



Voices of Children Charitable Foundation
NGO "Kharkiv Institute of Social Research"

CHILDREN AND WAR IN UKRAINE

24.10.-24.11.2022

Contents

Introduction	2
Children under the occupation and in the active combat areas.....	3
Recommendations.....	14
Displacement of children in Ukraine and abroad	15
Recommendations.....	21
Children and the problem of domestic violence during the war.....	23
Recommendations.....	29

Introduction

The ninth month of the war was marked by the liberation of a large number of settlements in the Kherson region — the city of Kherson in particular. The de-occupied territories need a lot of attention for now – the restoration of communal services, the delivery of humanitarian aid, the organization of medical and social services, the evacuation of people who have nowhere to live in the cold season. Unfortunately, the occupiers destroy or steal everything they can during the withdrawal of their troops from the occupied territories of Ukraine. Unable to advance, the Russian command is destroying our energy and residential infrastructure, launching hundreds of missiles and drones over our territory and aiming the places where no military facilities are available. The population is forced to stay without electricity, heating, water and gas for hours and even days. However, the worst thing is that as a result of constant missile attacks, the civilian population continues to die, get maimed and injured, especially children. As of November 24, 440 children have already died, 847 children have received injuries of various degrees of severity¹.

We present the report that briefly describes the key events of the ninth month of the war, related to the situation, problems and needs of children in Ukraine and abroad. Separately, in this report, we analyzed the problem of domestic violence against children in Ukraine.

2

The methodology is based on the analysis of statistics, data from official sources and media materials. In addition, 10 interviews were conducted with interviews with psychologists, public representatives and parents in the active combat areas, as well as with families who were forced to move to the western and central regions of Ukraine or abroad.

The report was prepared in co-authorship and with the financial support of the Voices of Children Charitable Foundation.

¹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-440-ditei-zaginuulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

Children under the occupation and in the active combat areas

On October 28, the list of territorial communities located in the active combat areas or under temporary occupation, encirclement (blockade) was updated. We are talking about nine regions: the Donetsk region, the Kharkiv region, the Dnipropetrovsk region, the Luhansk region, the Zaporizhzhia region, the Kherson region, the Mykolayiv region, the Sumy region and the Chernihiv region. In general, the number of communities in the list has remained almost unchanged compared to the previous month — 325².

Russia continues violating the norms of international humanitarian law in the war against Ukraine, using illicit types of weapons, attacking civilian and critical infrastructure, killing and terrorizing the civilian population. Below are examples of war crimes committed by the Russian Federation, in particular against Ukrainian children.

As of November 24, since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, 48,982 war crimes have been documented, most of which are violations of the laws and customs of war³.

3

According to the OHCHR data, from February 24 to November 20, **6,595 civilians died in Ukraine**, including 2,575 men, 1,767 women, **206 boys and 172 girls, the sex of 37 children** and 1,838 adults has not yet been determined. Among the 10,189 wounded, **299 were boys and 211 girls**, and **the sex of 245 children** could not be determined yet. Most recorded cases of civilian deaths or injuries were caused by the use of large-area explosive weapons, including heavy artillery and MLRS, as well as missile and air strikes⁴.

Usage of illicit means of warfare

The Russian army continues using prohibited weapons in the war against Ukraine. Most often, cluster ammunition, phosphorous and thermobaric weapons, butterfly mines, etc. are used. The enemy fires them not only at military, but also at civilian objects – residential areas, health care facilities, schools, playgrounds, etc.

On October 25, it became known that the Russian army attacked the village of Velika Novosilka, the Donetsk region, with phosphorus bombs⁵.

² <https://minre.gov.ua/news/onovleno-aktualnyy-perelik-gromad-u-rayonah-boyovyh-diy-na-tot-i-tyh-shcho-v-otochenni-2>

³ <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/11/24/ofis-generalnogo-prokurora-zadokumentuvav-68-065-zlochyniv-proty-ukrayiny/>

⁴ The OHCHR believes that the actual figures are much higher, as information from some areas of intense combat has been delayed and many reports are still awaiting confirmation. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2022/11/ukraine-civilian-casualty-update-21-november-2022>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1518302458633902>

On November 9, Russia shelled Kryvyi Rih with cluster munitions⁶.

On November 12, as a result of an attack by Russian troops in the area of residential buildings in Zaporizhzhia, unexploded cluster shells were recorded⁷.

An important feature of illicit weapons is not only that they affect a significant number of people, but also that they are dangerous even after firing. In particular, cluster munitions fly over a considerable distance and can explode later and injure the civilian population, particularly children, for a long time.

On November 11, at around 11:30 a.m., two teenagers, 12 and 15 years old, received shrapnel wounds to their legs as a result of an explosive device explosion in Kharkiv along Buchmy Street during their walk in an open area. According to preliminary data, the cluster munition detonated⁸.

Attacking, bombing and mining of civilian objects

During the nine months of the full-scale war, **Russia fired more than 4,700 missiles at Ukraine**⁹. Most of them were aimed at civil and critical infrastructure.



A residential building in Vyshhorod, the Kyiv region, after a missile attack by the Russian occupiers¹⁰

⁶ <https://t.me/vilkul/2234>

⁷ <https://t.me/kurtievofficial/7124>

⁸ https://t.me/dsns_telegram/10810

⁹ <https://president.gov.ua/news/ukrayina-bazhaye-miru-ale-dlya-jogo-vidnovlennya-mi-potrebuy-79297>

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=826259048703775&set=pcb.826259125370434>

Thus, on November 8, a 3-month-old boy was injured in the village of Borozenske, the Kherson region, as a result of a direct hit by an enemy projectile into a private house¹¹.

On November 17, as a result of an enemy missile attack on a private house in Vilniansk, Zaporizhzhia region, 10 people died, including two children aged 11 and 17¹².

On the night of November 23, the Russian invaders hit the maternity ward of the Vilniansk hospital in the Zaporizhzhia region with rockets, resulting in the death of a baby¹³.

On November 23, 2022, military personnel of the aggressor state performed a missile attack on the Kyiv region. One of the missiles hit a multi-story residential building in Vyshgorod, resulting in the death of 7 local residents¹⁴. Another 30 were injured to varying degrees¹⁵, including six children aged 5 to 16¹⁶.



In total, as of November 24, 2,719 educational institutions were damaged by bombing and shelling by the armed forces of the Russian Federation. 332 of them were completely destroyed¹⁷.

As of November 13, 135 sports facilities were damaged, 22 of which were completely destroyed¹⁸.

Maternity ward of the hospital in Vilniansk, the Zaporizhzhia region¹⁹

5

¹¹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-430-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-16029>

¹² <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-433-ditini-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

¹³ <https://t.me/starukhofficial/4257>

¹⁴ <https://t.me/OleksiyKuleba/2861>

¹⁵ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0izsqtMrozJ7HfR8v1FMvQT1bs6yNP3nK1cfnNvPguY8b6g189qFENJVnMPF5aDNQI&id=100039590617894

¹⁶ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-440-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

¹⁷ <https://gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-440-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

¹⁸ <https://ua.tribuna.com/uk/others/1000000025067-vadim-gutczajt-vse-sredstva-idut-na-voynu-rekonstrukcij/>

¹⁹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/zagibel-nemovlya-vnaslidok-obstrilu-rosiiskimi-viiskovimi-likarni-u-vilnyansku-na-zaporizzi-rozpocato-provadzennya>

As of November 10, the occupiers completely destroyed 144 health care facilities and damaged another 958. At the same time, Ukraine was able to completely restore 95 medical facilities²⁰.

