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Türk calls on Russia to silence the guns in appeal for 'a just peace'

[UN](#) (19.12.2023) - Since the onset of the invasion the UN human rights office ([OHCHR](#)) has meticulously monitored the situation. As of December 4, there have been over 10,000 civilian deaths, including 560 children, with an additional 18,500 civilians confirmed injured, with actual figures believed to be much higher due to the difficulties of verifying figures.

"I feel for the Ukrainians, who have a right to peace, and who deserve peace, in line with the [UN Charter](#) and international law. Instead, I fear that protracted and entrenched conflict will impact lives and human rights **for generations to come**," warned the High Commissioner.

The Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) has diligently documented the crisis using a methodology developed over decades. Mr. Türk highlighted [the findings](#), revealing gross violations of international human rights and serious breaches of international humanitarian law, primarily by Russian forces.

Report's findings

Between 1 August and 30 November, 2,440 civilian deaths and injuries were documented.

The data showed a 25 per cent decrease compared to the previous four months and a 46 per cent compared with the same period in 2022, attributed to factors such as frontline stabilization, civilian evacuations, and strengthened air defense systems.

Most of those killed were in the areas of Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia near the frontlines, with a disproportionate number of older people among the casualties, as they were unwilling or unable to relocate.

The majority of civilian casualties, 86 per cent, occurred in territory controlled by Ukraine, while the remaining 14 per cent – areas under Russian control.

Missile threat

However, being away from the frontline is no guarantee of safety, with missile attacks launched by the Russian armed forces regularly launched against targets in densely populated residential areas. Attacks on Kyiv in the past few days wounded over 50 people and damaged numerous buildings.

“People across the country do not feel safe,” Mr. Türk said, adding that attacks have also targeted grain storage and transport facilities that constitute protected civilian objects under international humanitarian law.

Over 1,300 education and health facilities have been damaged or destroyed since February 2022, with more than 100 incidents reported in the last four months. Mines and explosive materials continue to threaten lives.

Human rights violations

In Russian-occupied territories, documented patterns of arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, and widespread abuse by Russian armed forces continue to be reported. Despite lacking access to Russian detention centers, OHCHR highlighted at least 100 civilian deaths resulting from arbitrary detention, incommunicado detention, and enforced disappearance.

The report mentions thorough examination of six new cases of Russian soldiers killing civilians in occupied territory.

“The Russian authorities announced the arrest of two Russian soldiers in connection with the killing of a family of nine, including two children, in Volnovakha, in Donetsk oblast. There are also indications that an investigation has been opened into a second case that we have verified, in which a couple was killed in Maly Kopani, Kherson oblast,” Mr. Türk said.

He also reminded that under international law the occupying power must maintain the status quo, to the extent possible, and criticized Russian attempts to impose its own laws and practices in violation of international law – even conscripting Ukrainian men to serve in the Russian military.

Call on Ukrainians

On the Ukrainian side, Mr. Türk urged authorities to narrow the definition of “collaboration” in prosecutions, expressing concern over convictions related to what are lawful activities.

As of 30 November, some 8,600 criminal charges have been filed by authorities in Kyiv in relation to alleged collaboration, with courts ordering, in most cases, that the accused remain in custody pending trial.

Many have been convicted for conduct that could be lawful – including, for example, working to ensure the continued functioning of social services and schools in occupied areas.

The High Commissioner also noted concerns regarding freedom of religion and belief in Ukraine, given continuing action by Kyiv against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. A draft law under consideration, he added, could lead to the dissolution of any religious organization with ties to Russia, which is not in compliance with international human rights law.

Respect human rights

Mr. Türk appealed to all States to push for immediate and decisive measures by both parties, particularly the Russian Federation, to comply with international human rights and humanitarian law.

He called for an end to the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, timely investigations into allegations of violations, and the need for accountability for perpetrators.

Mr. Türk called on Russia to allow access by independent monitors to places of detention and an end to conscription of civilians.

He urged Ukraine to align all laws with international standards, protect freedom of religion, and swiftly adopt a national strategy for the protection of civilians.

