



Established in 1974, JFPF is the world's first supra-partisan parliamentary group on population and development.

In an age when global solidarity is needed to address various challenges, JFPF is expected to play an increasingly important role as a parliamentary caucus with a long history and tradition of leading Japan's diplomacy in the international community.

In every issue of JFPF Newsletter, we will carry "News" on activities and initiatives related to population and development issues.

News:

○ *JFPF Meeting: Assistance for Ukraine, Part II*

[Editorial responsibility: JFPF secretariat]

News

JFPF Meeting: Assistance for Ukraine, Part II

On 30 March and 5 April, the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JFPF) held emergency meetings for supporting Ukraine. The topic of the meeting on 5 April was "Assistance for Ukraine, Part II". The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and Women's Strike, IPPF's partner organization in Poland, participated online to report on the situation on the ground. These organizations focus on supporting women and pregnant women in Ukraine and in neighboring countries that host refugees from Ukraine. They expressed gratitude for Japan's assistance and called for further support from the international community, including Japan, to enable continuation of emergency humanitarian assistance to protect the lives, health, and dignity of women. (The meeting on March 30, including "Assistance for Ukraine, Part I," was featured in the Newsletter No. 117.)

◎ Agenda for the meeting on 5 April

Moderator: Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, Secretary-General of JFPF

Opening address: Hon. Yoko Kamikawa, Chair of JFPF

- Ms. Nobuko Matsuda (journalist, International Division, News Department, Japan Broadcasting Corporation)
- Mr. Jaime Nadal, Representative in Ukraine and Country Director for Belarus, UNFPA
- Ms. Julie Taft, Humanitarian Director, IPPF
- Ms. Marta Lempart, Representative of Women's Strike

[Opening Address by Hon. Yoko Kamikawa, Chair of JFPF]

We heard at the last meeting that some 80,000 women in Ukraine are expected to give birth in the next three months.

The harsh reality is that women are forced to give birth in evacuation destinations with inadequate medical facilities. I

think that the scope and nature of support needed is changing from moment to moment. JFPF will need to think carefully about how we prioritize our response and how we can fulfill our role in providing the necessary support, and follow it up with the next sets of action.



[Ms. Nobuko Matsuda]

Numerous women have given birth in underground shelters, subway stations, and other appalling environment. Assistance for the health care system is urgently needed. As for human trafficking, the absence of reports on human trafficking does not necessarily mean that there are actually no cases of trafficking. Many have their cell phones and passports confiscated so that they do not have the means to report cases. An aid group in Ukraine told me that women are at risk of gender-based violence (GBV) daily, and even if they receive calls on the hotline, they cannot go and help the victims because of the presence of Russian troops. The aid group is doing what they can now, gathering emergency contraceptives and sending them to various locations. Support is needed for various issues that are often not brought to the surface.

[Mr. Jaime Nadal, UNFPA]

Bombardments are obstructing people's access to hospitals, and many are dying from preventable causes. Many women have experienced premature births as a result of the harsh conditions, and many more are suffering from complications resulting from giving birth in unsanitary environment. Europe is facing the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War. As of 3 April, there are 4 million people who have crossed a border and 7 million internally displaced people, most of them women and girls. In Ukraine, it is increasingly difficult to procure daily necessities, and there are concerns that the situation will further deteriorate. A major challenge is the lack of direct access to the affected areas and the disruption of supply chains. We are considering issuing another appeal for emergency humanitarian assistance in Ukraine in the next few days. There will also be a future need for postwar reconstruction. We hope to begin work on reconstruction as soon as the situation permits.

**Japan Parliamentarians
Federation for Population
(JFPF)**

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[Ms. Julie Taft, IPPF]

Some of Ukraine's neighboring countries do not have an established system for coordinating emergency response for sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Therefore, the local civil society organizations are taking the lead, working with networks of doctors, midwives, and psychologists in the countries, to provide SRH services. It is often overlooked but SRH care is life-saving in emergency situations. Pregnant women require obstetric care, and there is risk of complications. They also need access to prevention and care against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections as well as to contraception. The risk of GBV is increasing. IPPF's partner organizations are providing access to medical and psychosocial support, including counseling.

[Ms. Marta Lempart, Women's Strike]

Prime Minister Kishida and Foreign Minister Hayashi recently visited Poland. Support from other countries is essential for organizations operating in Poland. We focus our activities on women's rights, but we were not engaged in humanitarian or refugee assistance before the current crisis. However, under these circumstances, we think it best to work with the government, various other organizations, and our 3,000 volunteers to provide food and hygienic materials to 6,000 people a day from our operations sites in 500 cities. We supported 80,000 people in the past 40 days. We also distribute "Dignity Kits", packages of sanitary and hygienic products and other items that women and girls need. However, we are facing severe shortages in funding at the moment, and require the support of the international community.