As a result of shelling of residential buildings, hospitals, schools and parks in Ukraine, **the civilian population, in particular children, is killed and injured every day**. Among the 1,287 children who suffered as a result of the full-scale war, the most wounded and dead were in the Donetsk region — 424, in the Kharkiv region — 266, in the Kyiv region — 117, in the Mykolaiv region — 77, in the Zaporizhzhia region — 76, in the Chernihiv region — 68, in the Kherson region — 67, in the Luhansk region — 64, in the Dnipropetrovsk region — 32²¹.

On October 28, a 13-year-old girl was wounded as a result of enemy shelling in the village of Bakhmut, the Donetsk region²².

On November 1, as a result of enemy shelling of the village of Petropavlivka, the Kupyan district, the Kharkiv region, two children aged 3 and 6 were injured²³.

On November 8, an 8-year-old boy was injured as a result of enemy shelling in Kramatorsk, the Donetsk region²⁴.

On November 14, a 12-year-old girl was injured as a result of enemy shelling in Bakhmut, the Donetsk region²⁵.

6

Separately, it is important to mention **the mining of civilian objects by the Russian military**, as well as the widespread remnants of weapons, which pose a significant danger to local residents and people returning to the de-occupied territories and active combat areas.

On October 30, a 19-year-old man and a 12-year-old boy were injured as a result of the detonation of a projectile found in a field near the village of Zeleny Gai in the Mykolayiv region. **The child was taken to the regional hospital. Currently, his condition is critical**²⁶.

On November 14, three children aged 5 months, 5 and 10 years were injured of various degrees of severity when a civilian car hit an explosive device near the village of Novoraisk, the Kherson region.²⁷

²⁰ https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=857938762203743

²¹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-440-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

²² <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-430-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-15383>

²³ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-430-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-15528>

²⁴ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-430-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-15853>

²⁵ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-431-ditina-zaginula-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

²⁶ <https://t.me/mykolaivskaoblrada/4253>

²⁷ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-431-ditina-zaginula-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-2>

On November 14, a 9-year-old boy was injured by the detonation of a mine in the village of Yarova, the Lyman district, the Donetsk region²⁸.

On November 15, during a missile threat, children found a downed missile in the Kyiv region, which they brought to school to show it to the adults. No one was hurt²⁹.

In addition, **the occupiers continue using civilian facilities as military headquarters and/or warehouses for military equipment and ammunition.** Residential quarters and educational institutions are used most often. Moreover, the Russian military forces children to attend schools on a permanent basis.

This month, due to the loss of territories, the occupiers had to settle in the Melitopol region of the Zaporizhzhia region. In particular, since the middle of November, the Russian militaries have actively moved into captured houses, schools, and kindergartens. Military equipment was stationed in residential areas. Buses with Russian troops were brought to 22 schools in Melitopol. The Grad MLRSs were placed in the yard of the educational institution. Empty houses were broken into and occupied in the Priazovska, Novovasylivska and Oleksandrivska communities. In Kyrlyivka, they settled in the raided recreation centers. Tanks drove directly into the village of Shelyuga near Kyrlyivka, militarymen settled in a kindergarten and blocked access to forestry³⁰.

7

Murder, wounding, cruel treatment and sexual assault of children



After the deoccupation of the Kherson region, law enforcement agencies received a lot of facts of torture and humiliation of Ukrainian citizens by the Russian occupiers. **Torture cells were found, including a cell for teenagers.** Women and men were held captive together. There was also 24-hour surveillance in the cells³¹.

Torture cell of the occupiers in Kherson³².

²⁸ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-431-ditina-zaginula-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-2>

²⁹ https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid02uqvQ9gZhtgsNU6UuL8YrqepDpAQ1USiAF83xXSf4QmB44p93XueiwnU8KjJfndrl&id=100039590617894

³⁰ https://t.me/ivan_fedorov_melitopol/869

³¹ <https://fb.watch/hlQzJ8q9Vvk/>

³² https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=681350976694189&extid=CL-UNK-UNK-UNK-AN_GK0T-GK1C&ref=sharing



A cross made by a 19-year-old guy in a torture cell³³.

*"Now we are determining their [teenagers'] age. People say that some guys looked like about 14 years. And the cross that I showed in the video was made by a 19-year-old guy who was here in the torture cell. In other areas we did not find torture cells for children or adolescents. But here it did not work"*³⁴.

Dmytro Lubinets, Commissioner off the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for Human Rights

Cases of murder, cruel treatment of adults and children are also recorded in other regions of Ukraine.

On November 18, in the village of Komysch-Zorya, the Zaporizhzhia region, Russian servicemen shot dead a family together with two children aged 5 and 14 in their own residential house ³⁵.

8

On November 20, it became known that in the temporarily occupied Myrneska territorial community of the Kherson region, Russian invaders broke into the homes of families, where children of school age are brought up. The occupiers broke closed wickets to enter the courtyard and knocked down the doors to the houses. In this way they checked whether children were learning online in Ukrainian schools using gadgets ³⁶.

Besides, the investigation and sentencing of crimes committed in the territories de-occupied in April 2022 goes on.

On November 2, two Russian military men were sentenced for cruel treatment of civilians and sexual abuse of an underage girl. In March 2022, during the occupation of a part of the Chernihiv region, they settled in a house where a family lived — an underage girl, her brother and grandmother. One of the servicemen — the unit commander — repeatedly tried to rape a 16-year-old girl, using physical and psychological violence against her. To overcome the resistance, he hit her on the head with a gun and strangled her. He threatened to kill her family and give the victim for rape to other servicemen of the Russian Federation. Also, the occupiers repeatedly kept the girl's brother in the courtyard

³³ <https://hromadske.ua/posts/bula-okrema-kamera-de-trimali-pidlitkiv-ombudsman-rozpoviv-pro-stvoreni-okupantami-kativni-na-hersonshini>

³⁴ <https://hromadske.ua/posts/bula-okrema-kamera-de-trimali-pidlitkiv-ombudsman-rozpoviv-pro-stvoreni-okupantami-kativni-na-hersonshini>

³⁵ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-437-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini>

³⁶ <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/1910>

of the house in the frosty weather in the handcuffs and without outerwear, causing him bodily harm³⁷.

On November 3, two more Russian occupiers were identified and reported on suspicion. Law enforcement officers documented the facts of hostage-taking by the occupiers, inhumane treatment and robbery of the civilian population. The investigation also revealed that one of the suspects, together with another Russian serviceman whose identity is being established, raped a pregnant local resident. As a result of the criminal actions of Russian servicemen, she has lost a child³⁸.