“Ultimately, there is only one solution to this tragic and far-reaching conflict: a just peace,” the rights chief said.

Citing General Assembly Resolution [ES-11/1](#) and the [binding order](#) by the [International Court of Justice](#), he called on Russia to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine.

First Christmas for a family reunited with their child deported to Russia



Artem repatriated from inside Russia by his mother (Source: [LCI](#))

[LCI](#)/ HRWF (25.12.2023) - For several months, Natalia had only one wish: to find her son Artem. The 16-year-old had been abducted by Russian forces in September 2022 in eastern Ukraine. The teenager was finally able to return home, thanks to his mother's determination.

The family's ordeal began on the day Artem was abducted. The boy was loaded into a lorry with 30 other pupils from his school. They were taken to a boarding school 200 km from Lugansk, a town under Russian occupation. "They told me that if my parents didn't come back for us, we would have Russian identity papers", Roman, a friend of Artem's who had also been deported, told LCI.

"I just wanted to walk to pick him up"

The local authorities then explained to Artem that, if no one came to fetch him within three months, he would be adopted by a family in Russia, in Rostov-on-Don, a town on the Sea of Azov, some 60 kilometres from the Ukrainian border. When she realised that her son was being deported, Natalia was distraught. "You sit down and think: I've only got one child. I just wanted to walk to pick him up", she told LCI.

After several months, the young boy managed to contact his mother and tell her where he was. Through an association, Natalia travelled to Belarus, then to Moscow, where she took a taxi to the boarding school where her son was being held. It was the end of a long ordeal for her son: "When I saw him, I knew I was going back to my country", explained the teenager. "I only have one word for it: happiness", says Natalia, who celebrated her first Christmas with her family since being reunited with her son.

"The Russian soldiers came back to take me with them": deported Ukrainian children testify

Kiev has often accused Moscow of deporting "tens of thousands" of "kidnapped" Ukrainian children from the occupied territories. According to the wife of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Olena Zelenska, more than 19,000 of them were transferred or taken by force to occupied regions. Only 386 have been brought back to Ukraine, she said in September.

The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin for the "illegal deportation" of thousands of Ukrainian children since February 2022.

[See here HRWF report on the deportation of Ukrainian children by and to Russia](#) (8 pages) which was submitted to the UN Committee on the rights of the child which will meet in January 2024 in Geneva to review Russia's compliance or not with international conventions.

A teenager deported from Mariupol to Russia back home testifies

"Every child feels abandoned", says upon return a Ukrainian teen forcibly transferred to Russia

By Maryana Sych



Bohdan Yermokhin spent about 1 1/2 years in foster care against his will in Russia before his release was secured on his 18th birthday following Ukrainian and international intervention (Photo: RFE/RL)

[RFE/ RL](#) (17.12.2023) - A Ukrainian teenager who was forcibly removed from his homeland by invading Russian forces and sent to Moscow in 2022 had his birthday wish granted last month when he was returned to Ukraine and reunited with family.

Bohdan Yermokhin grew up as an orphan in Mariupol, a city in Ukraine's Donetsk region that became the target of a brutal siege in the early weeks of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. As Russian forces took control of the city, Yermokhin became one of more than 20,000 children Ukraine says have been illegally transferred to Russia since the war began.

He spent about 1 1/2 years in foster care against his will in Russia before his release was secured on November 19, the day he turned 18, following Ukrainian and international intervention.

Testimony

From his new home in the Ukrainian capital, [he spoke this month to Maryana Sych of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service](#) about being sent away from his hometown along with 31 other Ukrainian children. He talks about efforts by Moscow to indoctrinate him, to draft him into the Russian military to fight against his native country, and of his desire to escape Russia.

