



Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine

4 YEARS OF FULL-SCALE GENOCIDE OF UKRAINIANS



HISTORY LOOKS INTO THE EYES. SILENCE IS COMPLICITY.

Ukrainians, dear international partners!

There are dates that do not simply record events – they change the course of history. **February 24, 2022, is one such a date.** But in reality, this war began much earlier for Ukraine. It is time for the world to realize this.

At least one day in a year – February 24 – the public truth about this war must be heard. The truth that Russians have been deporting Ukrainian children, raping women, torturing and killing civilians, and arbitrarily executing prisoners of war for 12 years. Behind the fortified walls of prisons or in temporarily occupied territories, they commit the most serious crimes against humanity.

For 12 years, Russia has been carrying out a war of destruction – not only of territories, but also of people, language, memory, and identity. On February 24, this war was no longer hidden. It became open. **It received its true name – genocide.** This is not just armed aggression – it is an attempt to wipe out a people.

However, even among the ruins, we see life. In the courage of our military. In the resilience of civilians. In children who study under sirens and dream of the future. Ukraine today is not just a territory. It is a choice. It is action. It is responsibility.

Therefore, my appeal is clear and unambiguous: find the courage at least once a year to call things by their names. Talk about it publicly. Ukrainians are fighting bravely today, and you – find the courage to condemn the crimes of the Russian Federation.

Recognize Russia's actions at the highest level as genocide against the Ukrainian people, promote the condemnation of the aggressor and bring to justice those who commit these crimes and still move freely around the world, embodying cruelty and unjust impunity.

The world must open its eyes to what Ukrainians are going through today. That is why we have prepared this brochure. It speaks the language of facts – the language of numbers, documents, and destroyed lives, which together paint a clear picture of the deliberate destruction of a people. **A glossary has been compiled separately so that all concepts are clearly defined and understandable to Ukrainian and foreign audiences. [p. 15–18]**

I urge everyone to use this material, distribute it, and organize meetings and events to commemorate the anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Each of our steps is a small contribution to Ukraine's great mission. Even a small action can draw the world's attention to the suffering and give a voice to those who are being silenced!

Because only together, only by joining forces, can we change reality and show the world that **Ukraine is unbreakable and its truth will not disappear.**



Dmytro Lubinets,

*Ukrainian Parliament
Commissioner
for Human Rights*

ANNIHILATION

RESTORATION

PAIN

SOLIDARITY

COURAGE

RUINATION

FLIGHT

DEATH

HELP

STRUGGLE

SUFFERING

CHARITY

RESISTANCE

TEARS

UNITY

DESTRUCTION

SURVIVAL

LIFE

SHELLING

RESILIENCE

TERROR

PROTECTION

BRAVERY

DEVASTATION

REMEMBRANCE

WAR

UNBREAKABILITY

PATRIOTISM

AGGRESSION

HOPE

FEAR

LOSS

PEACE

FREEDOM

HEROISM

FIVE FORMS OF NATION DESTRUCTION

Genocide. A single word capable of conveying the magnitude of pain endured by entire nations throughout history. It is inextricably linked to the Holodomor in Ukraine, the Holocaust in Europe, and other mass crimes against humanity that resulted in millions of deaths and immeasurable suffering.

Nowadays, the Ukrainian people are experiencing similar pain. The Russian Federation has launched full-scale aggression aimed not only at seizing territories or destroying cities but at the systematic destruction of the nation.

According to the norms of international humanitarian law, genocide has 5 distinct forms (*in accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*):

- **Forcible transfer of children of one group to another** – this includes the abduction of children from the temporarily occupied territories (TOTs) of Ukraine, their forced deportation to the Russian Federation or to occupied territories, separation from parents and legal guardians, placement in Russian families or institutions, and the imposition of a different citizenship, language, and identity.
- **Killing members of a group** – this includes systematic shelling of civilian infrastructure, targeted killings of civilians in the TOTs, and the abduction of people followed by executions.
- **Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group** – this includes the use of torture, cruel and inhuman treatment, sexual violence, detention in subhuman conditions, psychological terror, and constant shelling of civilian targets leading to long-term trauma, disability, and mental disorders.
- **Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part** – this includes purposeful mass missile and drone attacks on energy and critical infrastructure, depriving the population of heat, electricity, water, and communication, especially during the winter period. This also includes the destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant, which led to the death of civilians, loss of homes, a humanitarian catastrophe, and deprivation of entire regions' access to clean water.
- **Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group** – this includes the killing and wounding of women, destruction of maternity hospitals and medical facilities, lack of access to medical care, psychological pressure, deportation of the population, separation of families, as well as conditions of constant danger that effectively deprive people of the opportunity to start families and bear children.