On November 18, the prosecutors of the prosecutor's office of the Kherson region, together with police investigators, established that in April 2022, during the occupation by the Russian Armed Forces of one of the villages of the Kherson region, the Russian military shot dead seven civilians in the house. After that, the occupiers blew up the house with the shot people. According to preliminary information, there were employees of the company who guarded irrigation units near the village, as well as an underage girl. The dead were buried near the scene of the incident, and the girl was buried by her parents in the local cemetery ³⁹.



The Barnahus Center in Kyiv⁴⁰

³⁷ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/shhe-dvoje-viiskovix-rf-otrimali-virok-za-zorstoke-povodzennya-z-civilnimi-ta-seksualne-nasilstvo-nad-nepovnolitnyoyu>

³⁸ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/grabiz-ta-zgvaltuvannya-vstanovleno-ta-povidomleno-pro-pidozru-shhe-dvom-rosiiskim-okupantam>

³⁹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/rozstril-semi-civilnix-sered-yakix-nepovnolitnya-divcina-prokurori-xersonshini-fiksuyut-cergovii-vojennii-zlocin-rf>

⁴⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=439466905030155&set=pcb.439467368363442>

It is also worth noting the active work of the state in creating appropriate conditions for procedural actions with children that minimize the consequences of trauma. This is particularly relevant for surveys of children affected by violence or who have witnessed acts of violence. A Register of psychologists involved in procedural actions involving children has been created. Also, on November 12, the fourth Barnahus center was opened in Kyiv, which provides comprehensive social, psychological, legal, medical and other types of assistance and services to children in a friendly environment, which reduces the level of concern and contributes to the implementation of the tasks of criminal proceedings. The scope of application of the "Green Room" method has increased by 6 times ⁴¹.

Kidnapping and forced deportation of children

According to official statistics, **as of November 24, 323 children are considered missing, 11,461 were deported to the territory of the Russian Federation**⁴². The exact number of children affected cannot be established due to active combat and the temporary occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine. According to open sources voiced by Russia, the number of deported children is much higher — 705 thousand⁴³.

Thus, the leader of the occupied Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov reported that Russians removed "difficult teenagers" from the occupied territory of the Luhansk and the Donetsk regions to the Chechen Republic, for "military-patriotic education"⁴⁴.

In addition to deportation and imposing propaganda narratives on Ukrainian children in Russia, **Russian officials also resort to illegal adoption of deported children**, primarily orphans and children deprived of parental care.

On October 26, it became known that 350 orphans from Donbas had been illegally adopted in Russia. Another thousand children are planned to be adopted. In particular, the Commissioner for the Rights of the Child under the President of Russia, Maria Lvova-Belova, also "adopted" a Ukrainian child stolen from Mariupol⁴⁵.

On November 16, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) also emphasized that Russian sources of information and proxies openly advertise the forced adoption of Ukrainian children into Russian families. Known Russian bloggers on November 9 began to replicate a multi series documentary about several Ukrainian children from Donbas who were adopted into Russian families. The documentary series states that in 2022 alone, Russian officials "evacuated" more

⁴¹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/popri-viinu-yuvenalni-prokurori-prodovzuyut-implementaciyu-pidxodiv-druznix-do-ditei>

⁴² <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>.

⁴³ <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>.

⁴⁴ https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3104

⁴⁵ <https://crimea.ria.ru/amp/20221026/rossiyane-usynovili-uzhe-350-detey-sirot-iz-donbassa-1125094507.html>

than 150,000 children from Donbas. Forced adoption and deportation programs for children in the guise of rest and rehabilitation are likely to form the basis of a massive Russian campaign of depopulation, which may be considered the violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and constitute a broader ethnic cleansing than it was previously reported by ISW ⁴⁶.

In total, as of November 24, **only 199 deported children had been returned to Ukraine**⁴⁷.

Recruitment and participation of children in war and propaganda

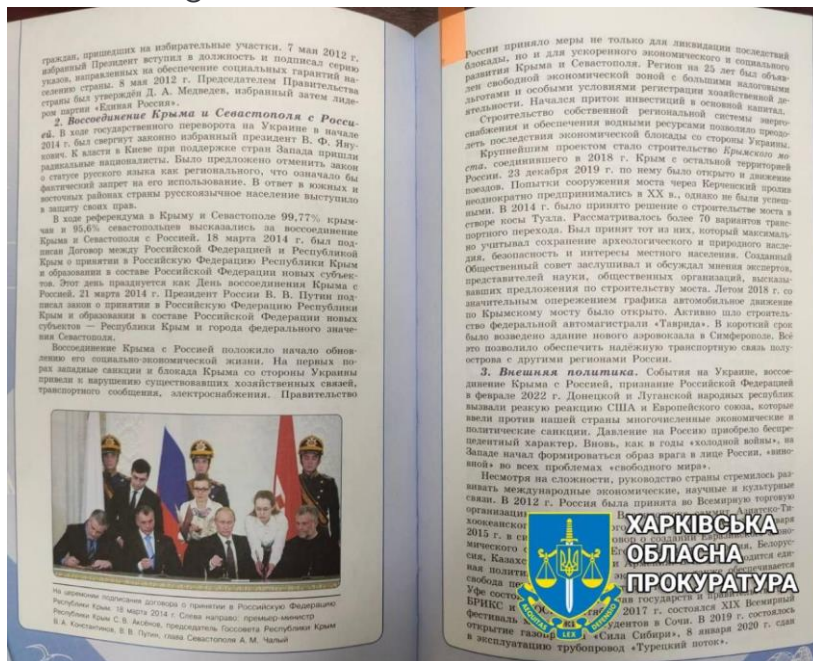
Russian occupiers continue to impose propaganda narratives on children and militarize them by conducting military schools during school classes.

Thus, on October 27, in the village of Borova in the Izyum district of the Kharkiv region, prosecutors of the regional prosecutor's office, together with employees of the Security Service of Ukraine, have found about a hundred Russian textbooks for pupils in the premises where the so-called "administration" was located during the occupation. Among them there are books on Russian language, history of the Russian Federation of different periods, the basics of life safety, social studies with a Russian tricolor on the cover, etc. Russian propaganda for children is everywhere. For example, in the textbook on history, it is written about "the great reunification of Crimea with the Russian Federation" and about

"the largest project — the construction of the Crimean bridge". In addition, the authors of the books also did not escape the recognition of the illegal "DPR" and "LPR" in February 2022 ⁴⁸.

A Russian textbook for schoolchildren discovered after the deoccupation of the Kharkiv region⁴⁹.

11



⁴⁶ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-16>

⁴⁷ <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua>.

⁴⁸ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/sproba-pere-vesti-osvitu-na-standarti-krayini-agresora-prokurori-vilucili-pidrucniki-rf-na-deokupovanii-teritoriyi-izyumshhini>

⁴⁹ <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/sproba-pere-vesti-osvitu-na-standarti-krayini-agresora-prokurori-vilucili-pidrucniki-rf-na-deokupovanii-teritoriyi-izyumshhini>

It also became known that Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmytro Chernyshenko instructed the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sports of Russia to expand the set of mandatory disciplines of the Ready for Labor and Defense complex — he proposed to teach schoolchildren to throw grenades, shoot rifles and control UAVs⁵⁰.