HRWF Database of news about the deportation of Ukrainian children by/to Russia

[RUSSIA/ UKRAINE: Ukrainian children un search of a way home from Russia/ HRWF Report submitted to the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child \(15 December 2023\) - See UN Website: \[bit.ly/3Rz46iu\]\(https://bit.ly/3Rz46iu\)](#)

17 December 2023

[Today we have good news. Three children have been returned home Ukrainian teen forcibly transferred to Russia says upon return that 'Every child feels abandoned'](#)

8 December 2023

[Zelensky at the meeting of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children Dozens of countries have taken up the return of Ukrainian children from the Russian Federation](#)
[Ukraine's human rights envoy calls for a faster way to bring back children deported by Russia](#)
[Conference "Joint Steps to Bring Kids Back UA" \(Speech of Dunja Mijatovic\)](#)

7 December 2023

[Ukraine has already returned 522 deported children in total -Lubynets](#)
["Every child feels abandoned." Exclusive interview with Bogdan Yermokhin, returned from Russia](#)

5 December

[The State of Qatar Facilitates Ongoing Successful Efforts to Reunify Ukrainian Children with their Families](#)
[Qatar announces return of six Ukrainian children from Russia](#)

19 November 2023

["Glory to Ukraine!" – the first words of Bogdan Yermokhin, deported from Mariupol to the Russian Federation, on Ukrainian land](#)

17 October 2023

[3 Ukraine children to be released from Russia after Qatar mediation](#)

16 October 2023

[Ukrainian children repatriated from Russia through Qatari mediation](#)

1 September 2023

[11 children who were kept by Russians in the occupied part of Kherson region were returned to Ukraine](#)

24 August 2023

[Deportation, Treatment of Ukraine's Children by Russian Federation Take Centre Stage by Many Delegates at Security Council Briefing](#)

[Imposing Sanctions and Visa Restrictions on Individuals and Entities Russia to Promote Accountability for Forced Transfer and Deportation of Children During Russia's Illegal War Against Ukraine](#)

21 July 2023

[Stolen generation. Russia systematically abducts children from Ukraine gives them to Russian families](#)

8 May 2023

[Andriy Yermak in meetings to discuss return of Ukrainian children illegally deported by Russia](#)

OP ED: EU Unity and Defending Freedom in Ukraine

By Aaron Rhodes

HRWF (26.12.2023) - On Europe's eastern flank, Ukrainian soldiers battle human-wave Russian assaults and trench rats, while civilians die in terror missile attacks aimed at undermining the country's resolve to remain sovereign and free. Vladimir Putin's overt threats against European Union members have intensified. But at their summit meeting, European Union leaders failed to agree on an aid package for their embattled neighbor. What the EU managed to offer, by persuading Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to miss the vote, was agreement to open negotiations for Ukraine's possible EU accession. But especially with American moral and military support faltering, the decision is a powerful symbol for Ukrainians, emblematic of what they want for their politics.

Most European citizens and their leaders seem to recognize the moral and political imperative of supporting Ukraine. An Irish "workaround" proposal for EU members to put up funds individually, outside the common EU mechanism, was reasonable, and would have brought the matter closer to the will of voters and tax-payers, as an expression of national and traditional values. But in the EU, no consensus obtains to act without

consensus. Legally mandated European political unity is hobbling action urgently needed to protect the peoples of the continent from Russian aggression; the ideal of unity trumps all other concerns. Member governments must act together, or not at all.

Americans are in no position to smirk about the derailment of Europe's Ukraine funding. Europe must cope with Orban's obstruction, evidently driven by a calculus that Russia and China own the future, as well as growing illiberal sentiment in a number of member states. American opposition rests on a broad and differentiated base of ignorance-based appeasement, delusions about how Putin's Russia promotes Christian and traditional anti-woke values, and knee-jerk Democratic Party partisanship preventing compromise on border protection.

Europe's problem, aside from limp defenses, is reflected in its institutionalized and bureaucratized universalism, which obscures the principles of liberty under a thick blanket of rational-legal proceduralism. The confederal structure resembles the over-extended Holy Roman Empire, while incessant, expensive and ineffective confabs of leaders mirror the aristocratic pretensions of the Congress of Vienna, upon which most modern intergovernmental institutions are modeled. In this worldview, universal values are embodied in, and cannot be acted upon without universal support. The processes of intergovernmental cooperation, replete with "high-level" officials, inter-agency structures, committees, etc., are what dominate media reports and political consciousness, not the substance of political questions. Outreach from the free and democratic states of Europe to Ukraine, a society existentially fighting for its survival, thus takes the form of opening bureaucratic accession negotiations, in which only a hollowed out shadow of the ideal of liberty is perceptible.

