



Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine

NATIONAL MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE UNDER OCCUPATION: the struggle for survival

RESEARCH RESULTS

«The position of national minorities (communities) and
indigenous people under occupation of Russian Federation»



INTRODUCTION



The Revolution of Dignity finally determined the pro-European choice of the Ukrainian people, and the ratification of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU was certainly an important achievement of Ukraine. This has been the main motive behind the democratic changes that have taken place over the last decade, as well as the driving force behind a number of key reforms based on European values.

The current state of development of European integration processes is unique, as it is taking place in the conditions of a full-scale war, which was launched unprovoked by the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Protecting the security architecture of Europe and the world, suffering from colossal human and financial and economic losses, Ukraine acquired the status of a candidate for joining the EU and continued to actively implement pro-European reforms.

Pursuant to the Resolution of the European Parliament 2022/2716 (RSP), the Ukrainian government has launched the process of harmonizing the legislation of Ukraine with the universal standards of the legal system of the European Union. In order to fully implement the political and legal provisions of the mentioned document, the EU put forward to Ukraine a list of requirements for the improvement of the legislation, which regulates a number of important areas of public life and state administration. One of the conditions for Ukraine's membership in the EU was the adoption of legislation that meets international criteria in the field of protecting the rights of national minorities.

The active dialogue between the Ukrainian government and European institutions in matters of managing ethno-cultural diversity testifies to the weight and significance of this factor on the path of European integration along with democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

Speaking about modern ethnopolitical challenges and problems in Ukraine, one cannot ignore the state of observance of the rights and freedoms of national minorities (communities) in the conditions of an open military conflict and martial law in Ukraine. As you know, the temporarily occupied territories in the east and south of the country are multi-ethnic regions with compact settlements of Bulgarians, Greeks, Crimean Tatars, Jews, Roma and other representatives of national minorities.

The steps of the Ukrainian government in creating a number of online platforms for recording and investigating crimes of the Russian Federation against the civilian population of Ukraine are welcome,¹ but today there is an urgent need to develop an effective mechanism for interaction with the affected representatives of national minorities in the liberated territories of Ukraine (Kherson, Kharkiv, Sumy, Kyiv region), as well as in those places where they received the status of internally displaced persons.

¹ Platforms fixation and investigation crimes Russian federation against civilian people of Ukraine . Link placed on official site Committee on issues rights person , de-occupation and reintegration temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine , national minorities and international relations : <https://kompravlud.rada.gov.ua/fsviiew/74615.html>

An important step on the way to quality management of ethno-cultural diversity should be the introduction of a modern model of institutionalization of ethno-cultural relations at the regional and local levels. Unfortunately, today executive structures at the regional and local level only superficially control the sphere of ethnopolitics and do not have clear powers in their activities. They do not record and accumulate actual statistical data on the violation of the rights and freedoms of national minorities and indigenous peoples in the conditions of an open military conflict, which can lead to a massive loss of evidence in crimes of the Russian Federation based on factors of discrimination (ethnic origin, skin color, religion, language). A significant barrier to the effective work of regional military administrations is also the lack of competent specialists in their staff who would be able not only to implement cultural policy, but also to carry out permanent legal and sociological monitoring of the ethnic environment.

Summing up the interim results, we can say with confidence that the issue of ensuring the rights of national minorities (communities) is one of the important points agenda of the Ukrainian government. Thanks to active cooperation with international organizations (UN, European Commission, Council of Europe, OSCE) and the expert environment, visible progress can already be observed in the direction of adapting national legislation and institutional practices of Ukraine to European standards of legal protection of national minorities and indigenous peoples.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to record cases of violations of the rights and freedoms of representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples during the period of Russian armed aggression, as well as to analyze the effectiveness of legal mechanisms for their protection during the martial law in Ukraine. Particular attention was also paid to the problems and achievements of European integration reforms in the field of ethnopolitics, which are considered as framework tools for decision-making at the state and regional level.

The data highlighted in the research is summarized with the expert support of the Council of Europe and is based, first of all, on the materials of the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as information received from regional military administrations and representatives of national minorities (splint) and indigenous peoples.

The research was based on **the following tasks**:

-  Obtaining official and unofficial information about facts of abduction, genocide or discrimination of representatives of national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples in the occupied and de-occupied territories of Ukraine, taking into account their nationality, age, place of residence, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, skin color, religion, political beliefs, language or any other factor.
-  Diagnostics of the current state of ensuring the rights and freedoms of national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples in Ukraine under martial law.
-  Examination of the latest legal acts in the field of ethnopolitics for their compliance with international and European standards, national legislation, and the security strategy of Ukraine.
-  Development of recommendations for target groups and stakeholders.

The study is based on the following **main principles**:

-  The principle of objectivity: the results of the research depend solely on the evaluation of the received information in the researched area and do not depend on the subjective opinion or emotional arguments of the monitor / expert.
-  The principle of legality: when carrying out their activities, the subjects of the study acted in strict accordance with the current legal acts that determine their powers in this field.
-  Principle of transparency: information on research results is freely available to the public and meets basic open data standards.
-  Credibility principle: the conclusions of the study are based on verified information obtained from primary and secondary sources, which are assessed as reliable and trustworthy.
-  The principle of confidentiality: willingness to comply with the principle of non-disclosure of personal data that became known during the research.

Methods were used in the study:

-  Consultations:
 - with representatives of relevant ministries and other bodies of executive power at the central, regional and local levels;
 - with representatives of national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples;
 - with the heads of national-cultural and human rights non-governmental organizations.
-  Information requests to information managers.
-  Distribution of the questionnaire among respondents.
-  Comparative legal analysis of international and national normative acts, decisions, recommendations, reports and other official documents.
-  Search for current web content in open sources.
-  Accumulation, verification and analysis of received information.

The target groups of the research were representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples of Ukraine, including those who became victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, as well as relatives of victims and witnesses of these crimes.

As part of the research, 102 completed questionnaires were received from representatives of target groups, 24 informational reports from regional military administrations, and 7 generalized analytical reports from relevant ministries. 16 in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of national minorities (communities) who were or are currently in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

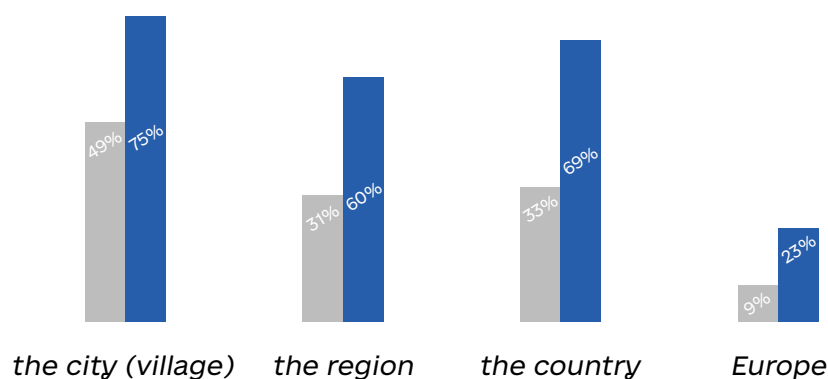
The time frame of the conducted research includes the period February 2022 – August 2023 and is based on the initial data from February 24, 2022, that is, from the beginning of the full-scale war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. The report covers the situation until August 31, 2023.

Geographically, the study covered the entire territory of Ukraine, including the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Special attention was paid to the occupied and de-occupied territories, where the situation with violation of the rights of national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples is the worst today.

VIOLATIONS OF THE SYSTEM OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES (COMMUNITIES) IN CONDITIONS OF WAR: A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS IN THE TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE

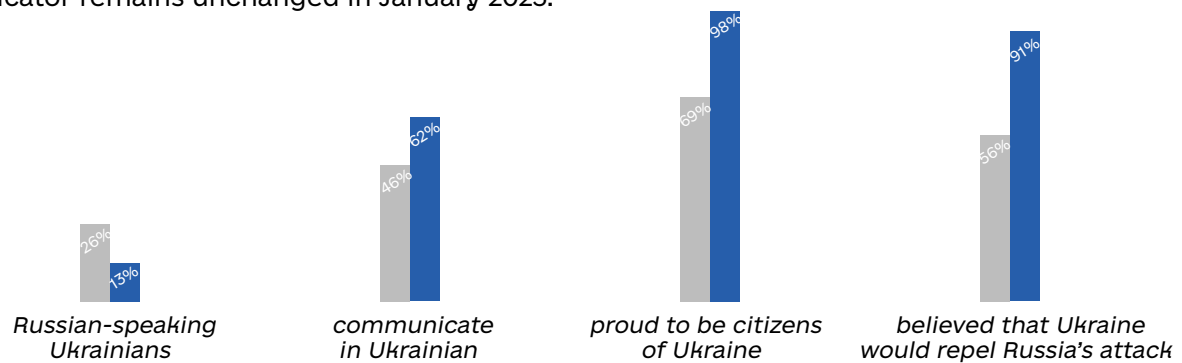
For almost 10 years, Ukraine has been at war with the Russian Federation, fighting for its independence and territorial integrity, as well as protecting the future of the entire democratic world. During this time, Ukrainian society became more united and consolidated around common goals, oriented towards victory in the war and the further development of Ukraine as a highly developed, democratic, influential, European state. The war situation intensified the citizens' need for solidarity with the residents of their city, village, region, country as a whole, even Europe and the world.

According to the Razumkov Center, the share of those who feel very close to the residents of their city (village) increased from 49% in 2020 to 75% in 2022, with the region – from 31% to 60%, with the country – from 33% to 69%, with Europe – from 9% to 23%.²



² Political values and political and ideological orientation citizens of Ukraine in the period Russian aggression: state and directions changes // National security and defense, 2022, No. 3-4. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://razumkov.org.ua/images/journal/NSD_189-190_2022_ukr.pdf

Along with a significant increase in faith in the Ukrainian state and its future during 2022, there was a two-fold decrease in the share of Russian-speaking Ukrainians – from 26% before the invasion to 13% in January 2023, and a 16% increase in those who most often communicate in Ukrainian (from 46% to 62%). In 2020, 69% of Ukrainians were proud to be citizens of Ukraine, and in August 2022 – 98%; in February 2022, 56% believed that Ukraine would repel Russia's attack, and in March 2022 – 91%, and this indicator remains unchanged in January 2023.³



Such an emotional background became one of the factors in the formation of the Ukrainian civil (political) nation – after all, 94% of citizens, including representatives of various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, share an all-Ukrainian identity.⁴ Today, the all-Ukrainian identity is an important tool for countering Russian aggression, and its erosion still remains one of Russia's tasks in the war against Ukraine.

In the first days of the new phase of the Russian-Ukrainian war, representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples expressed their full support for Ukraine and called for unification and coordination of joint efforts in confronting external threats and challenges.⁵ In their joint statements at the national and regional levels, they emphasized long-standing historical ties with Ukraine and expressed readiness to protect its state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Such solidarity created conditions for a powerful information and volunteer front, and also contributed to the active involvement of representatives of various ethnic communities in the ranks of the Armed Forces.

Unfortunately, there are currently no mechanisms for keeping detailed statistics on the ethnicity of servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, since since 2002 the legislation of Ukraine has canceled the «nationality» column in civil status records.⁶ This also makes it impossible to record demographic changes in the regions with a compact residence of representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples of Ukraine, which are currently under the occupation regime. Neither the State Statistics Service of Ukraine nor regional state administrations perform such accounting at this stage. Therefore, obtaining the latest demographic data for Ukrainian regions, in particular regarding their national composition, will become possible only after the next All-Ukrainian population census.

Under these conditions, the initiative of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience, which has started constant monitoring of cases of participation of representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples in the resistance movement, seems very relevant.

Monitoring is carried out by analyzing open sources of information and covers facts in six directions of involvement in countering Russian aggression:

1. «Advocacy activities in support of Ukraine»;
2. «Humanitarian mission»;
3. «Resistance in temporarily occupied territories»;
4. «International information»;
5. «Direct participation in the armed forces and other defense forces»;
6. «Public position».

³Changes in Ukrainian society during the year of full-scale war. InfoSapiens, 23 Feb 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.sapiens.com.ua/ua/socpol-research-single-page?ID=259>

⁴The effectiveness of the implementation of state policy in the sphere of the affirmation of Ukrainian national and civil identity: sociological indicators. Razumkov Center, June 29, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/efektyvnist-realizatsii-derzhavnoi-polityky-u-sferi-utverdzhennia-ukrainskoi-natsionalnoi-ta-gromadianskoi-identychnosti-sotsiologichni-indykatory-traven-2023r>

⁵Statement of heads of Romanian national and cultural societies of Transcarpathia. September 26, 2022. Access mode: <https://ungvar.with.ua/2022/09/26/zaiava-kerivnykiv-rumanskykh-natsionalno-kulturnykh-tovarystv-zakarpattia/> Address of the NGO «Council of National Societies of Vinnytsia». Vinnytsia Regional Military Administration, February 25, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.wine.gov.ua/upravlinnia-u-spravakh-natsionalnostei-ta-relihi/43941-zvernennia-ho-rady-natsionalnykh-tovarystv-vinnychchyny> Ukraine is a peaceful home for all of us: appeal for support of Ukraine. DESS, February 24, 2022. Access mode: <https://dess.gov.ua/zvernennia-etnospilnot-ukrainy/> Meskhetian Turks urged the Muslims of Russia and Chechnya not to participate in the war against Ukraine. UNIAN, April 15, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.Union.ua/world/turki-meshetinci-zaklikali-musulman-rosiji-i-chechni-ne-brati-uchast-u-viyni-proti-ukrajini-video-novini-svitu-11787444>. html Appeals from individual communities, organizations and various networks of civil society. DESS. Access mode: <https://dess.gov.ua/zvernennia-vid-spilnot/>

⁶Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated September 12, 2002 No. 1367 «On approval of sample books for registration of civil status acts and descriptions of certificate forms issued by state bodies for registration of civil status acts.» [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/1367-2002-%D0%BF#Text> Rules of state registration of acts of civil status in Ukraine, approved by the order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine dated October 18, 2000 No. 52/5 (as amended by the order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine dated October 24, 2010 No. 3307/5). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/z0719-00#Text> resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated November 10, 2010 No. 1025 «On approval of sample records of civil status, descriptions and sample forms of certificates on state registration of civil status acts»). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/1025-2010-%D0%BF#Text>

As part of the monitoring, 367 reports on the facts of the activities of representatives of 38 national minorities and indigenous peoples of Ukraine were recorded, however, the specified number of facts is not exhaustive, since many such cases remain outside the public information space and require additional time for search and study.