Ivan Fedorov, Mayor of Melitopol in the Zaporizhzhia region, also confirmed such initiatives. According to him, it is planned to introduce elementary military education for the high school pupils of the — they are prepared for possible participation in "volunteer battalion". Units of the Yunarmiya ("Youth army") are formed on the basis of the university. In general, children are taught based on Russian textbooks, where the history is rewritten according to the KGB methodologies⁵¹.

Regarding the use of children in propaganda, the analysis conducted by the independent publication Texty.org.ua is pronounced. With the help of machine algorithms, they have analysed all images from 13 Kherson telegram channels of the occupiers throughout the occupation (about 20 thousand photos in total). 2400 of them showed the faces of people, among each 420 — at least one image depicted a child. Images of children mainly occurred on handouts about Russian social programs and promises of a "better future", stories about the education and rest of children, as well as celebrations of certain dates using propaganda symbols (Georgian ribbon, Russian flag or things with the colors of the Russian flag, etc.). Children were also present in the materials on the distribution of humanitarian aid, in particular from the military. It is also worth noting that among all the photos found, no face of the child was hidden/blurred⁵².

12

Depriving access to humanitarian aid

There is a continuing humanitarian crisis in the temporarily occupied territories. The occupation authorities do not make any efforts to provide the local residents with sufficient food and drinking water, as well as utilities, access to medicines, medical care and social services. The occupiers are blocking humanitarian aid from Ukraine, there is a significant increase in food prices.

"We wait for Ukrainian troops every day. Because every day is like survival. You have to find something to eat, something to heal up with, now the children have grabbed some kind of virus. It may be a coronavirus, but there are no tests to check. I'm afraid of the cold so that the children won't freeze when it's minus

⁵⁰ https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/news/2022/11/11/949888-chernishenko-poruchil-rasshirit-perechen-normativov-gto?utm_campaign=vedomosti_public&utm_content=949888-chernishenko-poruchil-rasshirit-perechen-normativov-gto&utm_medium=social&utm_source=telegram_ved

⁵¹ https://t.me/ivan_fedorov_melitopol/823

⁵² <https://texty.org.ua/articles/108181/hersonski-dity-v-obyektyvi-rosijskoyi-propahandy/>

20. *It's scary to leave, the eldest son is 15, maybe they will take him somewhere, I'm afraid. And there's not much money left to go anywhere".*

From an interview with parents

Besides, Russian troops are trying to block humanitarian assistance in the frontline settlements of Ukraine. De-occupied territories of Ukraine, especially in the Kharkiv, Sumy, Kherson and Donetsk regions, are subject to regular shelling and bombing.

Thus, on November 19, the occupiers shot at a bread delivery point in Bilozerka, the Kherson region. Five local residents were injured⁵³.

On 22 November, Russian troops hit a humanitarian aid delivery point in the school premises, killing a social worker and injuring two other women⁵⁴.

The situation with obtaining medical services, buying medicines, receiving rehabilitation for children with disabilities remains difficult. There is also no possibility to make routine vaccinations for children, to be vaccinated against influenza and coronavirus. There are almost no planned operations.

"I consult with our doctor only by phone, she was able to leave at the beginning of the war. We try to cure ourselves as we can, because she prescribes medicines to us, and we cannot buy them. There are some Russian analogues, but the dosage is quite different. Our doctor has to look up how to take it. There is no point in going to hospital, there are very few doctors. All of them are occupied by the Russists. They even bring their doctors. Recently, my daughter's ear was inflamed, so there was a long story of treating it with what we could find".

From an interview with parents

People also complain about the deterioration of the criminal situation in the temporarily occupied territories. The number of robberies, thefts, burglaries has increased. It is often the Russian military that is involved. They occupy and steal homes abandoned by locals during evacuation, and remove machines and equipment from hospitals, schools, and other institutions that can be used or sold. In addition, the occupiers are more likely than others to be the culprits of car accidents.

"We try not to go out to the city center again, we walk in our neighbourhood and that is very limited. The military men are everywhere, there are drunks, there are those who may be bored, and they start persecuting people, especially young girls. And it is difficult to argue with them, they can place you in the cell or beat".

From an interview with parents

⁵³ https://t.me/tymoshenko_kyrylo/2715

⁵⁴ <https://t.me/starukhofficial/4248>

Recommendations

- Maintain contact with the occupied territories at all times by all possible means and ways. Local authorities, state institutions and agencies should know their working mode, powers and procedures in different situations. This will help to maintain the calmness and trust of the population in the decisions of the state.

- Inform the population of the occupied territories about the safety rules, compliance with which will help to prevent bullying and murder by the Russian military, mobilization to the army of the occupier, as well as mine safety rules. Always remind children of the importance of following the rules of safe behavior during air alarms in bomb shelters and at home. Parents should limit as much as possible the stay of children in places where they can get hurt or injured. This also applies to the ban on visiting forest belts, beaches and rivers that can be mined.

- Facilitate the organization of humanitarian corridors and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the occupied territories of Ukraine and active combat areas, as well as to the areas suffering from a humanitarian disaster, to stockpile food, water and medicines in territories where there is a significant risk of Russian occupation.

- Facilitate the recording of all crimes committed by the Russian military: murders, mutilations, cruel treatment. An integral part of this process is the formation of trust and conveying to citizens the need to address law enforcement agencies with statements and evidence of crimes, in particular through the Internet and telephone communication.

- Increase efforts to document crimes of a sexual nature, in particular against children. Most of them remain latent and are very little recorded by the law enforcement agencies.

- Maximize the use of international channels to monitor the condition of children who have been deported to Russia, to document the crimes committed against them. Facilitate greater involvement of international organizations and volunteer communities in the process of returning Ukrainian children home.

- Conduct informational and explanatory conversations with children about online security rules and available schemes of recruitment/involvement of adolescents in war and propaganda (transfer of intelligence, participation in campaigning, etc.).

- Conduct information campaigns on the prevention of the coronavirus and influenza epidemic throughout Ukraine, especially where it is difficult to provide an adequate level of medical care.

Displacement of children in Ukraine and abroad

As of November 18 the total number of internally displaced people, based on the international evaluation, reached 6.5 mln⁵⁵, the majority of them are women and children. According to the latest IOM report as of October 31 - November 11, most of the internally displaced people were registered in the Kharkiv (430,242), Dnipropetrovsk (355,493) and Kyiv (335,517) regions. Those are the IDPs from the Donetsk, Kharkiv and Luhansk regions. The number of registered IDPs has increased the most from the Zapozizhzhia region direction, with a moderate increase in the eastern regions. ⁵⁶.

Internal displacement is primarily caused by regular shelling of settlements, residential buildings and civilian infrastructure. People are also leaving the recently de-occupied territories in the South of Ukraine due to the lack of appropriate conditions for living during the winter and shelling from the occupiers. In addition, there are constant threats of nuclear and power catastrophe.

The Russian army regularly shells the electric power infrastructure of Ukraine. Families, including those with infants, are forced to stay without electricity for up to 8-10 hours, in the worst case - for more than a day. In addition to the scheduled shutdowns, there have been emergency outages throughout the country. The power outage also leads to the lack of heating and water supply in a large number of homes.

