

IASW Motion 2

Motion to the IFSW General Meeting

Review of Professional Integrity and Mandatory Military Service

Proposer: Irish Association of Social Workers (IASW, Ireland)

Seconded: Consejo Gral. Trabajo Social (CGTS, Spain)

The IASW further requests that it is essential to address how member associations navigate the intersection of national legal obligations, such as mandatory military service, and their professional commitment to the IFSW Global Statement of Ethical Principles.

Professional Integrity and Mandatory Military Service

The Federation recognises that many social workers operate in jurisdictions with mandatory military conscription. However, the Federation constitution and by-laws, along with member association statement from the Special General Meeting emphasise that legal mandates do not absolve a member association of its duty to maintain an independent professional voice and to protect the ethical integrity of the profession.

- **Non-Participation in Combat:** Member associations have a specific obligation under Principle 9.3—which commits the profession to peace and non-violence—to prevent social work knowledge and skills from being used for inhumane purposes.
- **Requirement for Non-Combat Advocacy:** When members are subject to conscription, the association is expected to take minimal professional steps by formally requesting that their government exempt social workers from active combat roles.
- **Ethical Boundaries:** The refusal to seek such exemptions or to issue a public call for peace is viewed by the proposer as a collapse of independent professional capacity. A professional body that treats participation in armed assault as an ordinary civic duty without setting ethical boundaries fails in its responsibility to resist the capture of professional practice for inhumane ends.
- **Condition-Based Membership:** Some member organizations have even proposed that the formal request for non-combat exemptions should be a mandatory condition for reinstatement or continued membership in good standing.

By articulating these requirements, the IFSW ensures that its ethical standards function as binding principles rather than elective choices, particularly in high-stakes contexts of armed conflict and structural violence.