Currently, communication channels between Ukraine and its temporarily occupied territories are almost non-functional, which complicates the process of recording facts regarding systematic violations of human rights and freedoms by the Russian Federation.

Multi-ethnic population, in particular the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk and Donetsk regions, are on the line of active hostilities. According to the approved list of territories where hostilities are taking place or temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, it can be seen that among them there are a large number of settlements with compact residences of representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples, in particular:

Crimean Tatars (Novooleksiivka, Rykovo, Shchaslyvtsevo, Partizans of the Heniche district of the Kherson region; Novotroitskyi district of the Kherson region; Makiivka, Myrnodar of the Donetsk region; Anthracite of the Luhansk region);

Bulgarian (Ozeryany of Heniche district of Kherson region; Raynivka, Vyacheslavka, Gyunivka, Zelenivka, Inzivka, Sofiivka (Kolarivka), Manuylivka, Marynivka, Preslav, Banivka, Troyani, Radolivka, Petrivka, Lozuvatka of Berdyansky district of Zaporizhzhya region; Botieve, Bogdanivka, Hannivka, Stepanivka Druga, Stroganivka, Melitopol district, Zaporizhia region; Velika Ternivka, Yakymiv district, Zaporizhia region);

Greeks (Mariupol, Sartana, Maloyanisol, Sartana, Urzuf, Kremenivka, Chermalyk, Yalta, Mangush, Stary Krym of the Mariupol district of the Donetsk region; Volnovakha of the Donetsk region; Bugas, Starognativka, Velyka Novosilka, Rozdolne, Granitne, Komar, Staromlynivka, Ulakly, Bogatyr Volnovasky district of Donetsk region; Styla, Starolaspa, Starobesheve of Kalmius district of Donetsk region);

Roma (Bakhmut, Krasnohirka, Kramatorsk, Vugledar, Toretsk, Chasiv Yar, Kropyvnytske, Stritenko, Novotroitske, Olhynka, and Dmytrivka of the Volnova region; the city of Mariupol and the Mariupol region; Lysychansk, Kreminsky, and Swativ regions of the Luhansk region);

Meskhethian Turks (Khrestivka, Baltazarivka, Moroziivka of the Chaplin district of the Kherson region; Slovyansk of the Donetsk region).

A large number of representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples remain in the zone of active hostilities and daily experience massive violations of human rights and freedoms - from uricide campaigns⁷ and «filtration» measures to cases of illegal abductions, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, illegal detentions, murders and show executions, politically motivated criminal prosecutions.

Numerous reports of international organizations and missions that are constantly working in Ukraine testify to Russia's brazen disregard of its international legal obligations. Since the beginning of the aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the Russian Federation has violated almost 400 different treaties of international law, including the UN Charter, the Hague and Geneva Conventions, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on protection of cultural values in case of armed conflict and many others.

At the same time, it should be emphasized that a complete picture of offenses can be made only by taking into account the situation with both universally recognized rights (human and citizen rights) and the special legal status of representatives of national minorities in Ukraine and the world.

The rights of national minorities are an integral part of the general system of human rights and civil rights and freedoms, but in democratic countries they are endowed with a number of specific rights that differ from the rights of the majority of citizens of the state. These are their rights in those areas where they manifest themselves as a special ethnic group (preservation of identity, traditions, language, cultural heritage, etc.), as well as where there is a need to balance the discriminatory position of the minority compared to other citizens.

⁷Uricide is a separate form of mass violence that is characterized by on purpose destruction vitally important civil infrastructure. In complete disregard of international humanitarian law, uricide is based on the logic of collective punishment directed against the civilian population and the built infrastructure on which its life depends. Such campaigns of systematic bombing and destruction can leave entire cities in ruins, hence the term uricide – the «killing» of a city

As of August 29, 2023, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine documented 105,247 war crimes committed by Russians, including the killing of 503 children (1,117 wounded).⁸ According to official data from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 9,511 civilians (civilians) were killed and another 17,206 were injured due to Russian aggression against Ukraine from February 24, 2022 to August 27, 2023.⁹

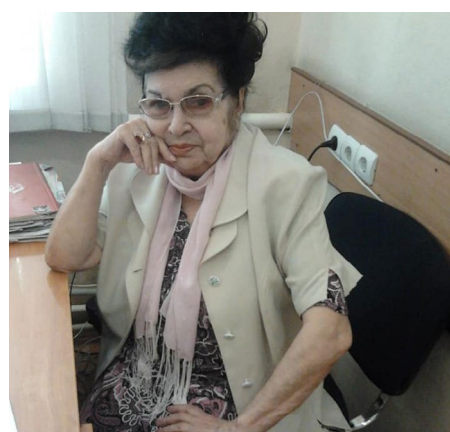
These figures are very approximate, as they include only confirmed losses and no data from occupied territories. The vast majority of cases of death or injury of civilians occurred due to the use of heavy artillery in populated areas, in particular, rocket salvo systems, as well as rocket and air strikes. In addition, Russian troops committed a number of extrajudicial executions and indiscriminate killings of civilians, including children.

The Greeks of the Azov region are under threat of extinction – the third largest ethnic group of the Donetsk region and the largest center of compact settlement of Greeks in the territory of the entire post-Soviet space. Within the boundaries of one ethnic community, two unique language groups have been preserved to this day: **Rumei, who communicate in the Rumei dialect of Greek, and Urumi, whose language belongs to the group of Turkic languages.**



Since 2014, almost all settlements of the Azov Greeks have suffered catastrophic destruction and numerous human casualties among the civilian population, as they were in the front-line zone on the line of fire. Since February 2022, the situation has worsened due to the occupation and the humanitarian situation in Mariupol and other Greek settlements, where approximately 100,000 Greeks lived. Thus, the city of Volnovakha with a population of more than 21,100 inhabitants (15,000 of them Greek Romans) was destroyed by 95%; the village of Granitne (3,600 Urumin Greeks lived) was destroyed by 95%; the village of Staromlynivka (inhabited by 2,400 Urumin Greeks) was destroyed by 90%; the village of Bugas (inhabited by 1,400 Greek- Romanians) was destroyed by 70%; the village of Chermalyk (1,900 Urumin Greeks lived) was destroyed by 70%; the village of Starognativka (home to 2,100 ethnic Greeks: Urums and Rumeys) – destroyed by 60%.

As a result of an airstrike on February 26, 2022, the death of 10 Greeks was recorded in the suburbs of Mariupol (villages of¹⁰ Sartana and Bugas). It is also known about the death of Natalia Kharakoz – a writer, journalist, public figure who came from a Greek family and lived in Mariupol all her conscious life.¹¹ The woman refused to leave the occupied city with her family and died at the age of 87 from the terrible conditions in which she had to live. After the destruction of her house, she spent several weeks in the basement of a nearby high-rise building without contact with loved ones, in the cold, hunger, dirt, without water and medicine. Locals buried Natalya Kharakoz in the yard. The neighbor put a note in her pocket with the name and date of death. Thanks to this, relatives who remained in the occupied territory were able to find the burial place of Natalia Kharakoz in a mass grave at the Old Crimean cemetery.



⁸Crimes committed during the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation. As of 08/29/2023 // [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/08/29/ofis-genprokurora-ukrayiny-zadokumentovano-ponad-105-tysyach-voyennyh-zlochyniv/>

⁹Ukraine: civilian casualty update 8 May 2023 // [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Ukraine%20-%20civilian%20casualty%20update%20as%20of%2027%20August%202023%20UKR.pdf>

¹⁰Greece is evacuating citizens and consulate employees from Mariupol. Ukrinform, March 2, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.ukrainform.ua/rubric-politics/3418238-grecia-evakuue-gromadan-ta-spivrobitnikiv-konsulstva-z-mariupola.html>

¹¹War with words, war with weapons: In Memoriam for journalists who died in the war. Soil. Access mode: <https://grnt.media/special-project/in-memoriam-dlya-zhurnalistiv-yaki-zagynuly-na-vijni/>

According to confirmed data of the mayor of Mariupol, more than 20,000 civilians died in the city during the occupation period.¹² According to unofficial data, this figure may exceed 100,000 people.¹³

In general, several problematic points can be identified, which complicate the process of identifying the exact number of dead among the townspeople. **The first category** of problems is related to the closed database of the Russian Federation, where identified victims buried by the Russian military are entered. **The second** is mass burials in mass graves and public places, after exhumation of which it will be almost impossible to establish the identity of the deceased. Satellite images recorded that the largest mass burials of Mariupol residents are located near Mangush, at the cemetery in Vynogradny and in Old Crimea.



The third is the impossibility of counting the victims who remained under the rubble of buildings – when the remains of buildings were dismantled, the bodies were taken out together with construction debris. **The fourth category of problems** is represented by the chaotic burial of burnt bodies, the ashes of which were simply buried in the ground, often without marking the place of burial.

The given examples also confirm the personal stories of the respondents:

[Translated from Russian] «My husband went to gather branches so that we could cook food on the fire. And then as soon as it happened, we saw that he was lying down and did not move, but we do not know whether he was still alive for some time or died immediately. When we managed to reach him, he was already dead. [...] It was not possible to take it away and bury it, because they were constantly shelling it. Then someone came up with the idea of writing on paper the name and surname, date of birth, place of residence, and those notes were left in their pockets and tied to their hands and feet. [...] So the marauders removed all this, tore it down. Men then put those notes several more times, because they kept disappearing. [...] They went and looked for valuable things on corpses, and there were such. [...] On March 27, my children took me from the city and that was the last day I saw my husband's body, it was lying there. Then the neighbors told me that he was lying like that until April 23, that is, the body lay on the street for more than a month. [...] The body was taken away by some people from the DPR or the military, I don't know for sure. And although the neighbors told them the name and surname, and all the details of the man, they said that it would be a body with a number» (woman, representative of the Greek national minority, Mariupol).

News about killing of minors **Tigran Ohannisyan** and **Nikita Khanganov**, Armenians by origin, who were accused by the local occupying authorities of Berdyansk (temporarily occupied territory of Zaporizhzhya region) of «anti-Russian and terrorist activities», were shocking.¹⁴

According to the Media Initiative for Human Rights, the criminal prosecution of the teenagers began on September 30, 2022, after several months of harsh interrogations with the use of beatings and electric torture in order to extract confessions from them. On May 24, 2023, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation indicted the teenagers for allegedly planning sabotage on the railway in Melitopol – they faced arrest and up to 20 years in prison under Article 281 of the Criminal Code.¹⁵



¹²The mayor of Mariupol gave the data on the dead in the city. Radio Svoboda, April 14, 2023. Access mode: <https://www.radiofreedom.org/a/news-mariupol-zahybli/32363334.html>

¹³How many people died in Mariupol: the journalist revealed new data from sources. ZN . UA , May 4, 2023. Access mode: <https://zn.ua/ukr/war/skilki-ljudej-zahinulo-u-mariupoli-zhurnalistka-rozkrila-novi-dani-dzherel.html>

¹⁴The Russians announced the killing of «pro-Ukrainian terrorists» in Berdyansk: one of them was 16. UNIAN, June 25, 2023. Access mode: <https://www.Union.net/society/tigran-oganesyan-rossiyane-zayavili-ob-ubiystvye-v-berdyanske-dvuh-chelovek-12306384.html>

¹⁵Russia accuses Ukrainian children of sabotage – they face 10 to 20 years in prison. MIPL, May 25, 2023. Access mode: <https://mipl.org.ua/terminovorosiya-obvynuvachuye-ukrayinskyh-ditej-u-dyversiyi-yim-zagrozhuje-vid-10-do-20-rokiv-uvyaznennya/?fbclid=IwAR1iWm2bKOAMp5zEutss3Wq5lV1aEpX7ZpN3npa531B0dNI9hPR0u0CuUQ>

On June 15, 2023, the European Parliament published a resolution demanding that the Russian Federation stop persecuting children and allow them to leave the territory controlled by Ukraine.¹⁶ In particular, the deputies called on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to facilitate the safe return of teenagers to the territory controlled by Ukraine, as well as to investigate this case with the participation of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on violence against children. Unfortunately, there was no response to this call.