15

On October 31, Russian occupiers struck 10 regions with missiles and drones, and damaged 18 objects, mostly power supply facilities. Hundreds of settlements in seven regions of Ukraine were left without electricity. This massive attack resulted in partial blackouts and emergency power cuts for users in Kyiv, Cherkasy, Zaporizhzhia as well as in the Cherkasy, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Poltava regions⁵⁷.

On November 15, the invaders once again shelled critical infrastructure facilities in Ukraine. It was the largest attack in the history of the energy sector, which affected all regions of Ukraine. In total, about 10 million consumers were left without electricity⁵⁸.

On November 23, the Russian army struck the energy infrastructure with missiles. The massive attack caused a temporary blackout of all Ukrainian nuclear power plants, as well as of most thermal and hydroelectric power plants. Power transmission facilities were also hit⁵⁹.

As of November 24, 4 thousand "Points of Invincibility"⁶⁰ have been deployed in the regions to provide basic support to people under conditions of

⁵⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-situation-report-16-nov-2022-enruuk>

⁵⁶ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/ukraine-%E2%80%94-displacement-report-area-baseline-report-raion-level-%E2%80%94-round-16-october-31st>

⁵⁷ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/31-zhovtnya-situaciya-v-energetici>

⁵⁸ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/16-listopada-situaciya-v-energetici>

⁵⁹ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/23-listopada-situaciya-v-energetici>

⁶⁰ https://t.me/tymoshenko_kyrylo/2799

power and heating outages. These are specially equipped places where heating, water, electricity and Internet are provided. Some locations are also equipped with playrooms for children.



16

Playroom in the Point of Invincibility in the Odesa region ⁶¹.

The nuclear terrorism danger from the Russian side remains. The occupiers took control over Enerhodar and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant on March 4, 2022⁶². For the last nine months in a row, the enemy has been neglecting the nuclear and radiation safety of the European largest nuclear power plant, threatening the world with the radiation catastrophe. As a result of the continual plant-related infrastructure shelling, the nuclear power plant energy supply is repeatedly disrupted.

On November 2, as a result of Russian shelling, the last two high-voltage transmission lines of the Zaporizhzhya NPP connected to the Ukrainian power system were damaged. The plant was switched to the full blackout mode⁶³.

In the evening of November 19 and in the first half of the day on November 20, as a result of continuous Russian shelling, shells hit and damaged the infrastructure of the Zaporizhzhia NPP⁶⁴.

The military men of the Russian federation try to prevent evacuation and often only allow women, children and the elderly to leave. Also, after the de-

⁶¹ https://t.me/tymoshenko_kyrylo/2841?single

⁶² https://t.me/energoatom_ua/8698.

⁶³ https://t.me/energoatom_ua/10488

⁶⁴ <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/21-listopada-situaciya-v-energetici>

occupation of some settlements in the South of Ukraine, evacuation routes for people trying to leave the temporarily occupied territories of the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions were blocked. The blockade was caused by fleeing of the Russian military and the occupation authorities – significant queues on the roads were formed in a long wait for departure.



17

Mother and daughter are evacuating from village of Makiyivka (the Donetsk region)⁶⁵

As of November 10, **nearly 5,000 citizens have been able to evacuate within one month**. About 2,000 people from the Kherson region, over 2,000 people from the Zaporizhzhia region and nearly 500 people from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. In total, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, 165 evacuation corridors from the temporarily occupied territories (TOT) have been established with the participation of the Ministry of Reintegration, which have allowed more than 350 thousand civilians to leave the dangerous areas. Since the beginning of the mandatory evacuation, over 30 thousand people have left the Donetsk region, including more than 4,4 thousand children and nearly 1,8 thousand people with limited mobility. Last month alone, more than 6,000 citizens evacuated.⁶⁶

Another option to evacuate from the temporarily occupied territories for Ukrainians is to leave for Russia. **Passing through filtration measures and a long road are the most difficult for families with children**. If the Russians have the slightest suspicion of a pro-Ukrainian position or of having relatives among the

⁶⁵ https://t.me/serhiy_hayday/8687?single

⁶⁶ <https://minre.gov.ua/news/prodovzhuyetsya-evakuaciya-z-nebezpechnyh-regioniv-ukrayiny>

Ukrainian military or law enforcement authorities, this automatically means long interrogations, including children, possible detention in a filtration camp and separation from their loved ones. The loss of documents during the evacuation also makes it difficult to return to Ukraine. An important innovation in addressing this issue was the introduction of an experimental procedure for issuing an identity document for the return of citizens deported to the Russian Federation, which has been in force for a year effective from November 14. The issue of such an identity document (without the person's presence) is carried out by the State Migration Service on the basis of an application from one of the parents or other legal representative of a person under the age of 18, one of the parents, spouse, adult child, sibling (full or half) or official request of the Ministry of Reintegration⁶⁷.

People are slowly coming back home after the deliberation. As of November 18, settlements in five regions are de-occupied: the Kharkiv region, the Kherson region, the Mykolaiv region, the Donetsk region and the Luhansk region. Most of the settlements liberated are in the Kharkiv region - 568 and in the Kherson region - 226. In the Mykolaiv region - 99, in the Donetsk region - 43, in the Luhansk region - 7. In total, 943 settlements have been de-occupied, where nearly 360 thousand people currently live⁶⁸.

However, it is still too early to return to the de-occupied territories. Currently, buildings, public places and roads are being actively demined, electricity and water supply are being restored, state institutions and state registers are being reopened. A lot of humanitarian aid was brought both from other regions' administrations, as well as from charitable foundations and public organizations. **More than 228,000 Ukrainians from the de-occupied territories have received more than 9,000 tons of humanitarian aid.** At the same time, more than 48,000 residents of the deliberated settlements received financial aid from international donors for the total amount of more than UAH 65,000,000⁶⁹. Also, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has ordered to allocate UAH 100,000,000 to the Kherson Regional Military Administration for the priority restoration of critical and social infrastructure damaged as a result of the combat actions⁷⁰.

At the same time, after the de-occupation, some people have to be evacuated due to the lack of proper living conditions. First of all, we are talking about families with children, elderly people and people with limited mobility. According to the Ministry of Reintegration, as of November 10, 160 000 free places for IDPs were available in relatively safe regions of Ukraine. Most of them are in the Rivne, Zhytomyr, Odesa and Khmelnytskyi regions⁷¹.

⁶⁷ <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1201-2022-%D0%BF#Text>

⁶⁸ <https://minre.gov.ua/news/zavdyaky-zsu-v-minreintegraciyi-bilshaye-roboty>

⁶⁹ <https://minre.gov.ua/news/na-zvilnenyh-terytoriyah-gumdopomogu-otrymaly-ponad-228-tysyach-ukrayinciv-groshovu-bilsh-yak>

⁷⁰ <https://minre.gov.ua/news/uryad-vydilyv-100-mln-gryven-na-vidnovlennya-infrastruktury-hersonshchyny>

⁷¹ <https://minre.gov.ua/news/kilkist-vilnyh-misc-dlyca-rozmishchennya-vpo>

Displaced families continue to struggle with finding housing, employment and social benefits. However, warm clothes, generators, gas stoves, water storage tanks and other means for heating, cooking and basic hygiene are among the key needs of families. Schoolchildren also face difficulties. Due to the constant shelling and power outages, they are forced to regularly interrupt their studies and study a significant part of the educational material on their own. According to the Ministry of Education and Science, as of November 14, 2022, the educational process takes place in 12,924 schools: in 7,764 schools in the conventional format, and in 5,160 in online format. In total, 4,031,537 schoolchildren are currently enrolled. Of those, more than 1 mln students from the Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv and Kherson regions are studying remotely⁷². As of October 27, more than 25,000 (95%) educational facilities have been inspected. According to the results, 16,419 educational institutions (more than 62.2%) are ready for the educational process in the face-to-face form of education in terms of the provision of participants of the educational process with shelters. Almost 70% of schools have shelters⁷³.

