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**AAHOA Chair Vinay Patel Issues Statement on Russia's
Premeditated, Unprovoked, and Unjustified Invasion of Ukraine**

ATLANTA, Ga., Mar. 10 – Two weeks ago, Russian military forces under the guidance of President Putin began an unprovoked and unjustified attack on the Ukrainian people. Today, more than two million people have fled Ukraine, with as many as five million expected to be displaced as Russian troops continue to advance toward major cities.

The thoughts and prayers of AAHOA Members, Americans, and the entire world are with the Ukrainian people as they suffer through this tragic humanitarian crisis.

“Seeing the news – images and videos of Ukrainian people in bomb shelters, fleeing their homes, and crowding train stations to get to safety – is incredibly upsetting,” AAHOA Chair Vinay Patel said. “And I know AAHOA Members also are in shock and disbelief about this premeditated war, which is undoubtedly bringing incredible human suffering to the innocent people of Ukraine.”

It's in times of need and suffering that our industry can really make an impact. A new initiative, #HospitalityHelps, has the single goal of providing temporary hotel accommodation to Ukrainian residents who are forced to leave their homes as a result of the war.

“The hospitality industry has always been one to step up in times of need,” Patel said. “The #HospitalityHelps initiative is a true testament to what can be accomplished when we work together to help those who are suffering.”

#HospitalityHelps is currently connecting families on the run from the war in Ukraine with hotel owners across the world providing free hotel stays.

“At the end of the day, people just need to feel safe. They need a roof over their heads and a place to call home while their country is experiencing extreme unrest,” Patel said. “This is the very foundation of the hotel industry and what hotel owners

strive to do each and every day: provide solace and peace for those who need rest and a safe place to stay.”

AAHOA Members and our community of hoteliers are stepping up to help the refugees affected by this senseless act of aggression.

We encourage anyone who can make donations or contributions to help the refugees affected by the war at hospitality-helps.org. Alternatively, here’s a [list of the top-rated charities](#) to help the Ukraine relief effort.

AAHOA Members continue to pray for the strong, brave people of Ukraine and will continue providing any help possible as the situation progresses.

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About AAHOA

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the nation, with Member-owned properties representing a significant part of the U.S. economy. AAHOA's 20,000 members own 60% of the hotels in the United States and are responsible for 1.7% of the nation's GDP. More than one million employees work at AAHOA member-owned hotels, earning \$47 billion annually, and member-owned hotels support 4.2 million U.S. jobs across all sectors of the hospitality industry. AAHOA's mission is to advance and protect the business interests of hotel owners through advocacy, industry leadership, professional development, member benefits, and community engagement.