On June 26, 2023, the occupation authorities of the Zaporizhia region confirmed the death of Tigran Ohannisyan and Nikita Khanganov, who «were blocked and destroyed as a result of coordinated and operative actions of law enforcement agencies». The journalists learned that the boys were killed by a sniper shot: Tigran received a fatal gunshot to the heart, and his friend to the head. Currently, this case requires an international investigation to clarify all the circumstances.

It is also known about human losses among the Roma population. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, data on the death of 4 people (1 military, 3 civilians, including a woman and a child) and 2 missing persons (1 military and 1 civilian) were confirmed.

All the listed types of crimes are recorded today in large numbers in the occupied and de-occupied territories of Ukraine.

According to the data of human rights organizations of Ukraine, four categories of the local population experienced the most cases of violations of human dignity:

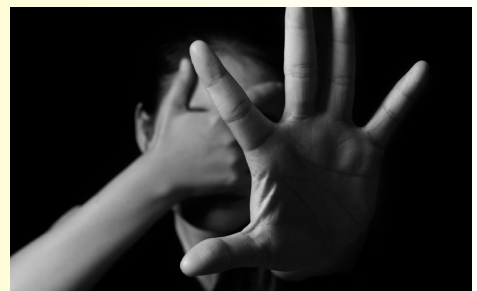
1. **veterans and former servicemen of the Ukrainian army who did not serve at the time of the start of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022;**
2. **civilians who directly or indirectly cooperated with the Ukrainian army while the territory was under the control of Russian troops;**
3. **persons who were openly disloyal to the Russian army expressed their position publicly (local public activists, volunteers, entrepreneurs, etc.);**
4. **managers and senior officials of local authorities who refused to cooperate with the Russian army;**
5. **family members of the specified categories of civilians. Representatives of these groups are victims in 48% of documented cases of torture.**¹⁷

One of the most traumatic and widespread violations of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine is conflict-related sexual violence (or CRSV), which was inflicted on civilians by the Russian aggressors. It is a legal term that refers to rape, sexual slavery, sexual torture or humiliation, intentional transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, coercion of sexual violence against other people, and other forms of sexual violence that are carried out with political or socio-economic intentions relevant to the goals of the conflict.

According to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, as of September 1, 2023, 231 facts of CRSV are officially known. The largest number of cases were recorded in the following regions of Ukraine: Kherson – 69, Donetsk – 55, Kyiv – 52, Kharkiv – 21, Zaporizhia – 15, Mykolaiv – 9, Chernihiv – 5, Luhansk – 3, Sumy – 2. Among the injured were 82 men and 149 women. At the same time, 13 people were minors: 12 girls and one boy. Statistical data on the ethnicity of victims of the CRSV are currently not recorded by the prosecutor's office.

Among the respondents with whom it was possible to communicate in the course of this study, there are those who left the occupied territories due to the fear of sexual violence. One of the representatives of the Bulgarian ethnic community from the occupied part of the Zaporizhia region said that she repeatedly felt pressure from the Russian military in public places – in public transport, at street stops, bazaars, etc.

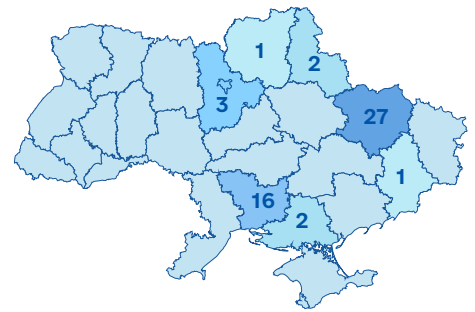
«I used to bring milk to the spontaneous bazaar in Melitopol from the village in order to earn at least a penny. I often took my daughter with me, because her children were nowhere to be found - the school in the village no longer worked, there is a military base there now, and I was afraid to leave the child alone. At some point, a lot of «Kadyrivets» came, they were constantly clinging to young women in the bazaar, on the street, at bus stops, all around. Drunk, with weapons in their hands, they talked like slaves, demonstrated their power.» (woman, representative of the Bulgarian national minority, Zaporizhzhia).



¹⁶Resolution of the European Parliament regarding torture and criminal prosecution by the Russian Federation of Ukrainian minors Tigran Ohannisyan and Nikita Khanganov. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://mipl.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/rezolyucziya-yevropejskogo-parlamentu-shhodo-katuvan-ta-kryminalnogo-peresliduvannya-rosijskoyu-federacziyeyu-ukrayinskyh-nepovnoletnih-tygrana-ogannisnyana-ta-mykyty-hanganova-1.pdf>

¹⁷Torture and other forms of ill-treatment committed in the context of armed conflict by the representatives of the Russian Federation in the territory of Ukraine. April 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://mipl.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/torture-and-other-forms-of-ill-treatment-upr.pdf>

In 2022, the National Police of Ukraine discovered **54 places of illegal detention** and torture of citizens in the de-occupied territories. In particular, there are 27 prisons in Kharkiv Oblast, 16 in Kherson Oblast, 3 in Kyiv Oblast, 2 each in Sumy Oblast and Mykolaiv Oblast, 1 each in Donetsk Oblast and Chernihiv Oblast.¹⁹ The prosecutor's office opened **5,079 criminal proceedings** on the facts of torture and other inhuman treatment by the Russian military in Ukraine. At least one case of torture was officially recorded, which was additionally motivated by ethnic and religious intolerance on the part of the Russian Muslim military.



Among the interviewed respondents from among representatives of national minorities, one case of the stay of civilians in a specialized torture chamber for long-term illegal detention in the city of Kherson was recorded. The victim, who has Bulgarian roots (the father is an ethnic Bulgarian), reported that he was sent to the pre-trial detention center for participating in protests, volunteering and publishing pro-Ukrainian content on social networks. He did not leave Kherson because he was taking care of his cancer-stricken father and a single aunt who lived in the suburbs.

He describes his detention as follows: «About 5 in the morning, I woke up to a bright light in the window and screams in the yard, then immediately a strong knock on the door. It was not difficult to guess that they had come for me. 5 armed orcs in balaclavas broke into the house, but they were not dressed in military uniform. Five more armed soldiers were waiting in the yard. My father and I were ordered to sit on the couch while they searched. [...] When they put me in the car, I saw how my father jumped out into the street, shouted, cried. He was 77 years old, he has cancer, he is very weak. One of them hit him in the chest with a butt, I saw how he fell. That was the last time I saw my father.» (man, representative of the Bulgarian national minority, Kherson).

Another example is the story of a Korean family from the Kherson region, which the occupiers kept in the basement of their own house for more than a month. The Vaughn family [name and surname changed at the request of the respondent] lived in the town of Chaplinka, Kherson region, since 1989 and had their own family agribusiness – a melon and onion farm. At the time of the full-scale invasion of the Russian occupation forces into Ukraine, they were at home and decided not to leave the household.

Leila spoke about illegal interrogations during her speech on the platform of the 21st UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples (PFKN) Ibrahimova is a representative of the Crimean Tatar people, the director of the Melitopol City Local History Museum, a deputy of the Zaporizhzhya Regional Council. In particular, she reported: «On March 10, I was kidnapped from my home. I was the first person detained by the Russian military in Melitopol. They put me in a car, put a black bag on my head, and drove me very quickly in an unknown direction. I ended up in some cell, where the interrogation began, which was conducted by physical persons in balaclavas, who were constantly changing each other.»²⁰



A person's right to the inviolability of his home

Since the Russian Federation occupied parts of Ukrainian territories, violations of the right to inviolability of housing have become systematic and massive. In order to record crimes committed by the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, the non-governmental organizations «Network of Anti-Corruption Centers» and «Chuguyiv Human Rights Protection Group» collected information on more than 200 cases of seizure by the Russian military of private houses or forced entry into residential premises of local residents in Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Luhansk, Donetsk regions.²¹

These facts are also confirmed in interviews by representatives of national minorities who were interviewed by the Melitopol city Jewish community within the framework of the project «Ethnic communities and community: a guarantee of public activity and trust» with the assistance of the Melitopol city council and the office of the Council of Europe in Ukraine.²²

¹⁹Crimes committed by the Russian military during the full-scale invasion of Ukraine (as of March 23, 2023) / National Police of Ukraine, March 23, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Regime access: <http://surl.li/gnaxp>

²⁰Russia's Military Aggression Against Ukraine: Impact on Indigenous Peoples. Facebook page of the Crimean Tatar Resource Center, May 5, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.facebook.com/ctrcenter/videos/1848833175486714/>

²¹Human rights defenders recorded the facts of forced entry into residential premises of local residents in the temporarily occupied territories. Access mode: https://www.pereselenci_kh.ua/?p=3604

²²Ethnic communities and community: the key to public activity and trust. Results of content analysis, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews (2022). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://fim.mdpu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ETNICHNI_SPILNOTY_I_SPILNIST_zvit_vyrobnycha_praktyka.pdf

Many representatives of ethnic communities in the temporarily occupied territories suffered from looting, robberies, arbitrary destruction of their property.

Sometimes respondents who left the occupied territory learned about the robbery of their homes from neighbors or friends.

According to the results of the research of the Crimean Tatar Resource Center in 2022, at least 21 searches were recorded in the temporarily occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, 16 – in the houses of representatives of the Crimean Tatar people.²³

A person's right to privacy and physical integrity, non-interference in his personal and family life, confidentiality of correspondence, telephone conversations, telegraphic and other correspondence, etc.

Among the wide range of war crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine, special attention is drawn to the filtering points where human rights were massively violated. «Filtration» is a form of mandatory inspection by the Russian military of Ukrainian citizens who tried to leave the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine or the war zone. The filtering process was organized in punitive and humiliating methods that, in particular, violated people's rights to privacy and physical integrity.



In the report of the International human rights organization Human Rights Watch noted that infiltration camps routinely collected civilian biometric data, including fingerprints and facial images; conducted searches of personal belongings and phones, scrutinizing contacts, messages, photos and social networks, and in some cases recording IMEIs; carried out interrogations about political views. The men's bodies were subject to inspection for tattoos that indicated a connection with Ukrainian military or nationalist groups, as well as signs of wearing weapons (for example, bruises from a bulletproof vest).²⁴ According to respondents, authorized persons did not ask for their consent to the collection of personal data, including biometric data, and did not inform them of the reasons why these data were collected.

As of April 2023, the National Police recorded 27 infiltration camps and prisons in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and 7 in the territory of the Russian Federation.²⁵ The largest filtration points in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are located in the places of compact residence of national minorities, in particular, Greeks – Mangush, Sartana, Starobesheve, Dokuchaevsk, Amvrosiivka, Bezimenne, Donetsk, Kachkarske, Kozatske, Khomutov, Nikolske, Novoazovsk, Pervomaisk, Shyrokyne, Uspenka.

Representatives of ethnic communities evacuating from the war zone in Eastern Ukraine passed through the above-mentioned filtering checkpoints. They all reported that they had to wait in line for days, weeks and even months, in schools, community centers, government buildings, tents or vehicles in deplorable conditions with limited food and terrible sanitation.

Kuris family evacuated from Mariupol with two children (7 and 10 years old) and one parent (man, 71 years old) in their own vehicle through the filtration camp in Mangush. There they went through two stages of «filtration» – at a checkpoint, where they stood in line for three days without getting out of the car, and a stage of inspection at a special filtration station.

²³Analysis of human rights violations in the south of Ukraine (Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://ctrcenter.org/upload_files/%D0%90%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D1%96%D0%B7%D0%20%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%BD%D1%8F.pdf?fs=68845fcc65e5ccfbc8410effd18dd109

²⁴«We Had No Choice». «Filtration» and the Crime of Forcibly Transferring Ukrainian Civilians to Russia. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/09/01/we-had-no-choice/filtration-and-crime-forcibly-transferring-ukrainian-civilians>

²⁵National Police documents 95% of all military crimes : the main thing is to attract to responsibility military personnel Russian Federation - Maksym Tsutskiridze . Headquarters of the National Police in Cherkasy region, April 27, 2023. Access mode: <https://ch.npu.gov.ua/news/natspolitsiia-documentuie-95-usikh-voiennykh-zlochyniv-holovne-pryiahnuti-do-vidpovidalnosti-viiskovosluzhbovtziv-rf-maksym-tsutskiridze>

From an interview with Olena: «*This is the scariest and most humiliating thing that I had to experience in my life. I couldn't believe that this was happening to us in the 21st century, because we saw such horrors only in movies about the Second World War. [...] At the first point, we stood in line for three days, we were not allowed to get out of the car even to go to the toilet, we went to the bottles. The children were tortured and frightened. [...] At this point, we were checked by the «DPR» – they collected passports, phones, twisted all bags, backpacks, climbed into every hole in the car. I don't know what we were looking for, we didn't ask, we were afraid to even raise our eyes. [...] Men were undressed, like that right in the cold. We brought my father, a 70-year-old man, from Mariupol sick, with a fever – no, there was no exception for him. [...] We were almost hungry for three days, because there was nothing in Mariupol, we cooked potatoes on the street or pasta. There was nothing to take with me on the road.*» **(woman, representative of the Greek national minority, Mariupol).**



During the second stage of filtering, the Kuris family was detained for three weeks in a field camp, where they were housed in tarpaulin tents without heating. They were entered into the queue on March 30, 2022 and were number 891 on the list. On April 22, 2022, when the Kuris family was leaving the Mangush filtering station, there were already 3,500 people in line.

Mass violations of human rights to privacy, physical integrity, and confidentiality of correspondence were also recorded in the south, in particular, in the temporarily occupied territories of Zaporozhye. According to eyewitnesses, there were not a large number of specially arranged filtration camps, but those who left had to pass up to 30 checkpoints on their way.