«We don't have electricity for 10 hours at home. It is cold, the internet connection is weak, and after four hours of power outage it is not working at all, because something is down on the provider's side as well. The son joins the classes but it is not the education. It is often hard to hear and there are also air raid alarms. I even think that I need to hire a tutor so that he remembers and learns something in the core subjects».

19

From an interview with parents

The number of Ukrainian refugees, based on the UNCHR estimates, accounted for around 7,876 mln people as of November 22. **4,751,000 people were registered for Temporary Protection in Europe.** The most Ukrainian refugees with Temporary Protection status are registered in Poland — 1,508,000 people. Germany and Czech Republic come next – 1,000,000 and 462,000 people correspondingly. A lot of Ukrainians got temporary protection in Italy (164,000), Spain (154,000), Bulgaria (143,000), the UK (146,000), France (118,000), Slovakia (101,000), Austria (86,000), the Netherlands (79,000), Lithuania (69,000), Switzerland (68,000), Belgium (59,000). Turkey accommodated 145,000 our citizens but temporary protection is not provided there. More than 2,852,000 Ukrainians crossed the Russian border. The data about the status of these people is not available⁷⁴. The United States and Canada also accommodated Ukrainians and

⁷² <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/bilshist-ukrayinskih-uchniv-navchayutsya-v-ochnomu-abo-zmishanomu-rezhimi>

⁷³ <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/ministr-osviti-i-nauki-zhodnih-obmezhen-shodo-viznannya-rezultativ-navchannya-ditini-za-kordonom-na-sogodni-ne-isnuye>

⁷⁴ https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.228732760.514168680.1646989952-176134281.1646551413. Дані щодо Туреччини не оновлюються з 19.05.2022.

developed their own refugee support programs (according to the latest data 100,000⁷⁵ i 105,000⁷⁶ people correspondingly).

This month, among the positive changes for Ukrainian citizens abroad was the development of a draft resolution, according to which foreign diplomatic and consular missions of Ukraine will have the authority of the registrar of the State Register of Civil Status of Citizens. This initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will enable Ukrainian consuls abroad to issue duplicate birth certificates to former residents of the temporarily occupied territories who are outside of the country. The access to the State Register of Civil Status Acts of Citizens will be granted first of all to the Ukrainian diplomatic missions in the countries where the majority of Ukrainian citizens who left the TOT are located, namely in Georgia, Turkey, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Kazakhstan⁷⁷.

Aside from the job search and permanent residence, parents abroad are **concerned about the schoolchildren's workload**. According to the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, as of 8 November 2022, 679,298 Ukrainian children are integrated into the school systems of the European Union. It should be noted that these statistics do not include data on the number of Ukrainian students in the UK, USA, Canada and other countries⁷⁸. There are still such problems as: the need to study in two programs at once (Ukrainian and the program of the host country), the coincidence of lessons in Ukraine and abroad, the language barrier and the difficulties of adaptation in a new country.

«We were offered to graduate externally from our Ukrainian school. But I don't understand what kind of schooling it would be. What would be the quality? What would he learn on his own? I can not control this because I got the job. But my son is really tired of learning both here in Germany and in Ukraine. We hope to come back, that's why I want the child to get the corresponding documents at the end of the academic year».

From an interview with parents

At the same time, children cannot avoid attending schools abroad. In Europe, there is a mandatory requirement of schooling for every child, including Ukrainian children who moved abroad because of the war. It is also planned to monitor the implementation of this requirement. According to the new bill of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration of Poland, from April 1, 2023, the fact of school attendance will be checked by schools and local governments in Poland. The checks will take place considering that most Ukrainian children do not attend classes in Polish schools. According to the latest data, less than 50% of

⁷⁵ <https://thedispatch.com/article/the-ukrainian-surge-to-the-us>.

⁷⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/ukraine-measures/key-figures.html>.

⁷⁷ <https://minre.gov.ua/news/ukrayinski-konsuly-za-kordonom-zmozhut-vydavaty-dublikaty-svidoctv-pro-narodzhennya>

⁷⁸ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/migration-management/migration-management-welcoming-refugees-ukraine_uk

Ukrainian pupils attend secondary school in Poland. An even smaller number attend primary schools - about 8%⁷⁹.

Recommendations

- Carry on the awareness raising regarding the evacuation for families with children from the temporarily occupied territories, territories under continual shelling or those under the threat of active combat beginning. It is important to avoid criminal responsibility threatening for the actions, committed under the temporary occupation under duress (for obtaining Russian citizenship in particular).
- Inform and increase the awareness of the residents of the possible ways of leaving the occupied territories, to the territories of the Russian federation and Crimea in particular. It is important to coordinate the efforts with volunteering and public initiatives on these territories as well as with the organizations based on the territories neighboring with Russia in order to help Ukrainians leave for Europe.
- Continue the international coordination to achieve the fastest possible demilitarization of the Zaporizhzhia NPP, withdrawal of the Russian troops from the NPP premises and returning the control of the power plant to Ukraine for the safety of the whole world.
- Constantly update the residents on the necessity of the daily energy efficient measures and accommodation readiness to the possible heating and power and water supply cuts.
- Develop state programs to support Ukrainians with children coming back from Europe, which would imply compensation payments and employment or entrepreneurship perspectives.
- Think over the system of recognizing the schooling passed by children abroad after their coming back to Ukraine.
- Seek for new opportunities to employ the internally displaced people. In order to do that, it is necessary to evaluate the labor market and IDPs qualifications, intensify the retraining programs for citizens, create new workplaces and coordinate with employers in terms of IDPs employment.
- Analyze the needs of IDPs in accommodation and the availability of the municipal housing to extend the state and regional housing programs of IDPs accommodation.
- Create opportunities in the de-occupied territories to provide basic services and meet the urgent needs of the population in the shortest

⁷⁹ <https://www.ukrainianinpoland.pl/uk/why-ukrainian-children-must-go-to-school-in-poland-uk/>

possible time, as well as to facilitate the evacuation of local residents whose homes are unfit for living in winter.

- Facilitate the reconstruction of power, water and gas supply in the de-occupied territories. Guarantee the heating in the cold season, in particular, provide private sector residents with alternative fuel for heating their homes.
- Carry out the regular assessment of the population's needs for humanitarian aid.
- Send clear signals to citizens prohibiting or allowing them to come back to the de-occupied territories and territories that have been heavily shelled. Such statements should be accompanied by the information about the security and infrastructure of the specific settlements.