A rhetorical question: has Russia not been committing all 5 of these forms of genocide and war crimes against Ukrainians?! This is not an accident or a coincidence. This is the systematic destruction of our people.

More than

210,000

**CRIMES OF AGGRESSION
AND WAR CRIMES**

**committed by the Russian Federation
against Ukraine**

FORCIBLE TRANSFER OF CHILDREN FROM ONE GROUP TO ANOTHER

[A Form of Genocide]

Russia has been carrying out unlawful deportation and forced displacement of Ukrainian children since 2014. After the full-scale invasion, these crimes took on a massive, organized, and systematic character:

- **Thousands** Ukrainian children have been deported or forcibly displaced.
- In her report, the Commissioner for Children's Rights of the Russian Federation publicly confirmed that **more than 700,000 Ukrainian children were taken from their country** following the start of the full-scale aggression.
- Currently, **at least 1.6 million** children remain **at risk of deportation in the TOTs of Ukraine**.

! Children are forcibly displaced and deported under the guise of "evacuation" and "health rehabilitation." **This is a way to mask the crime.**

Stages of Identity Change:

- **First.** The Russian Federation abducts Ukrainian children. It forcibly displaces them within the TOTs or deports them to Russia.
- **Second.** Ukrainian children's citizenship and documents are changed to Russian. Personal data is altered: names, surnames, dates of birth.
- **Third.** Ukrainian children are handed over for guardianship and adoption into Russian families.
- **Fourth.** Russia implements its educational standards in the temporarily occupied territories and forces Ukrainian children to study under them. The educational process is militarized. It is aimed at total re-education.
- **Fifth.** Russia attempts to turn Ukrainian children into a new generation of its soldiers. Programs such as "Yunarmiya," "Eaglets of Russia," and cadet schools are launched. There, children are taught to use weapons.

According to Yale University data:

- **148 children** have been entered into the federal databases of the Russian Federation, 42 of them have already been adopted or taken under guardianship;
- **166 children** have been placed in Russian families;
- at least **67 children received Russian citizenship**, which allowed for the deprivation of their Ukrainian citizenship without the children's consent.

These figures may be significantly higher!

Children are separated from parents and abducted from children's homes.

Russia displaced the wards of the Oleshky Children's Home and Boarding School to the temporarily occupied territories and subsequently deported them to Russia. These are children aged 9 to 17, as well as adult wards.

Regarding the children: they were forced to write "gratitude letters" to the invaders, they were kept in inappropriate conditions, deprived of proper medical care and a safe environment.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ukrainian side, several wards of the institution were successfully returned home. Among them is a 28-year-old ward who requires constant care. Despite his own desire to return, the young man had to overcome numerous obstacles to finally exercise his right to be home.



SAVED LIVES: RETURNING UKRAINIAN CHILDREN

To return every Ukrainian child, the initiative of the President of Ukraine, **Bring Kids Back UA**, is in operation. Ukrainian state bodies, non-governmental organizations, and international partners are working together to bring children home.

Nearly **2,000 CHILDREN**
have been returned home since February 24, 2022

- The Working Group for Point 4 of Ukraine's Peace Formula is also working on strengthening efforts to return children, having held **11** meetings.
- An important tool is the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children, which currently includes **46** members and **4** observer states.

Even in the darkest times of war, there are stories that bring light and faith in the restoration of justice.

The story of the wards of the Novopetrivka School, Mykolaiv region, is another such example.

During the occupation of their town, the children were deported to Russia. The educators, risking their lives, saved all the children from deportation and took them to Georgia.

On October 31, 2025, employees of the Ombudsman's Office met them: logistic routes were developed for the return of the children, and work with documents took place. This was a complex and lengthy process.



Returning every child home is not just a journey. It is the return of a voice, a name, and a future, without which Ukraine cannot be itself.

KILLING MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR GROUP

[A Form of Genocide]

The killing of Ukrainians is a systemic, purposeful policy of the Russian Federation aimed at intimidating, destroying, and demoralizing the nation.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in 2022:

- **14,700** Ukrainians have died;
- more than **680** children have died, the youngest child was only **2 days old**;
- **2025 was the deadliest year for Ukraine's civilian population** (2,514 civilians killed, over 12,000 wounded);
- **337** Ukrainian prisoners of war were deliberately and brutally **executed by Russian forces**.

! These figures are only part of the real, horrific tragedy. The real numbers may be many times higher!