It is also worth adding that from the first days of the full-scale war, the Russian military interfered in the private lives of Ukrainian civilians, checking their phones and conducting baseless searches of their personal belongings.

Political and electoral rights

The political rights of citizens constitute the organic basis of a civilized society, create the basis for the legitimization of a democratic political regime and the ruling elite. This is a constitutionally determined measure of a person's possible political behavior, first of all, participation in direct popular government, the exercise of state power and local self-government, in which a person acts, first of all, as a citizen of Ukraine, a participant in public-power relations.

The political and electoral rights of Ukrainians in the temporarily occupied territories were grossly violated during pseudo-referendums, which were held by the occupation administrations on September 23-27, 2022, with the aim of joining the so-called self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, the occupied parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. According to the Russian side, 97.93% of people supported the entry of the «LPR» into Russia, «DNR» - 98.96%, Zaporizhzhia - 97.81%, Kherson Oblast - 96.75%.

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, in its Resolution No. 101 of September 27, 2022 «On the nullity of pseudo-referendums in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine», declared that the action called «referendums» has nothing to do with democratic referenda and is illegal from the standpoint of the Constitution of Ukraine and international law, and therefore do not have any legal force.²⁶ In particular, the issue of changing the territory of Ukraine can be decided exclusively in an all-Ukrainian referendum appointed by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Articles 73, 85 of the Basic Law of Ukraine).²⁷ The expression of the people's will in the form of a referendum must take place exclusively in compliance with the fundamental internationally recognized principles of their conduct – universal, equal, free, direct and secret voting. The conditions for holding the referendum must ensure, first of all, respect for basic human and citizen rights, freedom to form the will of voters, freedom to express the will of voters, countering any falsifications, as well as the safety of citizens, which cannot be ensured in conditions of war and occupation.



²⁶Resolution of the Central Election Commission dated September 27, 2022 No. 101 «On the invalidity of pseudo-referendums in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.» Access mode: <https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/v0101359-22#Text>

²⁷Constitution of Ukraine (1996). Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/constitution>

In addition, the occupation administrations initiated pseudo-referendums without the consent of the local population, violating the basic right to choose and participate in the governance of the state, which is contrary to Art. 1 Art. 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Protocol N° 1 of the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.²⁸

It is worth noting that the absolute majority of Ukrainian citizens ignored this illegal vote, despite the insane psychological and physical pressure of the occupiers. Among them are representatives of national minorities: *«I saw this procession from the window – two men armed to the teeth, two policemen and one woman of retirement age who wears a cloak. [...] I didn't get a humanitarian certificate from them, I didn't show up anywhere, that's why they didn't have my data. We just didn't open the door. [...] Our neighbor came to them, but said that she would not vote. So they wrote it down in their notebook. [...] But I know that most of our people tried to sit at home and pretend that no one was there. They turned off the light and sat quietly, waiting.»* **(man, representative of the Bulgarian national minority, Zaporizhzhia region).**

Respondents also confirm numerous violations of the voting procedure: *«Of course, we were not going to go anywhere. These gopniks came to us themselves – two women, two armed men in camouflage, without chevrons. [...] They asked if we had already voted. We said no, but we are going to go to the school to vote. And they say: «No, sit here, vote, you can.» They sat us down at the table, gave us these pieces of paper with two questions and stood over our heads, watching to see if we would make the right choice. We voted, and then they say: «According to the registration, there are five of you living here. Take three more ballots and vote for yours.» [...] And our neighbor was stopped on the street and forced to vote. Without a passport, without anything.»* **(woman, representative of the Armenian ethnic community, Nova Kakhovka).**

On October 3, 2022, the State Duma of the Russian Federation ratified agreements on the inclusion of the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions of Ukraine into the Russian Federation, based on the announced results of pseudo-referendums. On December 26, 2022, President V. Putin signed a decree on the procedure for acquiring Russian citizenship by citizens of Ukraine who lived or live in the temporarily occupied parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions.

In reality, this law put Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied territories before the ultimate choice – to get a Russian passport or acquire the status of a foreigner, which prevents access to social benefits, medical assistance, employment, limits the right to own housing and other rights. The situation is changing critically after President V. Putin signed the decree «On the peculiarities of the legal status of certain categories of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the Russian Federation» dated April 27, 2023, which allows the deportation of Ukrainians without a Russian passport after July 1, 2024. A separate clause of this decree concerns residents who advocate «*forcible change of the foundations of the constitutional system*» in Russia, finance terrorist and extremist activities or participate in «*unauthorized*» actions – they will be deported and banned from entering the country.

In this way, Russia carries out a policy of forced naturalization of Ukrainians, which seriously violates the norms of international humanitarian law. Imposing citizenship on Ukrainians actually forces them to swear allegiance to the occupying power – the Russian Federation, which is prohibited by Article 45 of the Hague Convention (1907).²⁹ It is also worth emphasizing that the Russian Federation's use of people to officially recognize the annexation of the occupied territories creates a dangerous precedent for which modern international law was not ready.

Forced naturalization contradicts a number of international documents that protect various aspects of the right to citizenship, in particular:

1. laws on citizenship should not discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of race or ethnicity;
2. any change of citizenship must be voluntary;
3. measures affecting the exercise of the right to citizenship must comply with the principles of due process;
4. measures preventing the exercise of the right to citizenship must have a legitimate purpose.³⁰

It should be noted that a critical sign that the newly adopted legislation in the Russian Federation violates international guarantees of the right to citizenship is the coercive nature of its application to Ukrainians and its ethnically discriminatory nature. The procedure for acquiring Russian citizenship is non-selective and applies to all residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, regardless of their ethnicity, statelessness, citizenship, resident status, age or length of residence.

²⁸Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/995_015#Text International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/995_043#Text Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1952). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <http://consultant.parus.ua/?doc=00DQNE623D>

²⁹The Hague Convention (IV) on the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Provisions on the Laws and Customs of War on Land. October 18, 1907, 36 statutes. 2277. Art. 45.

³⁰Human rights in the context of imposing citizenship in Crimea (2018). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://www.irf.ua/content/files/report_crimea_human_rights.pdf

Persecution of people with a non-Russian national identity causes systematic discrimination, including ethnic groups, and also undermines the key principle of the minority rights protection system, namely the right of minorities to exist. As a result of the occupation of the most multi-ethnic regions of Ukraine (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson Oblasts and Crimean Autonomous Republic), representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples became a target because of real, ascribed or assumed Ukrainian national identity.

Discrimination against them is manifested in many aspects of everyday and public life in combination with other violations - disappearances, illegal searches, restriction of freedom of expression, attacks on cultural institutions and deprivation of language rights. Despite the fact that representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples identify with various aspects of Ukrainian national identity, discriminatory legal boundaries are, in fact, now applied to residents of the entire temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, thus creating risks for various population groups.

From an interview with Pavlina: [translated from Russian] «*They found my diploma, I am a teacher of the history of Ukraine, before the occupation I worked at a school [in Novaya Kakhovka], which I graduated myself at the time. At first they started mocking, saying: «You don't need this piece of paper anymore. You will have to learn the real story if you want to work.» When I told them that I wasn't going to study anything and wasn't going to work in a Russian school, they started shouting that Ukrainian patriotism is not in fashion now and I'd better keep quiet. [...] Well, it got to the point that they collected all my books, textbooks, I kept children's drawings, children drew for Independence Day, portraits of hetmans by Natalia Pavlusenko, a lot of things, like every history teacher. [...] All this was taken to the yard and demonstratively burned. Along with my diploma. [...] (woman, representative of the Armenian ethnic community, Nova Kakhovka).*

The Russian Federation is clearly aware of the connection between ethnicity and citizenship legislation. In particular, the forced passporting of Ukrainians shows the desire to apply the law on citizenship to form a politicized Russian ethnicity. However, as shown by numerous monitoring, research and interviews conducted in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, Ukrainian national identity has inseparable ethnic and political dimensions, especially under conditions of occupation. Obtaining a Russian passport can be considered by Ukrainians as a security component, but not as a factor of integration into Russian civil society.

The right to peaceful public assembly and freedom of expression

Restrictions on the right to peaceful public assembly particularly affected residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. During March and April, numerous protests took place in areas controlled by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Kyiv, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has documented a number of cases in which Russian military units dispersed peaceful gatherings, resorting to inappropriate or disproportionate use of force, such as the use of tear gas, stun grenades, and firearms (from which they fired above the participants' heads).³¹ The vast majority of these incidents occurred in the Kherson region, others were recorded in the cities of Enerhodar, Melitopol, Tokmak and Berdyansk in the Zaporizhzhia region and in Slavutych in the Kyiv region.



Representatives of national minorities, who expressed a public protest against the Russian invasion and blocked the movement of military equipment, actively participated in such actions. About her participation in the rallies against the occupation of Melitopol, Olena Semenivna Arabadzhi, head of the board of the NGO «Union of Karaites of Ukraine», member of the board of the NGO «Melitopol National-Cultural Karaite Society» Jamaat: «*My family, and I personally, took part in protest rallies against occupation of Melitopol, which lasted from February 26 to March 12, 2022, when the mayor Ivan Fedorov was arrested. Then the rallies were dispersed by the occupiers. We also took part in the joint prayer service «For Ukraine», which was held by representatives of various faiths on the main square of Melitopol. The prayer continued despite all the threats of the occupiers until August 2022.*

³¹Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine: February 1 - July 31, 2022. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ua/2022-09-23/ReportUkraine-1Feb-31Jul2022-ua.pdf>

Attempts to stop the pro-Ukrainian resistance found a legal basis in the law of the Russian Federation, which deprives «foreign agents» (that is, persons considered to be under the influence of foreign states, individuals or international organizations) of the opportunity to organize public gatherings. Its application in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine seriously undermined the right to freedom of association and expression of views, respect for private life and participation in public affairs.

In particular, the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provides information that law enforcement agencies in Crimea continue to issue written «warnings» to human rights defenders, members of Crimean Tatar institutions and other active citizens about the inadmissibility of participation in a vaguely defined «extremist» or other «illegal» activity. The document notes that Crimean Tatar activists consistently receive an average of five warnings per year, usually before key Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian commemorative dates.³² They see these warnings as an attempt to suppress initiatives on the ground to organize gatherings or other public events.

According to the human rights organization «Crimea SOS», at least 35% of sentences for victims of politically motivated criminal prosecutions in Crimea were passed after the start of the full-scale invasion. Crimean Tatar activists, as is customary, publicly advertise themselves as extremists and terrorists. Based on falsified propaganda campaigns, they are credited with belonging to the Islamist organization «Hizb» banned in Russia ut-Tahrir» or the volunteer Crimean Tatar battalion named after Noman Chelebijkhana.³³ According to operational data of the Presidential Representation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, as of August 28, 2023, it is known that the occupiers illegally imprisoned 186 citizens of Ukraine, 123 of them – representatives of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people. Of the total number of political prisoners, 30 were arrested, 138 were imprisoned, and 18 were without status.³⁴

Economic and social rights and freedoms

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, the issues of protecting socio-economic human rights have become especially urgent, taking into account the loss of housing, property, work and means of livelihood, physical and psychological health for many Ukrainians. The most acute humanitarian needs are recorded in areas located near the «line of demarcation», where active hostilities have been or are being conducted for a long time. In the temporarily occupied territories, people are cut off from basic public services – banking services, social benefits, transport services, water, electricity and heat supply, as well as local administration services. With the deterioration of the security situation, supply chains have been disrupted for a long time.

Based on the results of content analysis, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, until mid-2022, representatives of national minorities who remained in the areas of hostilities or temporary occupation had difficulties in receiving social benefits and pensions through the banking system of Ukraine.

In particular, in the study «Ethnic communities and community: the key to public activity and trust», which was conducted by the Melitopol City Council together with the Center for Sociological Research of the Melitopol State Pedagogical University named after Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, the following fragments³⁵ are cited in support of what has been said:

«Money is running out, and to get it is impossible to use them in banks, because there are long queues, and they exchange them only at interest» (Olena).

«Now big problems co removal money from bank cards, especially if the person does not have a phone with the application and authorization», but only a card. Menyaly require 15-20% for cash» (Maxym).

«The pension is not enough for food, humanitarian aid is not missed or taken away by the new government, the products brought from Crimea are expensive... I don't know how to live on» (Mariia).

«Money you won't get it – that's what they told me when I went to the Rashist Bank to get a transfer» (Volodymyr).

³²Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine: February 1 - July 31, 2022. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ua/2022-09-23/ReportUkraine-1Feb-31Jul2022-ua.pdf>

³³The case of Hizb ut-Tahrir: a court in the Russian Federation gave five Crimean Tatars 13 years in prison. Ukrinform, July 8, 2023. Access mode: <https://www.ukrainform.ua/rubric-crimea/3650407-sud-u-rf-dav-pathom-krimskim-tataram-po-13-rokiv-kolonii-u-spravi-hizb-uttahrir.html>

³⁴Operational information regarding the situation in the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol as of August 28, 2023. Representation of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Access mode: <https://ppu.gov.ua/press-center/operatyvna-informatsiia-shchodo-sytuatsii-na-tymchasovo-okupovaniy-terytorii-avtonomnoi-respubliky-krym-ta-mista-sevastopolia-stanom-na-28-serpnia-2023-roku/>

³⁵Ethnic communities and community: the key to public activity and trust. Results of content analysis, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. (2022). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://fim.mdpu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ETNICHNI_SPILNOTY_I_SPILNIST_zvit_vyrobnycha-praktyka.pdf

In connection with the termination of Ukrposhta's work on the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine on August 1, 2022, it became impossible to receive pensions there. The situation worsened significantly in January-February 2023, when the Russian Federation at the legislative level began to actively implement the policy of «denazification» of Ukrainians in the captured territories. This was done, first of all, through the adoption of laws and regulations that affect people's realization of their socio-economic rights. Thus, the forced integration of the temporarily occupied regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions involves the transition of the population to the Russian pension and social security system, which is possible on the condition of obtaining a Russian passport.



