudice, and support effective conflict resolution. Psychologists thus have the ethical obligation to use research findings and their expertise to promote global education, advocacy, and decision-making, and to collaborate with other disciplines to promote societal harmony and reduce the risk of war. It is



equally important to advocate for changes in the structural conditions that can give rise to internal and international tensions that are the precursors to war.

We hereby call on members of the global public to learn about the psychological effects of war, raise their voices in support of peaceful conflict resolution, and to urge decision-makers to pursue diplomacy and dialogue. Such efforts should be informed by the best available scientific evidence, as well as intergenerational knowledge and experience regarding human behaviour, communication, and conflict resolution.

IUPsyS encourages institutions responsible for the education and training of psychologists and other professionals to incorporate historical and contemporary knowledge of conflict, the effects of war, multiple perspectives on peacebuilding, and mechanisms of social solidarity into their curricula. Preparing future generations by promoting their capacity to address the psychological dimensions of peace and cultivating attitudes and practices that counter the forces of war is an essential investment for a more peaceful and just world.

In this spirit, we invite the global psychological community to take collective action and participate in upcoming observances that promote peace:

- The United Nations *International Day of Living Together in Peace*, observed annually on May 16, mobilises the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding, and solidarity.
- The Inaugural *Psychological Science Diplomacy Day for Peace*, which will be celebrated on May 29, 2026, provides an opportunity for psychologists, students, and colleagues to promote peace through their teaching, research, professional activities, and engagement with communities.

The vision expressed in the *Psychologists' Manifesto* reminds us that psychology has a responsibility not only to understand human behaviour but also to help transform the conditions that allow individuals and societies to thrive. Building on this legacy, IUPsyS will undertake an initiative to renew the spirit and principles of the 1945 Manifesto to address the challenges of our time and contribute to a shared vision for peace, justice, and human flourishing.

In reaffirming that vision today, and in recognition of our shared humanity, the International Union of Psychological Science stands with the global community in calling for peace. IUPsyS thus invites scientific unions, professional associations, academic institutions, and civil society organisations around the world to share and endorse this statement and to join in advancing the contributions of psychological science to peace and human well-being. Organisations wishing to express their support are encouraged to disseminate this statement and to participate in initiatives that promote peace through psychological science.

Murphy, G. (1945). The Psychologists' Manifesto. In G. Murphy (Ed.), *Human nature and enduring peace: Third yearbook for the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* (pp. 454–460). Houghton Mifflin Company.  
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