Illustration: Tania Yakunova



RUSSIA KILLS EVERYONE WITHOUT EXCEPTION: CHILDREN, CIVILIANS, PRISONERS OF WAR

Civilians and children are dying in various regions of Ukraine. A horrific story of Russians murdering civilians took place in Volnovakha, Donetsk region. On October 27, 2023, Russian invaders burst into a family's private home and shot everyone sleeping inside – nine people, including two children. Nastia, a 4th-grade student, and Mykyta, a preschooler, were killed. The invaders planned to use the house to station their unit, but the owner refused – and the entire family paid the price.



In September 2024, 7 people died in Lviv due to a Russian attack, including the Bazylevych family: mother Yevheniia and her daughters – 7-year-old Emiliia, 18-year-old Daryna, and 21-year-old Yaryna. The only survivor was the father of the family, Yaroslav.

The deadliest shelling that claimed the most children's lives occurred in Kryvyi Rih in April 2025. A missile struck near a playground – a place where children's laughter and voices should have been heard. **20 people died, including 9 children.**





Ukrainians are being killed in Russian captivity. Among them was journalist Viktoriia Roshchyna, 27. She dedicated her life to ensuring the world learned the truth about the war and the realities of Russian occupation. In August 2023, she went to report in the temporarily occupied areas of Zaporizhzhia region and disappeared. **It only became known in April 2024 that Viktoriia was in Russian captivity, where she was subjected to brutal torture.** Viktoriia's body was returned to Ukraine in February 2025: **forensic experts found numerous injuries and traces of violent treatment.**

Prisoner of war Oleksandr Hrytsiuk also died in captivity. After his body was repatriated to Ukraine, he weighed less than 50 kg – almost half the weight he had before captivity (110 kg). It was extremely difficult to identify him. His wife recalls: “He looked like an old man. Just skin and bones. His head was bruised, his nose was broken and shifted to the side”. **His death was the result of systemic torture, hunger, lack of medical care, and inhuman treatment.**



**WHEN RUSSIANS KILL,
THEY DELIBERATELY AIM
AT HUMANITY ITSELF!**

CAUSING SERIOUS BODILY OR MENTAL HARM TO MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR GROUP

[A Form of Genocide]

The maiming of bodies and minds of Ukrainians is not a side effect of war, but a deliberate tool of Russia to break the will of the nation.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in 2022:

- over **39,500** Ukrainians have been wounded;
- nearly **2,350** children have been wounded;
- **392** cases of sexual violence have been documented;
- **23** children have suffered from sexual violence;
- **95%** of Ukrainian prisoners of war were subjected to torture during their detention.

TRAUMA AND MUTILATION AS EVIDENCE: TARGETING LIFE

In early April, a Ukrainian woman named Nataliia decided to take her children away from the shelling. **They were at the Kramatorsk railway station on April 8, 2022**, when it was shelled by Russians. At that time, there were up to 4,000 people at the station hoping for evacuation. **Due to the shelling, Natalia and her daughter Yana lost their limbs.**



As a result of a **missile strike on Vinnytsia** on July 14, 2022, 8-year-old Roman lost his mother and suffered burns over 45% of his body. Doctors did not know if the boy would survive or if he would be able to walk. **Now, he participates in ballroom dancing competitions.**



Illustration: Grasya Oliyko

95% OF UKRAINIAN PRISONERS OF WAR ARE SUBJECTED TO TORTURE. IT IS A PLANNED POLICY

Russians torture Ukrainians in captivity: both prisoners of war and unlawfully detained civilians. Torture methods include **beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, physical exertion, brutal isolation, deprivation of medical care, mock executions**, and other forms of inhuman and degrading treatment.

77 kilograms in 5 months was the largest recorded weight loss of a serviceman.

The torture and consequences of captivity for Serhii Boichuk.



The man was kicked, trampled on his wounded back, suffocated with a plastic bag, and had an unloaded pistol held to his head, neck, and genitals. He was tortured with electric shocks, beaten with a rubber truncheon and a wooden stick.

He was held without hygiene products, under constant beatings, and was ultimately sentenced to 20 years in prison. During 27 months of captivity, Serhii lost 38 kg, dropping to a weight of 49 kg. He returned with severe psychological trauma, nerve damage in his legs, and constant headaches due to an untreated concussion.

BRINGING UKRAINIANS HOME MEANS SAVING THEM

6,422 UKRAINIANS,

including **409 civilians**,
have returned to Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

71 prisoner exchanges have taken place.

In 2026, the first exchange in the last six months took place: **150 military servicemen and 7 Ukrainian civilians were liberated.** Among them were **18 defenders whom the Russians had sentenced to long-term imprisonment.** The oldest liberated serviceman is **63 years old**, and the youngest is **23 years old.**

Those released were in a difficult psychological state. Some were recorded with critically low body weight, indicating the harsh conditions of their detention in captivity.

GLOSSARY

**If necessary, this glossary
may be separated and
used independently*

of terms related to armed conflict: children, military personnel and civilians

This Glossary contains definitions of key terms used in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine.

CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

Deported child – a child who is a citizen of Ukraine, as well as a child who is a foreign national or a stateless person who lawfully resides (or resided) in the territory of Ukraine or has (or had) the right to permanent residence in Ukraine, and who has been deported.

Draft Law of Ukraine No. 14251; Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 551 of 14 May 2024.

Refugee child – a child who is not a citizen of Ukraine and who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, citizenship, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.

Law of Ukraine No. 2402-III “On Protection of Childhood”.

Child affected by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation – a child who is a citizen of Ukraine, as well as a child who is a foreign national or a stateless person who is (was) in the territory of Ukraine on legal grounds or has (or had) the right to permanent residence in Ukraine, who, as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, has sustained injury, contusion, mutilation and/or other bodily harm or other damage to health, has been subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence, has been abducted, deported, forcibly transferred or unlawfully detained, has been internally displaced or displaced across a border, has left his or her place of residence or stay in order to avoid the negative consequences of armed aggression of the Russian Federation, has been recruited or used in armed forces or armed groups, has been present in territories where hostilities are being or were conducted or in territories under temporary occupation, has lost one or both parents, a guardian or caregiver, or has been deprived of parental care as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Draft Law of Ukraine No. 14251.

Doctrination – the process of systematically influencing the worldview, beliefs, and values of children in order to shape in them a certain ideology, military or political loyalty, which violates the child’s right to freedom of thought, beliefs, and non-discriminatory development.

Draft Law of Ukraine No. 12170.

Ideological processing of children – a set of measures and/or programs aimed at imposing certain political, moral-ethical, religious, or other beliefs on children without regard to their best interests, rights, and needs.

Indoctrination – the process of transforming minors into a component of the offensive policy of an aggressor state or occupying power through propaganda, specialized training, and a systematic educational approach.

Militarization – the process during which children are involved in armed conflicts, military actions, including recruitment into armed formations, use in propaganda, or training in military actions, which violates their rights and harms their development.

Child's right to identity – the inherent right to official recognition and preservation of one's personality, including name, nationality, family relations, culture, language, and religion. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which provides authoritative interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, emphasizes that the right to identity is central to the dignity and development of the child. It is linked to other rights, including the right to protection of family relations and access to justice, and aims to ensure conditions for children to grow up with a stable sense of their own identity and belonging to their community.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 8.

Forced assimilation – the coercive influence on a child by an aggressor state or occupying authority aimed at changing the child's national, linguistic, cultural, or civic identity through coercion, pressure, or restriction of rights under martial law.

Forced relocation of a child in connection with the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine – the unlawful relocation, with or without the use of abuse, of a child among the citizens of Ukraine, as well as a child among foreigners and stateless persons, who is (was) present on the territory of Ukraine on legal grounds or has (had) the right to permanent residence in Ukraine, carried out by a state recognized by the Parliament of Ukraine as an aggressor state and/or occupying state, through expulsion and/or other coercive actions, including in the absence of the child's informed consent, if the child has reached such an age and level of development to express it, and/or the informed consent of the parents or other lawful representatives of the child regarding the relocation of the child within the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, in the absence of grounds provided by the laws of Ukraine and/or permitted by international law.

Draft Law of Ukraine No. 14251; Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution No. 551 of 14.05.2024.

Child reintegration – the process of returning a child to a family or social environment after losing contact with the family or changing the place of residence.

Закон України "Про охорону дитинства"; Постанова КМУ № 551 від 14.05.2024.

Grave violations against children during an armed conflict – six grave violations identified and condemned by the UN Security Council and detailed in its resolutions, namely: recruitment and use of children; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; abduction of children; attacks on schools and hospitals; as well as denial of humanitarian access for children.

UN Security Council Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1379 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), 2143 (2014), 2225 (2015), 2427 (2018) and 2601 (2021).

PERSONS IN ARMED CONFLICT AND RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Prisoner of war – a combatant (see: Combatant) who has fallen into captivity during an international armed conflict, regardless of their condition – healthy, sick, or wounded.

Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 164 of 23.03.2017.

Internally displaced person – a citizen of Ukraine, foreigner, or stateless person who is present on the territory of Ukraine on legal grounds and has the right to permanent residence in Ukraine, who was forced to leave or abandon their place of residence as a result of or to avoid the adverse effects of an armed conflict, occupation, widespread violence, human rights violations, or natural or man-made emergencies.

Instructions on the Procedure for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law Norms in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, para. 10.