Representatives of national communities also talk about the comprehensive pressure on local residents.

The war led to the destruction of labor market institutions and their effective functioning. Rising unemployment, social exclusion, gender inequality, discrimination at the workplace, including regarding the youth, the spread of poverty is one of the main negative social consequences of the war. Many representatives of ethnic communities who remained in the temporarily occupied territories have lost their jobs and are on the verge of survival.³⁶

Teachers, among whom there are many representatives of national minorities, remain a vulnerable group. In the temporarily occupied territories of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, teachers en masse refuse to work according to Russian curricula and teach in Russian.³⁷

From an interview with Pavlina [translated from Russian] «*The headmistress gathered us for a meeting at the school and said that she would write an application for dismissal. And you do as you see fit, I will not judge - he says. [...] I immediately decided for myself that I would not teach the history of Russia based on their writings. I am a historian! For me, it's like the Hippocratic Oath. Well, I can't betray myself.*» (woman, representative of the Armenian ethnic community, Nova Kakhovka).

In the temporarily occupied Crimea, school staff are forced to justify the Russian Federation's armed attack on Ukraine, to instill in schoolchildren a positive attitude to the special military operation, and generally to refrain from criticizing the Russian authorities. Teachers who refused to follow these instructions faced retaliation and sanctions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its report cites a documented case when the school administration did not renew the contract of a Crimean Tatar female teacher due to a discussion with students of alleged violations against civilians committed by the Russian military in Ukraine.³⁸ The Supreme Court of Crimea upheld the decision of the lower court, confirming that she expressed «a personal opinion with the aim of shaping the opinion of others.» She was found guilty and fined 30,000 Russian rubles. The woman was forced to look for work in another region.

The Russian authorities continue to intimidate and oppress Crimean human rights defenders, in particular lawyers who have official certificates of the right to practice law. On March 20, 2023, after a more than six-month trial, the local court in Simferopol revoked the right to practice law for two well-known Crimean Tatar human rights defenders who were legal representatives of Ukrainian citizens accused of terrorism and extremism in Crimea and the Russian Federation. The order on the deprivation of the right to practice law became the culmination of a long campaign of intimidation, and also continued the line of limiting the guarantees of human rights and legality in the occupied Crimea.³⁹

³⁶Ethnic communities and community: the key to public activity and trust. Results of content analysis, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. (2022). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://fim.mdpu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ETNICHNI_SPILNOTY_I_SPILNIST_zvit_vyrobnycha_praktyka.pdf

³⁷Right there.

³⁸Report on the situation with human rights in Ukraine: August 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ukraine/2023/23-03-24-Ukraine-35th-periodic-report-UA.pdf>

³⁹Overview of the situation in the field of human rights in Ukraine: February 1 - April 30, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/23-06-UkraineHRMMU-three-months-update-UKR.pdf>

In the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, the situation with the provision of medical services to the population remains catastrophic. The occupying administration directs medicines for the treatment of Russian soldiers and prohibits the provision of free medical care to people who have not received Russian passports or have not applied for these documents. According to representatives of national minorities, there is a shortage of medicines and lack of access to primary medical care.

The human right to freedom of worldview and religion

It should be emphasized that the concept of «religious minorities» is absent in Ukrainian legislation, but in recent years it has been actively used in informational and scientific discourse. In the practice of state administration of Ukraine, the concept of «religious minorities» is most often considered a derivative (derivative) of the concept of «national minorities» and defined as religious groups that do not occupy a dominant position in terms of number, distribution and influence in the religious environment, but whose religious and cult practices has its own self-sufficiency and identity. Such groups are usually called ethno-confessional (ethno-religious) minorities.⁴⁴ As a rule, the term «religious majority» refers to believers of such religious organizations that are territorially widely and numerous represented in Ukraine, in particular, believers of the OCU, UOC MP, UGCC, RCC, and some Protestant denominations. Ethnoconfessional religious organizations in Ukraine traditionally include associations of representatives of Islam (296) and Judaism (321), as well as religious organizations of Karaites (4), the Armenian Apostolic Church (30), the Holy Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East (4), Taoism (2), Korean Christian Methodist Church (1), branches of the German Evangelical Lutheran Church (33) and Transcarpathian (Hungarian) Reformed Church (118), etc.⁴⁵ In official state documents, the specified structures, as a rule, have their own nomenclature, but some of them are included in the composition of Protestant religious organizations.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to increase the number of ethno-confessional religious organizations on the territory of Ukraine. If at the beginning of 2019, religious organizations of national minorities were less than 2% (635)⁴⁶, then as of January 1, 2023, their number increased to 809, which is 2.2% of all religious organizations of Ukraine (36,657).⁴⁷ At the same time, Christian (Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant) religious centers make up 97% of the state's religious network.

⁴⁷DESS report on the network of religious organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2023 (by denomination). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DPcG1qbaPVIWEdo39b70mlyjvRLtwpJR/edit#gid=512250809>

The geography of distribution of ethno-confessional communities covers all regions of the state. In particular, Jewish communities operate in all regions of Ukraine, the German Evangelical Lutheran Church – in 16 regions, the Armenian Apostolic Church – in 20 regions. A certain number of ethno-confessional religious organizations are localized in the places of compact residence of the respective national minorities: Reformed Hungarians – in Zakarpattia Oblast, Karaites – in Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv Oblasts, the city of Kyiv, ethno-confessional communities of Koreans – in Poltava Oblast.⁴⁸

As of the beginning of 2023, Islam is represented in Ukraine by 296 religious centers (less than 1% of the state's religious network), 7 Muslim spiritual administrations and a number of independent Islamic religious organizations are functioning. In 2014, before the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, 1,238 Muslim structures operated in Ukraine, of which 81% were religious organizations of Crimean Muslims.⁴⁹

The most numerous Islamic association is the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine, which has 130 structures (44% of Muslim organizations), most of which are located in the South-Eastern and North-Central regions. Other Islamic associations are few: Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Ukraine «UMMA» counts 27 organizations; Spiritual administration of Muslims of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea – 10 communities; Religious administration of independent Muslim organizations of Ukraine «Kyiv Muftiyat» – 3 communities; The spiritual center of Muslims of Ukraine, whose center is located in the temporarily occupied territory of Donetsk region, has 18 communities; independent religious organizations of Muslims are represented by 98 centers.⁵⁰ Most of the Islamic organizations in Ukraine belong to the Sunni direction.

At the beginning of 2023, Judaism is represented in Ukraine by 321 religious organizations, which make up less than 1% of the state's religious network. The largest Jewish denomination is Chabad Lubavitch Jewish religious organizations of Ukraine, which includes 133 structures (41.4% of Jewish religious organizations). Less numerous Jewish denominations also operate on the territory of the state, such as the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine (72), Religious Organizations of Progressive Judaism (44), the All-Ukrainian Congress of Jewish Religious Organizations (5), other independent Jewish organizations (67).⁵¹

At the same time, in addition to religious communities of national minorities (Muslims, Jews, Karaites, reformed Hungarians, German and Swedish Lutherans, Armenian-Gregorians, and others), in practice religious minorities also include historically traditional for Ukraine, but few religious congregations of individual Orthodox and Protestant denominations: Old Believer communities (17), Molokans (4), Anglican Church (2). Organizations of non-traditional religious new formations are separately distinguished: neo-Christian movements, religions of the orientalist direction, esoteric associations, neo-pagan beliefs, synthetic neo-religions, Scientology movements, etc.⁵² In addition, in recent decades, the number of migrants has increased in Ukraine, creating new ethno-confessional formations that are not typical for Ukraine (Arabs, Afghans, Vietnamese, Chinese, Koreans, etc.).

The Russian occupation of part of the Ukrainian territories significantly affected the situation with respect for the rights of religious organizations and freedom of religion. The occupying administrations, led by the collaborationist authorities and separatist gangs, resorted to introducing a campaign of systematic religious persecution in the regions under their control, where the limits of religious freedom are determined by the willingness of religious communities to cooperate with the Putin regime and/or publicly demonstrate their loyalty to him. The vast majority of other denominations faced serious obstacles in the process of their activities and cruel discrimination.



⁴⁸DESS report on the network of religious organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2023 (by region). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DPcG1qbaPVIWEDo39b70mlyjvRLtwpJR/edit#gid=691852470>

⁴⁹Lutsenko V. Ensuring the realization of the rights of ethno-confessional minorities as an urgent task of the state policy of Ukraine in the sphere of religion // Scientific notes of the Institute of Political and Ethnonational Research named after I.F. Curacao of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. – 2019 / 3-4 (99-100) – P. 424.

⁵⁰DESS report on the network of religious organizations in Ukraine as of January 1, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1DPcG1qbaPVIWEDo39b70mlyjvRLtwpJR/edit#gid=512250809>

⁵¹Right there

⁵²«Religious minorities of Ukraine and state-denominational relations». Kyiv, 2021. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://rmu.uarr.info/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/booklet-final-zvit.pdf>

According to the Institute of Religious Freedom (IRS), as of January 31, 2023, as a result of Russian aggression in Ukraine, at least 494 religious buildings, spiritual educational institutions and shrines were completely destroyed, damaged or looted by the Russian military.⁵³

According to the official information of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience (DESS), from February 24, 2022 to January 26, 2023, at least 307 religious buildings in 15 regions of Ukraine were completely destroyed or suffered destruction of varying degrees as a result of an armed attack by the Russian Federation: churches, mosques, synagogues, Kingdom Halls, educational and administrative buildings of religious communities of Ukraine.⁵⁴



5 out of 307 structures damaged by the Russian attack are Muslim, 5 are Jewish, and the remaining 297 are Christian. 30 belong to Protestant communities, 21 to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), 5 to the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), 4 to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC). 95 buildings belong to communities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

The largest number of destroyed religious buildings in Donetsk (75) and Luhansk (59) regions. After them – Kyiv (43) and Kharkiv (38) regions.

The large-scale destruction of the prayer houses of evangelical churches – in total at least 170, of which the churches of the evangelical faith Christians were the most affected – 75, the prayer houses of the evangelical Christian-Baptists – 49, as well as the buildings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church – 24.

Many facts of the seizure of religious buildings and their subsequent use as Russian military bases or to cover firing positions of Russian troops have also been documented. This tactic of the Russian military provokes an increase in the scale of destruction of religious objects in Ukraine.

Experts from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) in their report dated April 9, 2023 report that since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian soldiers have committed at least 76 acts of religious persecution in Ukraine, and have killed or captured at least 29 clerics and religious leaders.⁵⁵ These data are based on reports in the Russian mass media and official information published by the occupation administrations.

Available reports from open sources indicate that the most common victims of religious persecution, after the Ukrainian Orthodox, are Protestants, in particular Evangelical Baptist Christians. Protestants of all denominations were victims in 34% of the cases recorded by ISW. Baptists accounted for 13% of the victims – the largest single group after the Ukrainian Orthodox. ISW monitored reports of persecution of Baptists near the occupied cities of Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Mariupol and Melitopol.⁵⁶ According to the Church of Evangelical Christian Baptists (ECB), out of 2.5 thousand communities, 400 have completely ceased to exist, which is connected not only with the destruction of prayer houses, but also with human losses.

⁵³About 500 churches and religious objects were destroyed in Ukraine during the war. World Council of Churches, February 22, 2023. Regime access: <https://www.oikoumene.org/uk/news/500-churches-and-religious-sites-destroyed-in-ukraine-during-the-war>

⁵⁴List buildings religious communities of Ukraine, that suffered destruction because of full-scale intrusion of Russia February 24, 2022 - January 26, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://dess.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Perelik-na-2023-01-26_UKR.pdf

⁵⁵Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 9, 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/April%209%20Special%20Edition.pdf>

⁵⁶Right there

Russian troops mostly persecute Protestants in the south of Ukraine, in particular, in Kherson (35%) and Zaporizhzhia regions (48%). As an example, ISW cites the story of the seizure of the Kherson Educational Institution of Ukrainian Evangelical Christian Baptists, where from March to November 2022 a garrison and a crematorium for the cremation of killed Russian soldiers were located. According to the report, a Russian officer threatened the employees of the institute: «*Evangelical believers like you should be completely destroyed ... just a shot will be too easy a death for you. You need to be buried alive.*»⁵⁷ Believers in their stories repeatedly mentioned the harassment and abusive treatment towards them, when they were called «*American spies*», «*sectarians*» and «*enemies*» of the Russian Orthodox people».

Similar cases in Chkalovo and Melitopol, Zaporizhzhia Region, where armed soldiers raided during the evening service, declaring that after the so-called referendum there would be no sect in the village, and only the Orthodox Church would remain.⁵⁸ Thus, in the building of the Melitopol Christian Church (MHC), which is one of the most modern buildings in Melitopol, the Ministry of Youth and Sports was first opened, and later it was transferred to the regional branch of the «*Young Guard of United Russia*». According to pastor Viktor Sergeev, the church was looted and defaced with church relics, in addition to expensive modern equipment, musical instruments were taken away and the cross that stood in the yard in front of the house was cut down.