© Q&A Session

[Hon. Shintaro Ito]

More than 4.2 million people have been displaced, while wheat harvest may fall in Ukraine. Because Japan has a stockpile of 1 million tons of rice, I proposed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) for the government to purchase some of this stockpile and send it. Probably people in Ukraine and its neighboring countries do not usually eat rice, so I would like to ask if they would want to eat rice through such assistance. Also, cooperation between MAFF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) would be essential for this scheme to work. I would like to ask MOFA if such cooperation is possible.



[Hon. Ayano Kunimitsu]



As a doctor, I felt that the situation is extremely critical on hearing that 81 women gave birth in a single night in Kyiv alone and that some will be requiring Cesarean section. We need to properly understand the local needs in providing support. Let me ask what can we offer from Japan that best meets the local needs? In other words, is it money, human resources, or supplies? As for "human resources", we cannot send people to Ukraine, but is there anything we can do in the neighboring countries? Or will "money" be more useful? I would like to ask this question particularly in relation to pregnant women, as they are the main topic of this meeting.

[Mr. Jaime Nadal, UNFPA Representative in Ukraine and Country Director for Belarus]

As for food and other supplies, various organizations are providing them to refugees and internally displaced persons. We work with the World Food Program (WFP) to ensure that women have access to food. What I want to emphasize is that women are at risk when they receive assistance. I believe rice is also being provided. As for your second question, we do require a lot more resources. We also need capacity building at the local level, and it is important that support is provided for that. We must improve the capacity of local governments and related organizations so that they can provide support to the displaced population. Without resources, we cannot reassemble these services.

Ukraine's health sector relies on the domestic market for 70% of its supplies, but there has been a major disruption due to plant closures and damages. The supply chain is not functioning. Therefore, it is very important to ensure the supply of necessary medical equipment. Humanitarian assistance in terms of perinatal care, SRH services, and GBV prevention can make a difference between life and death for women. To respond to these needs, UNFPA has transported emergency medical supplies and medicine for 500,000 people (13 tons) in four heavily affected cities (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, and Zaporizhzhia).

[Ms. Julie Taft, IPPF]

Fifteen percent of women giving birth are experiencing some forms of complications from pregnancy or childbirth that require intervention. IPPF is providing SRH-related medical supplies to health care professionals in Ukraine. Safe passage is critical for them to save lives, but it is not safe as hospitals are being targeted. In addition to supplies, there is a need to enable people to acquire specific skills needed to respond to GBV. I hope that there is sustained support for the activities of local NGOs, which are familiar with the local situation and people.



[Ms. Marta Lempart, Women's Strike]

There is clearly a need for all kinds of food as well as the capacity to distribute food. We are providing food for displaced people in Poland. Food assistance would be very helpful and appreciated.

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs]

On 11 March, a decision was made to provide \$100 million in emergency humanitarian assistance, including food aid through WFP. Just today, we provided \$100 million in additional emergency humanitarian assistance, which also includes food through WFP. Our food aid goes through UN agencies so that assistance can be delivered to the local areas quickly and efficiently during this crisis.

[Hon. Aiko Shimajiri]

At the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake, we built vehicles for mobile perinatal care. I think that we can provide know-how on the vehicle's specifications or send such vehicles directly to the affected areas.



[Hon. Yoko Kamikawa, Chair of JPPF]

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Nadal, UNFPA Representative in Ukraine, who gave us a report today from Lviv in Ukraine, and all the others for sharing with us the urgency of the local situation. We would like to make requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese Government as to how we can allocate assistance to your activities for supporting those who are giving birth in high-risk environments and those who are in extremely difficult circumstances with small children. As recovery will take much time, I would like to ask you in the affected areas to list up what is needed now and in the immediate future. We would like to consider what we can do for long-term assistance and take concrete action. We also heard about some specific measures for food assistance and mobile medical vehicles. We will further explore these possibilities and take action as soon as possible.

The following week, Hon. Yoko Kamikawa, JPPF Chair, and Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, JPPF Secretary-General, made recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the areas that Japan should put more effort into in supporting Ukraine.

"In the recommendations, we stressed, in particular, the importance of health services for women and girls who have been displaced or who are living in combat zones, including care for pregnant women, delivery of emergency contraceptives to victims of sexual violence, and management of sexually transmitted diseases. We urged the Japanese government to engage actively in supporting UNFPA, IPPF, and other international organizations that are working on these issues.

As Secretary-General of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPPF), I have been advocating for sexual and reproductive health in representing Japan at international conferences and on other occasions.

As Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and the destruction from the invasion expand, there is a strong need for assistance to protect the lives, and the livelihoods during and after the war, of women and girls of Ukraine that has suffered tremendous destruction.

I will continue to press this point to all parties concerned so that we can bring about concrete assistance".

(Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada's blog, "Japan's Assistance for Ukraine: Strengthening Support to Protect the Lives, and the Livelihoods During and After the War, of Women and Girls of Ukraine," April 11, 2022 <https://go2senkyo.com/seijika/141984/posts/385031>)



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