War crimes – grave violations of the 1949 Geneva Conventions and other serious violations of the laws and customs of war as defined in Article 8 of the Rome Statute. They constitute one of the international crimes (crimes under customary international law), which also include the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. War crimes can be divided into two types:

1. serious violations of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, namely: wilful killing, torture, causing suffering, deportation of population, taking of hostages, etc.;
2. other serious violations of the laws and customs of war as defined in Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: intentional attacks against the civilian population and civilian objects, personnel and means of humanitarian assistance, killing and wounding of combatants who have laid down arms, improper use of the enemy flag, intentional attacks against religious, cultural, historical objects, hospitals, declarations that no quarter will be given, pillaging of towns, etc.

What are war crimes: <https://warcrimes.gov.ua/what-is-crime.html>.

Genocide – intentional acts aimed at the complete or partial destruction of groups of persons on national, ethnic, racial, or religious grounds.

Victims of armed conflict – persons who have died or suffered during and as a result of hostilities, their direct or indirect effects. They include: the wounded and sick; persons who have suffered shipwreck (aircraft accident); persons missing in action; the dead (deceased); prisoners of war or other persons whose liberty is restricted in connection with the armed conflict; civilians located in areas of hostilities and in occupied territory. In the broad sense, victims of armed conflict, in addition to the dead, wounded, deported, and interned, include refugees and evacuees, and sometimes indirect demographic losses (unborn as a result of the impact of wartime on demography) are also considered. Practically the entire population of the Ukrainian territory since the period of the full-scale invasion (24 February 2022) can be considered victims of armed conflict.

Instructions on the implementation of the norms of international humanitarian law in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, para. 19; Terminological Dictionary of International Humanitarian Law / O.M. Voluyko, L.V. Polunina. – Kyiv: KINGU, 2024. – 148 p.

Hostage (in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war) – a person seized by Russian military personnel, law enforcement officers, officials, or other persons under Russian authority, for the purpose of compelling the Ukrainian authorities, a third state, an international organization, a natural or legal person, or a group of persons to perform certain acts or to refrain from performing certain acts, as a condition for ensuring security or the release of detained persons.

“Prisoners,” “hostages,” or “arbitrarily detained”: how to properly refer to civilians in Russian captivity: https://lb.ua/blog/koalitsiia_ua5am/660256_poloneni_zaruchniki_chi.html.

Crimes against humanity – crimes that cause harm to a person – to health, well-being, or dignity. Such crimes include: murder, causing suicide, assault, torture, failure to provide assistance to a person in danger, unlawful deprivation of liberty, taking of hostages, human trafficking, exploitation of children, rape, and sexual abuse of minors.

Combatant – a person who may take direct part in hostilities and belongs to the armed forces of the parties. The term “combatant” applies in the context of an international armed conflict and extends to:

1. members of militias and volunteer units, if they meet the following conditions: are under the command of a person responsible for their subordinates; have a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance; openly carry arms; conduct operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war;
2. inhabitants of a non-occupied territory who, upon the approach of the enemy, spontaneously take up arms to resist invading forces but do not have time to organize themselves (if they openly carry arms and respect the laws and customs of war).

Instructions on the implementation of international humanitarian law norms in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, para. 29.

International legal protection of victims of war – a system of measures aimed at ensuring the rules of conduct established by international humanitarian law regarding the wounded, prisoners of war, civilian population, etc., during armed conflict. The main international instruments in this field are the four Geneva Conventions for the protection of war victims, signed on 12 August 1949: Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field; Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea; Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

Non-combatants – persons who are part of the armed forces and provide assistance to them but do not take direct part in hostilities. Non-combatants include medical and religious personnel, quartermasters, war correspondents, legal advisers, etc. They benefit from the protection provided by IHL, which they lose in case of direct participation in hostilities for the duration of such participation. No weapons shall be used against such persons while they are engaged in the performance of their duties.

Instructions on the implementation of international humanitarian law norms in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, para. 39.

Repatriation – the return to the state of nationality, habitual residence, or origin of persons who, due to various circumstances, found themselves on the territory of other states.

Civilian – any person who is not a member of the armed forces and is not part of an armed group. Civilians enjoy general and specific protection under IHL, including the protection of children, women, persons with disabilities, and humanitarian and medical personnel. In case of doubt as to whether a person is a civilian, that person shall be considered a civilian. The civilian population consists of civilians. The presence within the civilian population of individuals who do not fall under the definition of civilians does not deprive the rest of the population of their civilian status and the protection afforded by IHL.

Instructions on the implementation of international humanitarian law norms in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, para. 59.



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THE SITUATION WITH CIVILIANS IN THE TOTS AND IN CAPTIVITY IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IS CRITICAL

The Russian Federation is deliberately creating an atmosphere of fear through violence, pressure, and intimidation in the TOTS.