From the interview: «*We were surrounded at 5 o'clock in the morning. 200 soldiers stood around the church. They drove in, breaking the barrier and the gate. A shameful storming of the building began. And each of our houses was surrounded by 10-12 soldiers at the same time. They were looking for terrorists. [...] The entrance was smashed with a sledgehammer, the entrance to the studio was shot with a machine gun. These were mostly buryats. They behaved inappropriately, to say the least.*» After the pogrom, he was brought to an interrogation conducted by FSB officers: «*They brought him to the office. They put everyone against the wall, and we thought it was the end. Because all our people were shot in Donetsk and Luhansk. We were told about it before, but we didn't even believe it. Everyone was demanded not to go to pro-Ukrainian rallies and not to organize them. They declared that Ukraine no longer exists, and we are allegedly already on the territory of Russia. [...] My friend's son was taken prisoner. They beat, tortured with electric current. Then they let him go. Part of the body was twisted. Therefore, when the boy came home, his father did not even recognize him immediately. I thought that some homeless person was standing in the yard.*»⁵⁹

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented the case of a Baptist pastor from the Kharkiv region, who was abducted in May 2022 by three men in masks and uniforms of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, after which they were brought to the police station and severely beaten. During the torture, he was told that «*only the Russian Orthodox Church can be in this area*» and that «*the Baptist Church has no place here.*» His relatives were not informed of his fate and whereabouts, and the fact of his detention was not acknowledged by the occupation authorities until his unconditional release.⁶⁰ OHCHR is concerned that the narrowing of civil space prevents people from reporting human rights violations they may have experienced or witnessed.

Religious organizations that cater to the needs of Muslims suffer no less. As part of the program «*facilitating religious organizations to integrate into the Russian socio-cultural space*», the occupation administrations are actively implementing alternative management structures with the aim of sowing discord among Muslim religious communities.

Thus, on the territory of the temporarily occupied Donetsk region, representatives of local Muslim cells are forced to submit to the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Russia and to carry out their activities under its canonical management.⁶¹ In particular, on April 22, 2022, the imams of Horlivka, Torez, Shakhtarsk, Snizhny, Makiivka, and Donetsk were gathered in the city of Shakhtarsk for the purpose of holding a constitutive meeting and creating the Spiritual Administration of Muslims «*DNR*», as well as electing the Council of Imams and the Council of Elders.

A similar situation occurred in the Luhansk region, where the muftiyat of the so-called LPR decided to withdraw from Dukhovny's subordination to the administration of Muslims of Ukraine and allegedly expressed a desire to join the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of Russia.⁶² The appeal was signed by 10 imams.

⁵⁷Right there

⁵⁸The occupiers closed a prayer house in the Zaporizhzhia region. All-Ukrainian Union of Evangelical Christian Baptist Churches, September 22, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.baptist.com/okupanty-zakryly-molytovnyj-budynok-u-zaporizhzhii-oblasti> / How are Baptists persecuted in the occupied territories? Word for word. Christian newspaper, November 3, 2022. Access mode: <https://slovoproslovo.info/yak-peresliduyut-baptistiv-na-okupovanih-teritoriyah/>

⁵⁹«There were times when the real father did not recognize his son» - a pastor from Melitopol told about the atrocities of the Russian army. Word for word. Christian newspaper, October 19, 2022. Access mode: <https://slovoproslovo.info/bili-tak-scho-ridniy-batko-ne-vpiznav-sina-pastor-iz-melitopolia-rozpoviv-pro-zvirstva-armii-rosii/>

⁶⁰Report on the situation with human rights in Ukraine: August 1, 2022 - January 31, 2023 [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/ukraine/2023/23-03-24-Ukraine-35th-periodic-report-UA.pdf>

⁶¹From now on, the FSB will regulate the activities of the «DPR» Muslims. RISU, April 30, 2022. Access mode: https://risu.ua/diyalnist-musulman-dnr-vidteper-rezhlamentuvati-fsb_n128809

⁶²Muftiyat «LPR» decided to join the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims of Russia. RISU, March 23, 2022. Access mode: https://risu.ua/muftiyat-lnr-irishiv-uvijti-do-skladu-dvovnih-zboriv-musulman-rosiyi_n127485

On the initiative of the «Tavriya Muftiyat» the religious centralized organization «Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Little Russia» was formed, which united more than 60 Muslim communities, in particular, its founders were «Barakat» (Genichesk), «Sary Bulat» (Novotroitske) and «Salyam» (Melitopol). The newly created structure extends its jurisdiction to the temporarily occupied districts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.⁶³

Abuse of the legal basis of the Russian Federation in the field of religion leads to repression and discriminatory treatment by the power structures. Waves of mass roundups, arrests and searches have been recorded in Muslim mosques in Crimea. On May 12, 2023, representatives of the illegal «Center for Combating Extremism» and riot police raided the « Suvuk -dere» mosque (Simferopol), during which they massively checked the documents of believers. In January 2023, the imam, who did not agree to cooperate with the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Crimea and Sevastopol, was issued an administrative protocol under Article 5.26 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation on «illegal missionary activity.»⁶⁴

Rustem told about the tactics of Russian troops in subduing and suppressing religious resistance Asanov - imam of the Crimean Tatar religious community «Birlik» (Schaslyvtseve village, Kherson region): «The Russian military detained me at a checkpoint in the Kherson region. They put a bag on his head and handcuffs and took him to his apartment in the city... There, the occupiers equipped a basement for torture and interrogation. I was kept from morning to night in this basement, inflicting injuries. They tightened the handcuffs on my hands – my thumbs still don't work. They tightened the bag over my head – it led to suffocation, and twice I fainted. They kicked the ribs and spine, as well as the lower back with something hard – probably the example of a machine gun. They knocked me off my feet so that I fell, and the handcuffs tightened even more at the same time – this caused me unbearable pain. [...] The Russian military was dissatisfied with my active civil position. They emphasized that I, as a religious figure, set a wrong example for my community. This annoyed them. [...] After they checked me, probably through their programs – calculated that I was not involved with any battalions – they let me go. But they set such conditions that I would not leave the district, not go anywhere, and strongly recommended establishing cooperation with representatives of the occupation administration, as well as with the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Crimea (in the city of Simferopol), which in 2014 switched to the side of Russia, that is, with traitors. [...] Now they don't hold religious services in the Kherson region, because the local residents are frightened by the atrocities committed by the Russian military: they break people's arms and legs, they can do it just like that - for their own pleasure. [...] The mosques of the Kherson region were searched and books were seized. The occupation administration provided local imams with lists of recommended literature that could be used, as well as lists of prohibited religious literature. Services are not held now – during this turmoil, we have suspended religious activities, because people are scared.»⁶⁵

The Council of Europe report «The Struggle of Crimean Tatars for Human Rights» dated April 18, 2023 also mentions cases where mosques associated with the Crimean Tatars were denied permission to re-register under new rules imposed on religious organizations by the Russian occupation authorities.⁶⁶

VIOLATION OF SPECIAL RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN TEMPORARY OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The right to preserve cultural heritage

The cultural heritage of Ukraine has long been formed on the cultural border: from the Bronze Age to the end of the 15th century, the border between nomads and settled farmers passed here, between the 16th and 18th centuries – between the Christian West and the Muslim East, from the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century – between the Western and Eastern Europe. Bright regional features, caused by the multi-ethnicity of the population and the interaction of various historical and cultural influences, have formed a complex of unique cultural values that have no analogues in the modern world.

In Ukraine, there are about 130,000 objects of cultural heritage registered in the state register. Among them are 9,562 monuments entered into the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine (914 monuments of national significance and 8,648 of local significance) and 8 unique cultural objects included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, which have exceptional universal value.

⁶³The «Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Little Russia» was created in the occupied territories. Spiritual Front of Ukraine, October 18, 2022. Access mode: <https://df.news/2022/10/18/na-okupovanykh-terytoriiakh-stvoryly-dukhovne-upravlinnia-musulman-malorosii/>

⁶⁴The occupiers raided a mosque in temporarily occupied Simferopol. ZNINA, May 12, 2023. Access mode: <https://zmina.info/news/okupanty-vlashtuvaly-rejd-u-mecheti-v-tymchasovo-okupovanomu-simferopoli/>

⁶⁵Russian attack on religious freedom in Ukraine. Research, analytics, recommendations. Institute of Religious Freedom, Kyiv, 2022. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://irf.in.ua/files/publications/2022.09-IRF-Ukraine-report-UKR.pdf>

⁶⁶Crimean Tatars' struggle for human rights. 18 April 2023. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://rm.coe.int/report-on-crimean-tatars-by-dunja-mijatovic-commissioner-for-human-rig/1680aeb4b>

The collections of more than 2,500 museums and historical and cultural reserves are unique and diverse. 1.4 thousand cities and towns and more than 8 thousand villages have a valuable cultural heritage. In general, the fund of historical buildings and structures in these settlements exceeds 70,000 objects. By resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the List of historically populated towns and urban-type settlements was approved, which included 401 settlements. About 65,350 (52%) objects of archeology, 44,496 (35%) of history, 1,944 of monumental art (2%), 13,518 of architecture and urban planning, 327 of garden and park art are on the state register; 219 – landscape objects and 92 – objects of science and technology.

With the beginning of the Russian war in 2014 and the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation in 2022, Ukraine faced the problem of preserving cultural heritage objects, which, in the conditions of military conflicts, is one of the most difficult of the entire range of tasks of the world monument protection industry. During armed conflicts, cultural heritage is exposed to potential risks and threats.

As of June 26, 2023, there are no updated data. Due to the actions of the Russian army, 1,582 objects of cultural infrastructure were damaged, of which 585 were destroyed. The cultural network suffered the greatest losses and damages in the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, Luhansk and Zaporizhia regions.⁶⁷ Club institutions, libraries, museums, theaters, philharmonics, art education institutions (art schools and colleges) in the territory of 222 territorial communities were damaged and destroyed. This is 15.1% of territorial communities of Ukraine. In particular, in Vinnytsia – this is 3% of the TG, Dnipropetrovsk – 17%, Donetsk – 87%, Zhytomyr – 12%, Zakarpattia – 2%, Zaporizhia – 33%, Kyiv – 29%, Luhansk – 42%, Lviv – 2%, Mykolayivska – 42%, Odesa – 4%, Sumy – 49%, Kharkiv – 36%, Kherson – 37%, Khmelnytsky – 5%, Cherkasy – 3%, Chernihiv – 14%. At the same time, it is worth noting that official statistics refer only to the most well-known facts. Beyond them, there are hundreds of other crimes against cultural heritage and thousands of cases of destruction and looting of cultural values, including private property: family icons, old prints, paintings and other family relics.

It is already known for certain that among the physically destroyed, damaged and stolen objects of cultural heritage there are significant monuments of architecture, art and literature, which were created by representatives of national minorities of Ukraine. Currently, the most polyethnic are under occupation regions of the country where a significant number of cultural artifacts of different times are located. In Crimea alone, at the time of the Russian attack, there were 14,364 cultural monuments in the state register, 32 museum institutions were operating, including 7 historical and cultural reserves, and there were 917,500 objects of the museum fund. The ancient city of Chersonesus Tavria and its choir (5th century BC – 14th century AD) are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.



The Chersonese settlement is a cultural heritage of the civilization of the ancient Greeks, the only completely preserved example of an ancient city in Europe with an agricultural district (hora), which demonstrates how the territory was distributed among the citizens of the ancient city and how economic activity was organized. Chersonesus was one of the most developed Hellenic colonies.

In 2015, deliberately violating the principles and norms of international law, the occupying authorities of the Republic of Crimea started a project to create an entertainment complex «New Chersonesus», which involved large-scale reconstruction on the territory of the reserve. According to the head of the international relations service of the Representation of the President of Ukraine in the AR of Crimea, the cultural layer and elements of museification of the complex of ancient buildings were significantly disturbed due to the installation of small architectural forms with sensory kiosks and a concrete pedestal directly on the territory of the ancient settlement.⁶⁸ Construction machinery destroyed the route of the medieval temple, and a new passageway was laid through one of the best-preserved defensive structures («Zeno's Tower»), which is also the site of numerous archaeological finds.

⁶⁷МКІР: Due to Russian aggression in Ukraine, 1,582 objects of cultural infrastructure were damaged, Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, July 4, 2023. Access mode: <https://www.km.gov.ua/news/mkip-cherez-rosiisku-ahresiiu-v-ukraini-postrazhdaly-1582-objekty-kulturnoi-infrastruktury>

⁶⁸Threats of loss of the world and Ukrainian heritage site «Tavriy Chersonesus» as a result of the Russian occupation. Access mode: <https://crimea-is-ukraine.org/svitlytsya/khersones-tavriyskiy>



The last glaring facts of the destructive actions of the Russian occupiers on the territory of the ancient city of Chersonesus Tavriyskyi was the holding of the international music festival «Opera in Chersonesus». For this purpose, 15 trucks of metal structures and a diesel-generator power station were brought to the territory of the reserve, four stages, three screens, a grandstand for spectators with a total weight of 500 tons, and light and sound equipment with a capacity of 50 kilowatts were installed. All this was mounted directly on ancient ruins and created an extremely negative anthropogenic load on the monument. During the preparation for the entertainment event, medieval arch stones and an ancient column were thrown away as garbage, communications were laid on the remains of archaeological objects, construction was carried out where research and restoration work had not yet been completed, heavy machinery moved through the cultural layer and the unexcavated part of the settlement.