Children and the problem of domestic violence during the war

The problem of domestic violence⁸⁰ is one of the most relevant for Ukraine. The war only intensified and added vulnerability factors for victims of domestic violence. A significant part of families that did not have such a problem before faced violence at home due to the impact of the war on the psycho-emotional and social state of people. Within 10 months of 2022, the National Hotline for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking and Gender Discrimination received 31,800 calls. More than 90% are related to domestic violence. According to the victims, violence has become more frequent and much more brutal than before the war.⁸¹

As of the end of October, more than 120,000 domestic violence reports have been received by the National Police since the beginning of 2022.⁸² At the same time, according to the data of the National Police, in 2021, significantly more relevant appeals were officially registered for the year — 326,000.⁸³

However, this does not mean that the problem of domestic violence is decreasing. Rather, **this problem again became more concealed in the conditions of the war.** Families are focused on meeting urgent needs — finding a safe place to stay, housing, food, warm things, etc. Part of the regions is under temporary occupation and there is almost no possibility to ask for help there or even just to report the violence nearby. Another part of the victims of domestic violence believes that burdening law enforcement agencies with this problem in wartime is inappropriate or even ineffective.

"War exacerbates and makes this topic, perhaps, more invisible. People flee from war, and they carry their situations with them. And if there was domestic violence at home, for example, and the police didn't even know about it, the social service didn't know about it, but neighbors and relatives did, when the family moves to a new place, no one knows about it, and a person, in relation to which violence is

23

⁸⁰ According to the [Law](#) of Ukraine "On Prevention and Counteraction of Domestic Violence", domestic violence is defined as acts (actions or inactions) of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence committed within the family or within the limits of the place of residence or between relatives, or between former or current spouses, or between other persons who live (lived) together in the same family, but are not (were not) in a family relationship or married to each other, regardless of whether the person who committed domestic violence lives (lived) in the same place as the injured person, as well as threats to commit such acts.

⁸¹ <https://www.facebook.com/269875056422919/posts/pfbid02hxPQq9fdGL1SgeTjyw7UeEuURLyZbQVc56D2EXBXJfaqCdqN7LvePkEj4aeq3ML7/>

⁸² <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=823803175444410&set=pcb.823816622109732>

⁸³ <https://www.facebook.com/269875056422919/posts/pfbid02Bi8PHX9mDsUgvpWZQFskXhXoyadTBPkgBiwq6dP71WmqeSNBtkdxPNgdDhzbzFVTNI/>

committed, it is already confused by the war, and also this is added, and it turns out that it remains in the shadow, becomes unknown to those around it".

From an interview with a psychologist

"I have already told my friend to go to the police several times. You don't know what will happen tomorrow, and maybe her husband will just cripple her. Because there were already the attempts - and that's scary! But she is afraid that it won't help. The police are now busy with completely different issues. The city has just been liberated, the documentation of Russian crimes goes on. The police are interviewing witnesses, they also came to me, I showed the garage where people were kept. It is clear that maybe it's not timely right now, but you can try to do something, get away from him after all."

From an interview with parents

Among the main factors of vulnerability in situations of domestic violence in the conditions of war can be named:

- difficult financial situation of families, loss of main sources of income;
- problems with finding housing, lack of living space and unsatisfactory living conditions;
- living in temporarily occupied territories and active combat areas;
- forced displacement and, accordingly, loss of stable social connections, not understanding where to get help in case of need, etc.;
- movement restrictions (curfews, air alarms, etc.);
- psychological traumas due to war, PTSD;
- use of negative survival strategies by family members;
- lack of social, medical, and psychological services for victims of violence;
- injuries and mutilations that increase dependence on other family members;
- problems with electricity, which can make it difficult to call for help, etc.

24

Children suffer from domestic violence the most. Various types of violence against children include:

- psychological violence — verbal insults, threats, humiliation, harassment, intimidation, constant psychological pressure, attempts to keep in constant psychological anxiety, restrictions on contact with friends, relatives, ignoring the child's feelings, etc.;
- physical violence - slapping, kicking, pushing, pinching, whipping, biting, burns; obstruction of free movement; creating situations that pose a risk to the child's life and health; compulsion to use alcoholic or narcotic substances, etc.;
- economic violence — unsanitary living conditions; expulsion from home; child starvation due to lack of food; lack of toys, books, entertainment; lack

of necessary medical treatment; involvement of the child in work; general neglect, in particular regarding the child's clothing, hairstyle, etc.;

- sexual violence — forcing to have sex without consent, touching intimate parts of the body, rape, forcing to observe sexual intercourse between other people, video and photo shooting of a sexual nature, etc.

A child often cannot identify violence against oneself on their own. Signs of abuse can include aloofness, anxiety, fear, unbalanced behavior, learning problems, low self-esteem, tired sick appearance, aggressiveness, suicide attempts, depressive disorders, etc. The war adds to this the loss of the usual way of life, the uncertainty of the future, the traumatic experience of shelling, evacuation, displacement, etc.

"Working with children who have experienced violence is difficult. They are usually very reserved, often feeling guilty about what happened. If during the war the displacement took place together with the aggressor, then this can provoke even more violent situations and actions. Parents lose their jobs, are forced to save money, live with other relatives or even strangers. This leads to a tense and difficult atmosphere in the family, which contributes to violence against other family members."

From an interview with a psychologist

25 It is important to remember that **a victimized child is recognized not only as a victim of domestic violence, but also as a witness of such violence.** Violence against the child's mother or another family member causes no less significant damage to the psycho-emotional state of the child who sees the situation of abuse. At the same time, neither the police nor the courts pay due attention to this when recording offences and considering cases.

According to the results of the study of court cases in the report "Domestic violence in Ukraine: response in conditions of war (1st half of 2022)" from the YurFem analytical centre, in 81% of cases children did not appear either as witnesses or as victims, because there was no mention of them in the court decisions. At the same time, children were witnesses in only 5% of cases (this is noted in the court decision). Only 5% of children were recognized by the courts as victims of domestic violence. In 9%, it was not possible to find any information, as some of the cases were sent for revision, and some of the decisions were written formally without specifying the role of individuals. Consequently, despite the concept of "child witness = child victim" enshrined in the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention and Counteraction of Domestic Violence", the courts do not apply it in practice when considering reports of domestic violence. At the same time, in many analyzed cases, it was revealed that despite the situation when domestic violence was committed against one of the spouses, **information about the presence or absence of a child is very rarely noted in the protocol, in particular if they witnessed the domestic violence.** A tendency was also revealed that the courts do not indicate the age of the child in whose presence domestic violence took place. In cases where domestic violence was committed by a mother or a

father against a daughter/son, it is impossible to conclude whether it is an adult daughter/son or a minor.⁸⁴

Among the positive moments of preventing and overcoming the problem of domestic violence in Ukraine was **coming into force of the Istanbul Convention on November 1, 2022** aimed at protecting, preventing and counteracting violence against women and domestic violence. The convention helps ensure focusing on the rights and interests of victims of violence, regardless of the course of events in the state, which obliges the relevant bodies and institutions to coordinate cooperation with each other and with public organizations. It is emphasized, that not only responding to gender-based and domestic violence is important, but also carrying out preventive measures: information campaigns, training of specialists who work with victims of violence and risk groups. The state should also create specialized services for victims of such behavior. **As of January 1, 2022, there were only 46 shelters in Ukraine for people who suffered from domestic violence** or gender-based violence.⁸⁵ This is completely insufficient to adequately provide support services to more than 300,000 victims, even taking into account that not all of them need temporary accommodation due to domestic violence. In addition, the lack of social, psychological and legal services in small towns and villages is a significant problem. Also, some of the providers of such services have been damaged, destroyed or temporarily occupied, and therefore are not accessible to adults and children who suffer from domestic violence.