- Since 2014, Russia has been systematically abducting and imprisoning Ukrainian civilians. At least **16,000** civilians are considered missing, and it has been verified that more than **1,800** civilians are being held in places of detention in Russia.



Volodymyr Mykolaiienko, former mayor of Kherson, had been unlawfully detained by Russians in April 2022. Volodymyr had served as mayor of Kherson from 2014 to 2020. The 65-year-old man had been in enemy's detention for over three years! He returned home on August 24, 2025.

He is a civilian who, according to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, should not have been detained. **But the Russians are violating the norms of international humanitarian law.**

In an interview after his release, Volodymyr said: *“The first days were the worst. You are beaten three times a day: during the morning check, the evening check, and when you go out for a walk during the day – either the guard dog bites you, or you go to the bathhouse – and there, they beat you too.”*

- The civilian population is systematically subjected to torture and cruel and degrading treatment by the occupying forces.

In the de-occupied villages, **mass graves of civilians and torture chambers were found.** After the de-occupation of the Kharkiv region in September 2022, **10** torture chambers set up by the Russian military were discovered in Balakliia and Izyum. In Izyum, a mass grave with **447** bodies, including women and children, was found.



After the liberation of Bucha in the Kyiv region from Russian troops in early April 2022, numerous pieces of evidence of war crimes were found: bodies of civilians in the streets, in mass graves and basements, many of which showed signs of torture and had their hands tied. **During the occupation, the Russian army committed more than 9,000 war crimes in the Bucha district, killing more than 1,700 civilians, of them nearly 700 in Bucha.**

WHO IS SUBJECT TO ILLEGAL KIDNAPPING AND DETENTION?

Absolutely all ukrainians: representatives of the government, the clergy, journalists, ordinary residents of the TOT. In particular:

- **Journalists.** As of February 5, 2026, at least **26** civilian Ukrainian media workers and **1** journalist who joined the Defence Forces are being held captive in Russia. Additionally, the occupiers have killed at least **143** media workers.

Some journalists have already been released from Russian captivity. Among them is Dmytro Khyliuk, who was unlawfully detained by the invaders in March 2022 in the Kyiv region together with his father. Dmytro's father was later released, but the journalist remained in Russian captivity for more than three years.

Dmytro lost a lot of weight. His health deteriorated significantly due to heart pain and an abscess. Dmytro was returned home on August 24, 2025, Ukraine's Independence Day.



- **Representatives of the clergy and the faithful.** At least **150** religious figures and the faithful **have been detained or imprisoned.** It is also known that **67** priests, pastors, and monks **have been killed or tortured.**

On June 28, 2024, two priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, **Ivan Levytskyi** and **Bohdan Heleta**, were returned from Russian captivity. They had been unlawfully detained since November 2022 after their arrest in the temporarily occupied Berdiansk. While in Russian captivity, the priests were subjected to pressure and torture.



During his visit to the torture chambers found in the liberated territories of Kherson region, Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, received information that children had also been held there.

14-year-old Vitalii Mukharskyi spent 10 days in a torture chamber in Kherson. According to the young man, he did not eat anything for four days. Food was brought in, but not for him. On the fifth day, he received two spoonfuls of buckwheat and two spoonfuls of noodles. After that, he was fed once a day. The child heard sounds and saw the consequences of torture.



→ **Forced issue of passports: a tool of pressure.**

Forced issue of passports in the temporarily occupied territories is a tool of forced assimilation and control. People are forced to accept the citizenship of the occupying state under threat of losing their jobs, medical care, freedom of movement, or security. Such actions **grossly violate the norms of international humanitarian law**, in particular the IV Geneva Convention.



The so-called “passports of a citizen of the Russian Federation” are being issued en masse in the temporarily occupied territories. For example, in the city of Pokrovsk, this is being done with the public involvement of representatives of the occupation administration. At the same time, the issuance of “biometric foreign passports of the Russian Federation” has begun. The declared validity period is 10 years, and the processing time is 1–3 months.

In order to obtain a “foreign passport of the Russian Federation,” men of draft age are required to provide a certificate of military registration. There have been cases of refusals to issue documents even when all the necessary documents were available.

Separately, it is noted that the State Duma of the Russian Federation has adopted a bill on **the mandatory requirement to be sworn in as a Russian citizen from the age of 14, including for residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.**

→ **Russia is forcibly conscripting Ukrainian citizens into military service in the Russian armed forces.**

It is known that by the end of December 2025, **the Russian Federation had fulfilled its recruitment plan for contract service for 2025.** In total, more than 11,600 people were recruited in the TOTs. In the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk region, the plan was fulfilled by more than 105%. In the temporarily occupied territories of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, the recruitment rate almost doubled. In the temporarily occupied territories of Luhansk region, special “operational headquarters” were created to campaign and recruit the population for contract service in the Russian Armed Forces.



