



Women's Network
for Dialogue and Enduring Peace

We are women peacebuilders and civil society and humanitarian aid leaders from across Ukraine and both sides of the front line. We are members of the Women's Network for Dialogue and Enduring Peace which we founded in 2015. We have over a decade of experience in peacebuilding, dialogue and providing support to conflict-affected populations on both sides of the front line.

Our human-centered approach aims to protect the lives and well-being of all affected by the conflict, and we are dedicated to ensuring their interests are represented in the peace process. A human-centered approach can address the needs of all affected communities, prevent future violence and build a sustainable peace.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES

Millions of people remain separated from their families as a result of the war in Ukraine. The separation of families and communities violates fundamental rights and remains an enormous barrier to lasting peace. The reunification of families can support reconciliation and build a sustainable peace.

Informed by lessons we have learned while supporting conflict-affected populations on both sides of the front line over the past decade, we recommend:

- **Immediately establish secure crossing points** along the front line, jointly controlled by both sides, in sufficient quantity to accommodate the numbers of people who want to cross, under the oversight of international organizations (such as the OSCE and the International Committee of the Red Cross).

- **Develop a clear procedure for crossing points**, which addresses the needs of all population groups.
- **Equip the crossing points with all the necessary infrastructure, basic medical and other support services**, including sanitary toilet facilities, to serve the needs of people of different ages, genders, health conditions, disabilities, etc.
- **Set up permit centers on both sides of the front line**, enabling people to obtain permission to cross and enter the other side of the front line, with mechanisms for coordination between these centers.
- **Adopt a phased approach** to expand crossing points and streamline the crossing process, in tandem with progress in the peace process.
- **Create an alternative narrative** to the existing enemy narrative about people on both sides of the front line. Advance a new narrative that includes the shared suffering and concerns of separated families and recognizes their human right to reunification as a normal and necessary part of recovery.
- **Develop a shared glossary of terms** related to the reunification of families, avoiding language that could be misinterpreted, viewed as political or provocative or cause tension on either side. Recognizing that different people have different points of view, use neutral descriptions that do not evoke humiliation or cause hurt on one side or the other. For an example of a neutral way to describe where people live: people living in territories controlled by Ukraine and people living in territories not currently under the control of Ukraine.

 For each of the above points, we have more specific, detailed recommendations informed by over a decade of first-hand, on-the-ground experience.