26

At the same time, Ukraine has been working on the development of services for victims of violence for several years in a row. Currently, there are several hotlines: the government hotline for counteracting human trafficking, preventing and counteracting domestic violence, gender-based violence and violence against children (telephone: 1547), as well as the national hotline for preventing domestic violence, human trafficking and gender discrimination (telephone: 116 123 and 0 800 500 335). Besides, there is a **National Hotline for Children and Youth** (phone: **0800 500 225** and **116 111**). You can also call or come for help to the police, centers for social and psychological assistance, centers for social services for families, children and youth, services for children, centers for free secondary legal assistance, etc. **There are also 516 mobile teams of social and psychological support for victims of violence operating in Ukraine.**⁸⁶ Public organizations and charitable foundations provide significant support to the state in the development of such services. Victims can contact them and receive free informational support, as well as the help of a psychologist, lawyer, social worker and doctor. This is especially relevant for the de-occupied territories of Ukraine, where there was no access to either law enforcement agencies or social services

⁸⁴ <https://jurfem.com.ua/domashne-nasyistvo-reahuvannya-v-umovakh-viyny/>

⁸⁵ <https://hromadske.ua/posts/u-socsluzhbi-rozpovili-hto-ta-v-yakih-regionah-najchastishe-skarzhivsyia-na-domashnye-nasilstvo-u-2021-roci>

⁸⁶ <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3621813-v-ukraini-e-516-brigad-socialnopsihologicnoi-dopomogi-zolnovic.html>

for a considerable period of time. Mobile teams of psychological assistance are currently active there. **In particular, the Voices of Children Charitable Foundation has such teams in the Kyiv, Mykolaiv and Kharkiv regions.** The issue of psychoeducation, in particular education about the signs and necessary actions in case of violent behavior among both parents and children, is extremely important for the prevention of domestic violence, especially in wartime. Direct individual and group psychological assistance is also provided to families with children. It is worth emphasizing that information and educational measures are needed for children so that they can distinguish the acts of violence against themselves and understand how to protect themselves and who to address for help in case of need.

"Where there was violence, there's a new outbreak of aggravation, where there were conflicts, it can turn into violence. Sometimes people, you know, don't pay attention to some alarms, when, for example, they start to control, forbid something - don't be friends with them, don't go there, don't do that, you did the wrong thing, and this is wrong. They think that it's just the character so difficult, but such a difficult character then turns into beatings, and people are shocked. What? How could that happen? But this is already a misunderstanding of what is acceptable and what is not; what can be allowed in a relationship, what can threaten you and your child in the future. It is necessary to know, understand and use it."

27

From an interview with a psychologist

In addition, the Istanbul Convention obliges to create a legal framework for counteracting various acts of violence, which are currently not criminalized in Ukraine:

- persecution (intentional behavior of repeatedly engaging in threatening behavior directed at another person that causes him or her to fear for his or her safety);
- sexual harassment (any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature, the purpose or effect of which is to violate the dignity of a person);
- female genital mutilation (removal, infibulation or any other mutilation in whole or in part of the labia majora, labia minora or clitoris).

Persecution became especially relevant in the conditions of the war. Many families were forced to part with the start of hostilities. Mothers with children moved to safer regions in the West of Ukraine or abroad. At the same time, abusive relationships (most often with men) continued at a distance with the help of phones and messengers. In such situations, women and children also do not feel safe, receiving threats, intimidation and humiliation, despite the physical distance.

"I observe that the acts of the psychological form of violence have increased. Domestic violence now takes place through means of communication. Phone, social networks, messengers. Total control takes place with the help of communication - where she went, with whom she went, what they went for, constant reporting to the husband, who remained in Kharkiv, while the woman went to Volyn with her children. And so, while I was counselling her, the man called twice, checking on her."

*From an interview with a representative
of a non-governmental organization*

At the same time, **separation and displacement during the war** also revealed their advantages in the issue of counteracting domestic violence. Thus, **families were given the opportunity to end abusive relationships**, live at a distance from the aggressor, and understand how to go on. Even the awareness of the possibility of living outside the situation of violence prompted some women to file for divorce, defend their own boundaries and guarantee the safety of their children.

"Before a full-scale war, you know, what I will live for, and where I will live, and how the children will go to school, kindergarten, and what about work? And there is a war, and there is no home, no work, nothing, what keeps you here? A husband? A codependent relationship? I personally already have 17 women who went abroad, broke up their relationship, and already while abroad, thanks to my consultations, I can safely say this, they learned that the diplomatic mission of our country abroad, according to the consular statute, has the right to issue power of attorney. That is, in France, she issues a power of attorney for her sister here in Ukraine, her sister files an application for divorce and alimony in court."

*From an interview with a representative
of a non-governmental organization*

Also, an important change with the adoption of the Istanbul Convention was that **committing domestic violence against a child or in the presence of a child can be considered as one of the grounds for the deprivation of parental rights**.

"I think this norm is one of the main ones. Parents may often think that it is okay to fight or threaten or humiliate each other when there is a child at home. You don't beat the child, you feed him/her, you buy everything you need. But with domestic violence, as now with the war, children see, hear and understand everything. On playgrounds, all games are now about HIMARS and cotton. Children know who Putin and Shoigu are, what trenches and howitzers are. The same with violence. The child understands that the mother is treated badly, that she cannot protect herself, feels her fear and is afraid. This is not the best environment to raise a mentally healthy child, and it must be stopped as soon as possible."

From an interview with a psychologist

Recommendations

- Conduct informational and educational campaigns on identifying signs of violence and necessary actions to prevent and protect against violent behavior both among adults and among children.
- Create a sufficient number of specialized services for victims of domestic violence throughout Ukraine.
- At all stages of recording, investigating and considering a case of domestic violence, indicate information about the presence or absence of children, as well as record the age of the victimized child.
- Contribute to forming the trust in law enforcement agencies for the timely appeal of victims of domestic violence.
- Align the national legal framework with the Istanbul Convention.
- Support social research on all forms of domestic violence to study its main causes and consequences, the number of cases and the effectiveness of measures implemented within the limits of its prevention and reduction.
- It is necessary to intensify the state's efforts to create state/communal psychological support services for children and families affected by the war in Ukraine.

The Voices of Children Charitable Foundation
The Kharkiv Institute of Social Research NGO

Authors of this report:

Svitlana Shcherban

Olena Rozvadovska

Andriy Chernousov

Anna Levkina

Roman Sheyko

30

More information at www.voices.org.ua and www.khisr.kharkov.ua