DELIBERATELY INFLICTING ON THE GROUP CONDITIONS OF LIFE CALCULATED TO BRING ABOUT ITS PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART

[A Form of Genocide]

Russia systematically deprives Ukrainians of:

- access to food, water, medical care, housing, or creates conditions that make survival impossible;
- deliberate destruction of critical infrastructure, social, medical, educational, cultural, and religious facilities;
- creation of an atmosphere of constant fear and repression, making normal life and community reproduction impossible.

DAILY ATTACKS ON THE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

Attacks on energy, water supply, and heating infrastructure are not “collateral damage” but a **deliberate strategy**: to leave cities without light, heat, and water in the cold, forcing people to survive in conditions incompatible with normal life. Russia is striking the energy and heating infrastructure of Kyiv as well as – among others – Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Dnipropetrovsk regions.

- In the homes of residents of Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, due to constant shelling and the lack of heat and electricity, **the air temperature can reach +2 degrees Celsius.**
- **Some people have been without electricity for up to 5 days!**

Russia's missile and drone attacks cause:

- mass power outages;
- water supply and sewage system shutdowns;
- lack of heating in winter;
- disruption of work of hospitals, schools, kindergartens, and social infrastructure facilities;
- transport and communication disruptions.



! Millions of people are forced to live in darkness, cold, and under the constant threat of renewed attacks.

Russia strikes when people are trying to flee danger:



- **April 8, 2022 – Kramatorsk, railway station.** Peaceful people were waiting to be evacuated. A Tochka-U missile marked “For the Children” **took the lives of 61 people**, including **7 children**, and injured **121 people**.
- **September 30, 2022 – Zaporizhzhia, humanitarian convoy.** **32 people** were killed and **118 more** were injured.
- **January 27, 2026 – Kharkiv region, passenger train.** Russian drones attacked the train, **killing 5 people** and injuring many more. Civilians came under fire even after agreements on an “energy truce” had been reached.

ABSOLUTELY ALL CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE UNDER ATTACK

→ **Residential buildings.** Shelling turns Ukrainian homes into traps and dangers, destroying lives and memories, taking away the sense of home and peace.

During the full-scale aggression, **250,000 buildings** were destroyed or damaged.



January 14, 2023 – Dnipro, a residential building. A rocket strike killed **46 people**, including **6 children**, and wounded **79**, including **16 children**.

→ **Healthcare facilities.** Attacks on such facilities endanger the lives of patients and medical personnel.

During the full-scale aggression:

- **2,551** facilities were damaged or destroyed;
- **327** facilities were completely destroyed (of them **125 hospitals and clinics**).



July 8, 2024 – Okhmatdyt, Kyiv. A rocket hit the building of a children’s hospital. **At the time of the strike, there were over 600 children inside.** Two people were killed and many were wounded, including children and medical workers. More than **60% of the hospital was destroyed or damaged.**

→ **Educational institutions.** Russia is depriving Ukrainian children of their right to education: children are forced to study remotely, and a separate underground school has been set up in Kharkiv Metropolitan.

During the full-scale aggression, **4,456 educational institutions** have been damaged by bombing and shelling. **408 of them have been completely destroyed.**

In December 2025, **13 schools and kindergartens** in Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, Kyiv, and Lviv regions **were affected during a single attack.**



→ **Places of worship.** Sacred places are being targeted. Russian troops are using churches for military purposes, setting up ammunition depots and headquarters there, turning sacred sites into military targets.

During the full-scale aggression, more than **700 religious sites** have been damaged by Russian attacks, **53 of them have been completely destroyed.** The most affected regions are Luhansk, Donetsk, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson.

Spaso-Preobrazhensky (Transfiguration) Cathedral, Odesa, July 2023. A rocket pierced the roof and altar, damaging the foundation and interior paintings. The Kasperivska Icon of the Mother of God, patroness of the city, was rescued from the rubble. On the same day, more than 25 architectural monuments and other religious buildings were damaged.



→ **Ukraine's cultural heritage is suffering from the war.** Every hit is not just a damaged wall, but a devaluation of the country's cultural heritage.

During the full-scale aggression:

- **1,640 cultural heritage sites** have been damaged;
- **2,446 cultural facilities** have been damaged.

On the night of January 24, 2026, **shelling of Kyiv destroyed part of the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra National Preserve, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

→ **The war has not spared places of detention.** As a result of the full-scale invasion by Russian troops, dozens of penitentiary institutions, social facilities, boarding schools, and children's homes have been destroyed. In the frontline territories, control over these institutions has been lost, communication with them has been disrupted, and the transfer of prisoners and wards to safe places has been complicated.

