

Motion: Strengthening Social Work's Contribution to Peacebuilding, Ethical Dialogue, and Practice in Contexts of Armed Conflict and Authoritarian Rule

Proposer:

Hungarian Association of Social Workers (SzMME)

Background

The IFSW Special General Assembly of 18 February 2026 reaffirmed the importance of social work as a profession committed to human rights, peace, social justice, and dialogue. During discussions it was noted that *"Social Work can build bridges even where politics builds walls."* Recognizing the increasing number of armed conflicts, occupations, and authoritarian contexts affecting social workers and the communities they serve, there is a need for IFSW to explore mechanisms that promote professional dialogue, ethical reflection, and the development of specialized knowledge and practice in such settings.

Motion

The General Meeting resolves that:

1. Mapping Social Work Practice in Contexts of Armed Conflict

IFSW shall invite member organizations whose countries are involved in armed conflicts or territorial disputes to voluntarily provide information regarding the roles and experiences of social workers operating within such contexts, including where social workers may be serving in military, humanitarian, civilian protection, or other conflict-related capacities.

2. Establishment of a Working Group on Social Work in Conflict and Authoritarian Contexts

IFSW shall establish an international working group composed, where possible, of social workers from countries and territories affected by armed conflict, occupation, or authoritarian governance systems.

The working group shall:

- Explore the development of guidance, competencies, and knowledge relating to social work practice in conflict and authoritarian settings;
- Identify ethical dilemmas and professional challenges faced by social workers in such contexts;
- Consider the feasibility of developing a specialized area of practice tentatively titled *"Social Work in Authoritarian Regimes and War Situations"*;
- Report its findings and recommendations to a future General Meeting.

3. Promotion of Ethical Dialogue Between Member Organizations in Conflict Situations

IFSW shall encourage opportunities for structured professional dialogue between member organizations representing communities affected by conflict. As an initial pilot initiative, IFSW may facilitate a voluntary process through which the Israeli and Palestinian member organizations engage in mutual professional reflection on each other's codes of ethics and ethical frameworks, with the objective of identifying shared professional values and opportunities for cooperation.

4. Oversight and Facilitation

The Executive Committee shall determine the most appropriate governance structure for overseeing these initiatives, including consideration of whether a dedicated commission, task force, or working group should be established.

Rationale

This motion seeks to strengthen IFSW's contribution to peacebuilding, professional solidarity, and ethical dialogue. It does not seek to intervene in political disputes but rather to promote the role of social work in fostering understanding, protecting human dignity, and advancing professional practice in some of the most challenging contexts faced by social workers globally.

Financial Implications

The Executive Committee shall assess the resource implications of implementing this motion and determine whether activities can be undertaken within existing budgets or require additional funding.

Proposed Effective Date

Immediately upon adoption.