An example of the destruction of the cultural heritage of the Crimean Tatars is the so-called «restoration» work in the Bakhchisarai Khan's Palace, which threatens to completely destroy its authenticity. The Palace of the Crimean Khans (Khansky Palace) is the main residence of the rulers (from the middle of the 15th century to the end of the 18th century), the center of the political, spiritual and cultural life of the Crimean Tatars. This is the only sample of Crimean Tatar palace architecture in the world and material evidence of the centuries-old history of state formation and political subjectivity of the indigenous people of Ukraine.



In July 2016, the Russian State Committee for the Protection of the Cultural Heritage of Crimea agreed to carry out «anti-emergency works» of the Great Khan Mosque. Already at the design stage, instead of restoring individual elements of the roof, it was decided to completely dismantle it, despite the fact that almost 95% of the beam system was in normal condition. In addition, normal building regulations were applied to the cultural heritage site, the works were not carried out by specialist restorers, but by unprofessional builders using heavy machinery and jackhammers, which caused vibrations of the mosque walls and numerous damages. During the repair work, the landmark building was not protected from precipitation and moisture got under the foundation of the secular building – as a result, stone erosion began.⁶⁹ The ancient hand-made spoon roof tile (keramet or «tatarka») was replaced by a Spanish version of factory production with an imitation of antiquity.

The consequences led to serious deformations – currently the walls of the architectural ensemble of the Khan's Palace are covered with cracks, in particular, a crack appeared on the eastern minaret of the mosque, which before the repair work had a slight slope. As a result of lack of protection from mechanical impact, cracks also appear on some tombstones of the Khan cemetery. An important loss is the damage to the paintings on the southern and western facades of the mosque, which were made by master Omer (XVIII century). In general, we can talk about serious violations of the aesthetic integrity of the object, its originality, authenticity, original appearance, and, in some cases, about the historical decontextualization of the cultural heritage of the Crimean Tatars (for example, holding Christian holidays).

The scenarios of treatment of the cultural heritage of national minorities and ethnic communities in the temporarily occupied territories of Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk and Luhansk regions turned out to be even more shameful. Cultural values are completely destroyed in the combat zone and in the front-line territories, for example, in places where Greeks live compactly in the Azov region, the destruction of historical buildings reaches 90% (Mariupol, Lysychansk, Severodonetsk, Rubizhne).

In Lysychansk, as a result of rocket fire, the largest complex of Belgian cultural heritage located outside Belgium was partially destroyed. Currently, it is known about the complete destruction of the building of the Lysychansk gymnasium, which housed barracks for unmarried employees of the soda factory 100 years ago. As a result of the fire, the premises of the former hospital were also partially damaged. All objects represented the composition of the Belgian architectural ensemble of the city of Lysychansk.

⁶⁹The aggressor destroys the objects of cultural heritage of Crimea. Virtual Museum of Russian Aggression, July 27, 2017. Access mode: <https://rusaggression.gov.ua/ua/start-restavratsii-khanskoho-palatsu--1299e65a212276e3fa31ac5693fbc421.html>



This European cultural heritage consisted of 33 buildings that were built in the 19th century in the Art Nouveau style. The factory hospital was recognized as the pinnacle of engineering technology and architectural art, the windows of which were decorated with original stained-glass windows, the floor was decorated with decorative tiles, and the roof was covered with French tiles.⁷⁰ The premises are built of red brick, with a large number of sockets, frames, windows and doorways, cornices decorated with shaped bricks. The tented roof, decor and shape of the building's facade are considered truly unique and unrepeatable. Also, the architectural ensemble of the «Belgian town» included the administrative building of the soda factory, the factory director's house, a hotel, residential multi-apartment two-story buildings for workers, a cottage and residential quarters.

The cultural heritage of the Azov Greeks (Mariupol Greeks), the third largest ethnic community in the Donetsk region, suffered the greatest damage. Mariupol was the center of Hellenism in Ukraine and the cultural pearl of the eastern region. It was in this Ukrainian city that the Cultural Center of the Federation of Greek Societies of Ukraine was located – an organization that unites 96 Greek societies throughout Ukraine. At the Mariupol State University, there was the only modern Greek language department in Ukraine, as well as the editorial office of the all-Ukrainian newspaper «Ellina Ukrainy», the only printed mass media of the Greeks of Ukraine. Every year, a huge number of cultural events took place in Mariupol, which helped to get to know the traditions of the Greek diaspora better.



In the east of Ukraine, there were many notable places related to the famous Mariupol Greeks, in particular, the Art Gallery named after Arkhip Kuindzhi, one of the most famous Ukrainian artists of Greek origin. More than 950 graphic and 650 painting works, 150 sculptures and about 300 works of decorative and applied art were collected in the museum's collection – a total of about 2000 exhibits.

Important centers of culture representing the cultural heritage of the Mariupol Greeks were the Mariupol Museum of Local Lore and the Museum of History and Ethnography of the Greeks of the Azov region in the city of Sartana. It was these museum institutions that kept very rare and valuable collections of books, documents, household items and clothes of the Mariupol Greeks. For example, the Mariupol Museum of Local Lore had seven exhibition halls and a scientific library with a collection of 17,000 books. The general fund of the museum included more than 53,000 exhibits, including material, visual, written (handwritten and printed), numismatic, archeological, photo-documentary, natural and other exhibits. Among them were the letter of Catherine II to the Christian Greeks who were expelled from the Crimean Khanate in 1778–1780 and settled in the Northern Azov region, the shroud of 1760, the Gospel of 1811.



Unfortunately, all the aforementioned cultural centers of the Greeks were destroyed and looted by the Russian army during the siege of Mariupol. Currently, it is not known for sure how many museum exhibits were burned, but a small part of the surviving items was taken to occupied Donetsk. Among them – the Gospel of 1811, produced by a Venetian printing house for the Greeks of Mariupol; a hundred-year-old Torah scroll that belonged to the city's Jewish community; the originals of three paintings

⁷⁰European Donbas. What did the Belgians do in Lysychansk? Eastern version, July 21, 2022. Access mode: <https://v-variant.com.ua/article/belhiytsi-u-lysyhansku/>

by Arkhip Kuindzhi «Red Sunset», «Autumn. Crimea» and «Elbrus», the original painting by Ivan Aivazovsky «Near the shores of the Caucasus», the originals of two works by Mykola Dubovsky «The Sea» and «Night on the Baltic Sea», the original posthumous portrait of Kuindzhi in 1910 by Grigory Kalmykov, the bust of Arkhip Kuindzhi by the sculptor Volodymyr Beklemishev ; three unique icons of the end of the 19th century, objects of decorative and applied art.

The cultural heritage of other representatives of national minorities also suffered significant losses. A partially destroyed Armenian khachkar (stone cross) in Mariupol, dedicated to the innocent victims of the Ukrainian and Armenian peoples.⁷¹ For Armenians, Khachkar has a high spiritual significance, because according to the canons of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Khachkars are consecrated, and it is near them that the most significant events in the life of every Armenian take place. It is also worth noting that in November 2010, the art of creating khachkars with the wording «Symbolism and craftsmanship of khachkars, Armenian stone crosses» was included in the UNESCO representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of mankind.

As a result of the bombing of the Malinivskoye NEC «DNS-ZNZ I-III degrees» in the village of Malyn, Zhytomyr region, the Czech room was damaged.

As a result of the shelling, the main building of the estate of L.E. Koenig was damaged – a monument of architecture and urban planning of national importance in the city of Trostyanets, Sumy region, where the museum and exhibition center «Trostyanets» was located. The estate was built in 1762 in the neoclassical style, but after 1874 its architectural ensemble was significantly changed by the family of the German sugar magnate Leopold Koenig. In particular, baroque forms were added to the facades of the complex, they were decorated with pilasters and bas-reliefs in the form of angels and chimeras. Unfortunately, direct shelling by Russian tanks and a fire in the building significantly damaged the facades, destroyed the roof and ceilings, destroyed the interiors, and broke out the windows. The unique samples of parquet, which were manufactured at the southern Koenig factory, as well as the library, which included more than 15 thousand books, dated at the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century, have been lost forever.⁷²



Among the German cultural monuments damaged by the Russians, it is also worth noting the estate of Henryk Jantsen in the city of Orihiv, Zaporizhzhia region, which presented the architecture of the end of the 19th century.⁷³ Henry Jantzen was one of the German Mennonites who moved to Ukrainian lands and made a significant contribution to their development. In particular, representatives of the Jantzen family built the first steam mill, a 14-bed hospital, a school for Mennonite children, and participated in the construction of shops, a cinema, and residential buildings. Henry Jantsen was the first mayor of the city and was continuously elected to the position of mayor of Orichov for 25 years. The Orihiv City Council was located in the two-story house of the Jantsen family. As a result of the Russian attack in the estate, the windows were damaged, the entrance door was smashed, the walls and ancient stucco were cut with fragments, part of the roof and the second floor were completely destroyed.

In May 2022, Russian troops destroyed Peter Dick's 4-story steam mill with incendiary shells – a monument of industrial architecture of the beginning of the 20th century in New York, Bakhmut district of Donetsk region, which was left behind by German colonists.⁷⁴ Erected in 1903, it became one of the largest in the community.

As can be seen from the above examples, the Russian occupation army is causing great damage to objects of national-cultural and ethnic-historical heritage throughout the territory of Ukraine. The specified actions constitute a crime under Art. 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (violation of the laws and customs of war), because it is a direct violation of the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague Convention) of 1954 and additional protocols thereto, as well as the Convention on Measures to Prohibit and Prevent Illegal Imports, export and transfer of ownership of cultural values in 1970.⁷⁵

⁷¹The Russians destroyed an Armenian khachkar in Mariupol. This is a monument to the innocent victims of all wars. The website of the city of Mariupol, February 6, 2023. Access mode: <https://www.0629.com.ua/news/3542825/rosiani-zrujnuvali-armanskij-hackar-v-mariupoli-ce-pamatnik-nevinnim-zertvam-vsih-vijn-foto>

⁷²The foundation of the Koenig estate in Trostyanets, Sumy Oblast, was lost forever. Society, June 6, 2022. Access mode: <https://susplne.media/247179-fond-sadibi-keniga-u-trostanca-na-sumsini-vtraceno-nazavzdi/>

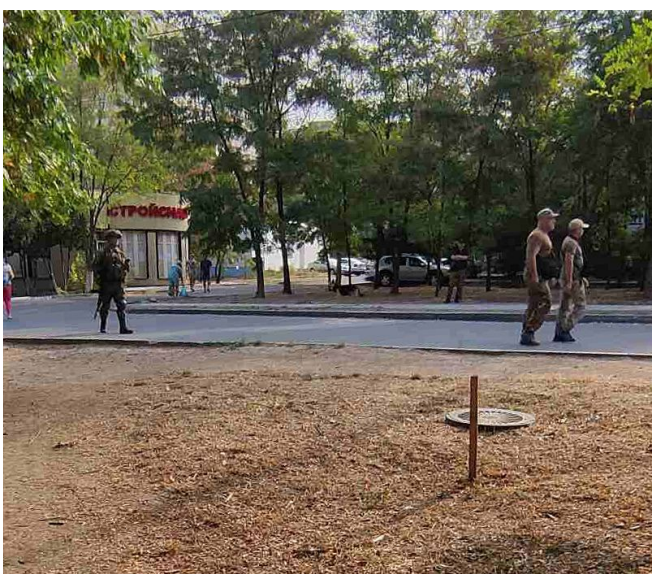
⁷³In Orihiv, the occupiers bombed a historical Mennonite estate. May 24, 2022. Access mode: <https://zp.vgorode.ua/ukr/news/sobytyia/a1207324-v-orikhovi-okupanti-rozbombili-istorichnij-mennonitskij-property>

⁷⁴In Ukrainian New York, the old Dick's Mill of Mennonite heritage burned down. Ukrainian Pravda, May 10, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/short/2022/05/10/161314/>

⁷⁵Executive Regulations of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (1954). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/995_721#Text On the ratification of the Convention on Measures to Prohibit and Prevent Illegal Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1988). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/5396-11#Text>

In the European dimension, the most important documents in the field of language and educational rights are the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter of Regional Languages or Minority Languages, which contain comprehensive provisions on the state's obligations to create the necessary conditions for representatives of national minorities to have the opportunity to learn and develop their own language.⁷⁶ According to these documents, Belorussian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Greek, Jewish, Crimean Tatar, Moldavian, German, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Slovak and Hungarian languages acquired a special status in Ukraine.

Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine contains guarantees concerning the protection of languages, linguistic and educational rights of national minorities in Ukraine. Article 24 prohibits «*privileges or restrictions based on ethnic origin, language or other characteristics*». Article 11 guarantees the protection of languages as part of the identity of peoples within the framework of the state's obligation «to promote the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness, traditions and culture, as well as the development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine. Article 53 states that «*citizens who belong to national minorities are guaranteed the right to study in their native language or to study their native language in state and communal educational institutions or through national cultural societies*». Article 119 entrusts local state administrations with the responsibilities of implementing programs of national and cultural development of indigenous peoples and national minorities in their places of compact residence.⁷⁸



At the legislative level, the protection of linguistic and educational rights of persons belonging to national minorities is also guaranteed by the Law of Ukraine «On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine» and the Law of Ukraine «On Education».⁷⁹

Preservation of the linguistic environment of indigenous peoples and national minorities acquires a new meaning in the conditions of the full-scale invasion of the Russian army into Ukraine. In the temporarily occupied territories, the policy of the Russian Federation is aimed at supplanting the Ukrainian language and the languages of national minorities and indigenous peoples from all spheres of life with the aim of complete Russification of the population.

