Dear Union Presidents and Single Club Presidents,

In light of the escalating humanitarian crises in various parts of the world many members have reached out asking: *What can we do? How do we show solidarity without becoming political?*

As Soroptimists, our mission compels us to act. We are non-political, yes — but we are not neutral in the face of human suffering. We stand for peace, human dignity, and justice, especially for women and girls affected by war and violence.

We are pleased to share a **Statement of Solidarity** that you are welcome to use within your Clubs and Unions. It expresses our humanitarian commitment in a way that reflects our values and role in civil society:

A Soroptimist Message of Solidarity for Peace and Human Dignity

As Soroptimists, we stand united in our mission to improve the lives of women and girls around the world — a mission that is inseparable from the values of peace, dignity and justice.

In alignment with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda established by the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, International Human Rights and humanitarian frameworks such as the **Council of Europe (CoE) Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence** and the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, we raise our voices in solidarity with all those suffering the devastating consequences of war and conflict, in every corner of the world where civilians are caught in violence they did not choose.

We also support the UN's Pact for the Future, which calls for renewed global solidarity, human rights and gender equality as foundations for peace and sustainable development.

We are deeply moved by the pain of women who must give birth in fear, of children who are orphaned or left without shelter, and of families who cannot access food, water, or safety. This suffering knows no borders. And while we do not engage in politics, we cannot remain silent in the face of such human tragedy.

We also want to express our deep respect and gratitude to humanitarian workers — doctors, nurses, NGO staff, and UN personnel — who risk their lives daily to care for others. Their courage and selflessness embody the values we stand for, and their sacrifice must never be forgotten.

Our voice is a humanitarian voice. We call for:

- Respect for human life and dignity.
- Protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence during and after conflict.
- Protection of civilians and justice, in accordance with international humanitarian law, with urgent attention to women, children, the elderly and those who are disabled, ill or dependent, - all of whom face disproportionate risks — including abandonment, inability to access first aid or medicine and risk being left behind in evacuations.
- Safe and free access to food, water, healthcare and shelter in all conflict-affected regions, including across borders, with guarantees of humanitarian airspace and terrestrial corridors, ensuring the safe and effective delivery of aid to populations in need.
- Support for peacebuilding efforts that include the voices and leadership of women.

We are especially alarmed by the gender-specific risks faced by women and girls in war zones: from rape and sexual violence to displacement, trafficking, and the loss of legal and physical protections. These are grave violations of human rights — and they require urgent international attention, accountability and commitment to prevention.

Now more than ever, we are reminded that peace is not the absence of war — it is the presence of justice, safety, and dignity for all, from us all.

Let us continue our work with courage and compassion. Let us act locally, while thinking globally. And let us remind the world that even in times of darkness, empathy, solidarity, and the belief in a better future remain our guiding lights.

We are Soroptimists.
We stand for peace, we stand for dignity, and we stand together.

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Guidelines to advocate with this statement

To support Clubs and Unions in acting responsibly and confidently, we encourage the following approach:

1. Use the language of human rights and humanitarian principles, not political debate.
2. Anchor your messages in internationally recognised frameworks, including the Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Istanbul Convention —

which explicitly recognise humanitarian approach shall always preside. You may enhance the link between violence against women and armed conflict.

3. Raise awareness of the specific dangers faced by women and girls, including rape as a weapon of war, trafficking, forced marriage, and loss of education and healthcare. You may enhance the link between violence against women and armed conflict.

4. Tell human stories — especially those of women and girls you have contacted, affected by war — to build empathy and remind the public of our shared humanity.

5. Mobilise for peace across Europe, as a voice of unity and compassion. Acting together across regions amplifies our impact while honouring our values.

We invite your Club or Union to share this message on social media, newsletters, or during public events. If you would like support in adapting this statement for national or local use, we are happy to help.

Let's continue to be a voice of hope and dignity — not by taking sides, but by standing up for those who suffer most.

With solidarity and sisterhood,
The SIE Advocacy Team