During the full-scale aggression, were damaged or destroyed:

- **36** penitentiary institutions;
- **98** places of detention of the National Police, of which 9 were completely destroyed;
- **2** offices of the State Migration Service;
- **8** temporary detention facilities of the State Border Guard Service, of which 2 were destroyed.

In July 2025, **16 prisoners were killed** and 44 more were wounded during shelling of the Bilenke Colony in Zaporizhzhia region.

→ **War leaves behind not only human casualties, but also environmental ones.**

Preliminary **losses** from Russia's aggression amount to almost **6.4 trillion UAH:**

- **air:** 1.14 trillion UAH;
- **soil and land:** 1.29 trillion UAH;
- **water:** 120.5 billion UAH;
- **nature reserve fund:** 3.78 trillion UAH.

More than 20% of the nature reserve fund's sites have been damaged, and some of them may be lost forever. This damage is difficult to measure in monetary terms – it is the loss of life, clean nature, and the future.





Another horrific crime committed by Russia was the destruction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant. It turned water into a weapon and ruined the lives of thousands of people. This is an example of ecological genocide (ecocide): more than 18 cubic kilometres of water flooded nearly 80 settlements, destroyed ecosystems, and turned the former reservoir into a dry sandy desert.

Millions of human lives are also at risk due to Russia's occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. Since the beginning of its occupation, international organizations have warned of serious risks to nuclear safety due to Russia's military presence at the facility.

In the event of fatal consequences, it is not only Ukrainian lands that could be affected. The zone of radiation contamination could spread to Romania, Bulgaria, Central European countries, and the northern part of the Middle East, including almost the entire territory of Türkiye. And the consequences of a possible accident in the centre of Europe will be felt by more than one generation of humanity.

All these actions by Russia are leading to another consequence: mass internal displacement of the population and Ukrainians leaving the country.

- Almost **4.6 million** people are registered as internally displaced persons (IDPs). Among them, more than **830,000** are children.
- **5.8 million** Ukrainians have left their homes since February 24, 2022.

They face a complex set of interrelated problems, ranging from everyday issues to psychological and legal ones.

PREVENTING THE BIRTH OF CHILDREN WITHIN THE GROUP

[A Form of Genocide]

A series of crimes committed by Russians are aimed not only at violence, but also at preventing Ukrainians from having children.

This includes separating families, conditions of captivity that **destroy reproductive health** (starvation, lack of medical care, torture), and changing the identity of Ukrainian children. It also includes shelling medical facilities, including maternity hospitals.

On February 1, 2026, a Russian attack hit the gynaecology department of a hospital in Zaporizhzhia. 15 medical workers and 16 women, including three women with newborns, were in the shelter. A doctor, a nurse, and a patient were injured. The strike knocked out windows, damaged the facade, and caused a fire.



JUSTICE FOR UKRAINE — SECURITY FOR THE WORLD

■ Russian aggression is not only a war against a state, but a systematic attack on people, the law, and the very foundations of the international order.

The international community has no right to remain silent: action must be taken immediately, and the aggressor must be held accountable. Every day without decisions means new victims and destruction.

To ensure justice, we urge the international community to:

- Recognize the actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine as genocide against the Ukrainian people. This can be done at the level of the parliaments of the world and through the adoption of relevant resolutions.
- Provide comprehensive support for the investigation of the crime of genocide by international and national judicial bodies, in particular the International Criminal Court and the future Special Tribunal.
- Ensure the inevitability of accountability for those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide by utilising all available mechanisms of national and international justice.
- Actively apply the principle of universal jurisdiction and call upon competent authorities to initiate pre-trial investigations and prosecutions of international crimes committed in Ukraine, and ensure their subsequent independent judicial review.
- Increase sanctions pressure on the aggressor state and associated individuals and companies to stop the financing of the war.
- Ensure the full implementation of the mandates of international human rights institutions in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- Facilitate the return of all categories of persons (children, unlawfully detained civilians, prisoners of war) from the Russian Federation and the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.
- Ensure fair reparations for victims of aggression, in particular through the establishment of an international compensation mechanism and the use of frozen Russian assets.
- Take measures to counter disinformation by exposing Russian propaganda.
- Support Ukraine's human rights capacity, in particular by strengthening national human rights institutions, systematically documenting crimes, and providing assistance to war victims.

■ Since February 24, 2022, the world no longer has the right to be “war-weary,” because every day without decisions means new victims, ruined lives, and impunity for the aggressor! **The world must act now.**

**“A BURDEN
SHARED IS HALF
THE BURDEN,**

**A JOY SHARED
IS TWICE
THE JOY.”**



Омбудсман України
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