As already mentioned, the Russian aggression had catastrophic consequences for the Greek community of the Azov region, which are the descendants of two unique language groups – the Urums (Turkophones) and the Rumeys / Romei (Hellinophones) of the Crimean Peninsula. The Greeks moved to the southeastern regions in the 18th century, creating communities primarily based on linguistic features. 29 villages of the Donetsk region, one village in the Zaporizhzhya region and the city of Mariupol were the area where the Urum language/speaking people lived, and the number of Urum was about 40,000 people. The geography of the use of the Rumei language was much smaller – it is Velikonovosilivskyi, Volnovaskyi, Volodarskyi, Mangushskyi and Starobeshivskyi districts of the Donetsk region.⁸⁰

⁷⁶European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/994_014#Text

⁷⁷Constitution of Ukraine (1996). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/constitution>

⁷⁸Report on ensuring the right to primary and secondary education in the languages of national minorities in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. March, 2020. [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://www.slideshare.net/ssuserd328fb/ss-239166078>

⁷⁹Law of Ukraine «On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine» (2022). [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <https://zakon.council.gov.ua/laws/show/2827-20#Text>

⁸⁰Piskizhova V. To the problem of preserving and popularizing the cultural (linguistic) heritage of the Nadzov Greeks in independent Ukraine

It is also worth mentioning that in 2018, Urum and Rumej were included in the «Atlas of the world's languages under threat» (UNESCO). According to the Levels scale of endangerment (equal dangers) the Urum language is «definitely under threat», while the Rumej language is «in serious danger». Included in the list of intangible cultural heritage of Donetsk region Maloyanisol dialect (Speaking) of the Rumej language. Only a few villages of the Nikol district – Maloyanisol, Kremenivka, Novoyanisol, Kasyanivka and Kyrylivka – were determined by the geography of the modern lifestyle of the specified element.

The physical destruction of Mariupol by the Russian army and its subsequent occupation became tragic pages in the history of Ukraine. A significant proportion of its residents were of Greek origin (21.9 thousand people or 4.3%), and the city itself has always been the main center of national and cultural life of ethnic Greeks, where their leading public institutions were located.



Mariupol State Humanities University was the only Ukrainian institution of higher education where the Faculty of Greek Philology and Translation worked. The Examination Center of the Ministry of Education and Religion of Greece for obtaining an international certificate in Modern Greek, the Research Center for the Study and Development of Greek Culture of the Black Sea Countries, and the Archive-Library for the Study of Dialects and Culture of the Ethnic Greeks of Nadazov were created on the basis of the faculty. Every year, the All-Ukrainian Student Olympiad and the All-Ukrainian Contest of Student Scientific Papers on the Modern Greek Language and Literature, as well as the Competition of Works in the Modern Greek Language named after Prof. Vassos Karageorgis. Library of Hellenistic Studies «Konstantinos Levendys» was widely known in Ukraine and abroad as the most modern and well-stocked library on Hellenistics.⁸¹ The Faculty of Greek Philology and Translation was very popular among the youth of the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, which had Greek roots.

Most of the compact settlements of the Azov Greeks are currently under the control of the occupying forces. There is no accurate information on the number of general education institutions operating in the temporarily occupied territories and the number of children who attend them. According to

the data of the Donetsk and Luhansk regional military administrations, the educational process is carried out according to Russian curricula, and the educational subjects «History of Ukraine», «Ukrainian language», «Ukrainian literature» are not included in the curricula of educational institutions. Anti-Ukrainian and anti-state educational activities are held in schools.



The languages of representatives of national minorities are not taught, and teachers are often victims of persecution and torture. Thus, the Federation of Greek Societies of Ukraine published a report on the abduction and detention of Elena Khristoforivna, a teacher of the Modern Greek language, an ethnic Greek, a member of⁸² the Urzuf Society of Greeks Tabakhova (Salambash). It is known that the woman was detained in the occupied Urzuf of the Donetsk region for her pro-Ukrainian position and refusal to cooperate with the occupation authorities of the DPR.

About oppression on the language representatives of national minorities in the temporarily occupied city of Melitopol also reported to the ground: «*God forbid we speak our native language here, if one of the orcs or collaborators hears it, I don't know how it will all end... both the state language and languages are prohibited here national communities.*» (Aryna).⁸³

⁸¹Faculty of Greek Philology and Translation. Mariupol State University website. Access mode: <http://www.mdgu.com.ua/?set=page&str=11>

⁸²The occupiers are holding a Modern Greek teacher from Urzuf captive. The website of the city of Mariupol, October 4, 2022. Access mode: <https://www.0629.com.ua/news/3473284/okupanti-trimaut-u-poloni-vcitelku-novogreckoi-movi-iz-urzufa>

⁸³Ethnic communities and community: the key to public activity and trust. Results of content analysis, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. (2022). Electronic resource]. Access mode: https://fim.mdpu.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/ETNICHNI_SPILNOTY_I_SPILNIST_zvit_vyrobnycha_praktyka.pdf

Ethnocide of the Crimean Tatars continues, one of the main tasks of which is the purposeful destruction of the language as the main sign of the ethnic group. This process is carried out by displacing the Crimean Tatar language from various spheres of social life and educational programs in educational institutions.

According to the All-Ukrainian population census of 2001, about 230,000 citizens of Ukraine named Crimean Tatar as their native language, including 228,373 out of 248,193 Crimean Tatars (92.0%). Among the languages of Ukraine, Crimean Tatar ranked third in the number of speakers after Ukrainian and Russian. The highest percentage of people who named Crimean Tatar as their native language was observed in the rural areas of Crimea – Bilogirskyi (28.9%), Kirovskyi (24.0%), Sovietskyi (21.2%), Dzhankoiskyi (20.4%), Bakhchysarayskyi (20.1%). In general, 11.3% of the population in Crimea (without Sevastopol) called Crimean Tatar their native language.



At the time of the occupation of Crimea, 15 schools carried out a full cycle of education in the Crimean Tatar language, and there were also several schools with education in two languages (Russian and Crimean Tatar). The number of classes in Crimea according to the language of instruction was distributed as follows: 875 classes – with Ukrainian, 384 – with Crimean Tatar, 8965 classes – with Russian. Of all students in Crimea, 206 thousand 866 children (99.2%) studied the Russian language as a subject, 18 thousand 20 (8.6%) Crimean Tatar language.⁸⁴

According to public information on the official website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Youth of the Republic of Crimea, in the 2022/2023 academic years, 33,351 students studied the Crimean Tatar language as a subject – either in-depth, optional, or extracurricular. 5,462 schoolchildren studied in the Crimean Tatar language in 16 secondary schools with the Crimean Tatar language of instruction, in which there were 261 classes. 119 Crimean Tatar classes for 1,905 children have been opened on the basis of Russian-language classes in 21 schools.⁸⁵ In total, 7,367 children studied in the Crimean Tatar language, which was 3.2% of the total number of students. It is currently impossible to verify this data.

Instead, according to Crimean Tatar human rights organizations, the status of the Crimean Tatar language is purely declarative. The Crimean Tatar language is only made optional in one of the last lessons of the school schedule, where, instead of teaching grammar and literature, children are told about the history of the national costume or traditional dishes. According to the representatives of the National Corps of the Crimean Tatar language, there are currently a few schools teaching Crimean Tatar in occupied Crimea, but only a few dozen graduates graduate from them each year.⁸⁶

⁸⁴Over the past three years, the number of students in Crimea studying Ukrainian has decreased 36 times. Ukrinform, May 1, 2017. Access mode: <https://www.ukrainform.ua/rubric-politics/2220496-za-tri-roki-kilkist-ucniv-u-krimu-aki-navcautsa-ukrainskou-zmensilas-u-36-raziv.html>

⁸⁵Information about students studying in the state languages of the Republic of Krym (Russian, Ukrainian, Crimean Tatar) in general education organizations of the Republic of Krym in the 2022/2023 academic year. Access mode: <https://monm.rk.gov.ru/ru/structure/210>

⁸⁶An endangered language: how to save Crimean Tatar? Svidmi, January 10, 2023. Access mode: <https://svidomi.in.ua/page/mova-pid-zahrozoiu-znyknennia-ia-k-zberehty-krymskotatarsku>

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which began in February 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and part of Donbas, revealed the critical vulnerability of modern society in confronting hybrid warfare, and also demonstrated the lack of an adequate and effective policy to confront new forms of military expansion. The fairly loyal and flexible reaction of the world to these events was one of the reasons that on February 24, 2022, Ukraine added to the list of «hot spots» on the planet.

Today, the geopolitical analysis of the Russian-Ukrainian war calls into question hundreds of international agreements concluded at different times, the level of manageability of international processes is falling, and the mechanisms for maintaining the international security system, created after the Second World War, are increasingly proving their insufficient effectiveness.

It is also appropriate to emphasize that Russia's war against Ukraine is another traumatic example of playing the «ethnic card» on the European continent. From the very beginning, the Russian Federation appealed to the «ethnic traumas» of the past, trying to provoke a chain reaction, justify and legitimize its own aggressive actions in Ukraine, and sow chaos. Instead, as the latest sociological studies show, the reverse process took place, which led to a radical consolidation of the population of Ukraine around the values of Ukrainianness.

It is known for certain that a significant part of the polyethnic regions of Ukraine and its population are under the Russian occupation regime, in particular, places where Greeks, Bulgarians, Roma, Meskhetian Turks, Crimean Tatars, descendants of Swiss and German colonists live. The military actions of the Russian army on the territory of Ukraine, which were repeatedly recognized by international organizations as crimes against humanity, led to serious violations of the rights and freedoms of ethnic communities.

They were subjected to severe torture and killings, abductions, forced displacements, extrajudicial punishments, politically motivated persecution and imprisonment, extrajudicial mechanisms and instruments of direct and indirect discrimination that violate basic human rights set forth in international law. The victims of Russian aggression were not only pro-Ukrainian public activists, members of the resistance movement, local officials, but also the civilian population, who were punished for maintaining ties with Ukraine, using Ukrainian online applications or Ukrainian symbols, and renouncing Russian citizenship.

Many representatives of national minorities were left in their homes due to shelling, especially the Greeks of the Azov region, who lived compactly in Mariupol, Mangush, Starobeshevo, Avdiivka, Makiivka, Marinka and other areas of active hostilities. In the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, many ethnic communities suffered from unauthorized searches and robberies of both private property and premises of their public organizations.

During the research, a high level of patriotism among representatives of national minorities and ethnic communities was confirmed, which is evidenced by numerous facts of the struggle against the occupation regimes and loyalty to Ukraine. Respondents with whom it was possible to communicate condemned the holding of illegal Russian referendums and did not participate in the voting. All of them emphasized gross violations of the election process, which, first of all, had a coercive nature without the right to freedom of expression.

The vast majority of representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples perceive forced naturalization as a discriminatory practice of imposing Russian ethnic identity. They consider obtaining a Russian passport only as a security component, but not as a factor of integration into Russian civil society.

The profile of the main socio-economic problems consists of unemployment, lack of access to quality medical services and medicines, blockage of the banking system of Ukraine and impossibility of receiving pensions, humanitarian disaster, destruction of the housing stock, lack of water, electricity and heat, as well as limitations in the provision of administrative services. In the temporarily occupied territories, the educational process is significantly disrupted, and psychological pressure on teachers is massively applied.

Russian aggression against Ukraine led to serious abuses of religious freedom. The occupation authorities persecute virtually all denominations, except the UOC (MP). The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Protestant and Muslim denominations suffer the most from the illegal actions of the aggressor. A large number of religious buildings were destroyed or significantly damaged by shelling.

The activities of public organizations of national minorities in the temporarily occupied territories are almost blocked, except for those who have agreed to cooperate with the occupation authorities.

The humanitarian policy and ideology of the Russian Federation is aimed at destroying the Ukrainian identity through the involvement of local collaborative agents of influence, including regional associations of national minorities.

Many facts of confiscation of premises of national and cultural societies and confiscation of their property have been recorded. Costumes of creative collectives of national minorities, without the permission of the owners, are used to spread the propaganda of Russian narratives.

The Russian army continues to massively destroy objects of cultural heritage of representatives of various national minorities and indigenous peoples, which are of particular importance for their identity, historical memory and preservation of identity. Unique museum exhibits were looted and taken to an unknown destination, a large array of archival materials, household items from private collections were lost forever.

Language rights are systematically violated in the temporarily occupied territories. The Crimean Tatar language, as well as the Urum and Rumei dialects of the Greek language, are under threat of extinction. Special conditions are not created for children of ethnic communities to learn their native languages either at school or in extracurricular education. The forced transition of the educational process to the Russian language without alternative continues.

In general, we can say that since the beginning of the Russian aggression, representatives of national minorities and indigenous peoples have increasingly become victims of gross violations of their special, civil and political rights, as well as human rights. This study only partially sheds light on the situation that developed in the ethnic environment after the full-scale invasion of the Russian army, but it clearly shows the general range of problems and forms a vision for the Ukrainian authorities regarding further policies aimed at the ethno-political dimension of de-occupation and reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.





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