The opening of EU accession talks was hailed as a "historic moment" and a "signal of hope" by top European officials. While the summit results revealed the weaknesses of the EU's multilateralism, their significance to Ukrainians is profound. Accession talks symbolize the incarnation of a dream of European identity that animated Ukraine's human rights movement during Soviet times. Then, the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Group, while stressing Ukrainian national rights, professed a desire to be part of a Europe where both Ukrainian identity and individual human rights protections could coexist. Their credo was "peace and prosperity in Europe." They reviled the Soviet Union not only for punishing what communist authorities called their "bourgeois nationalism," but also for its stifling bureaucracy. The Helsinki Commission of the U.S. Congress considered the Ukrainian Human Rights Group "the most repressed, in terms of prison sentences, of the Soviet Helsinki Groups." All but one of its 83 members were jailed by the Soviet regime.

In the post-Soviet period, aspirations for basic rights and freedoms continued to attach themselves to calls for EU membership, and continued to result in murderous assaults by Russian or pro-Russian forces. Well over 100 pro-EU citizens, as well as numerous police officers, were shot dead by snipers in the 2014 Euro-Maidan demonstrations, and since then, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians have been killed and maimed on behalf of principles of which, in their view, the EU is the arbiter. In the accession process, Hungary or any other European state can hold up the accession process, since each step requires unanimity. Promoting democratic principles, and the freedom and safety of a European neighbor, may demand more flexibility than the increasingly bureaucratic EU superstate can muster.

Aaron Rhodes was Executive Director of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (1993-2007), and is President of the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe. He is the author of The Debasement of Human Rights (Encounter Books 2018).

Qatar gets the repatriation of Ukrainian children illegally deported by Russia

By Dr Ievgeniia Gidulianova and Willy Fautré

HRWF (19.12.2023) – In two months, Qatar has managed to organize three successful rescue operations of Ukrainian children deported or forcefully kept away by Russia from their families in Ukraine.

Two days ago, on 16 December 2023, [three young Ukrainians](#) could be sent back home from Russia, through the mediation of Qatar. This happened within the framework of the action plan of the President of Ukraine “[Bring Kids Back UA](#)”. Two Ukrainian teenagers, a 15-year-old boy and a 12-year-old girl, could be taken out of the territories occupied by Russia and reunited with their mother. Another one was taken out of Russia through Georgia. This was [reported](#) on Telegram by Dmytro Lubinets, the Verkhovna Rada Commissioner for Human Rights, who at the same time recalled that any information related to the deportation of children could be shared with him through various channels: hotline 0 800 50 17 20 - within Ukraine, 044 299 74 08 - for calls from abroad, e-mail: hotline@ombudsman.gov.ua.

On 6 December 2023, thanks to the mediation of Qatar, [six Ukrainian children from 8 to 15 years deported by Russia](#) were returned to Ukraine and reunited with their families. Qatari diplomats accompanied the children from their embassy in Moscow to the Ukrainian border, where they were met by representatives of the Ukrainian authorities. This was the second successful rescue operation organized by Qatar.

On 16 October 2023, Qatar announced that [four children from the age of two to the age of 17 years](#) had been reunited with their families in Ukraine. The two-year old child had been deported from the region of Zhytomyr at the age of six months. Qatar’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs facilitated the accommodation of the children and their families in their embassy in Moscow during the operation. Their staff accompanied them to their destination, ensuring their safety, comfort and well-being. [The trip was organized with several modes of transport](#), including a diplomatic convoy, a train, and a private charter plane through Qatar.

It is during a [visit](#) to Ukraine in July 2023 by Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani that Qatar agreed to a Ukrainian request to mediate with Russia on the return of children to their immediate families.

About the magnitude of the deportation of Ukrainian children

Since the beginning of the full-scale military invasion of the Ukraine, the Russian Federation has been carrying out forced mass displacement and deportation of Ukrainian children who, under various circumstances, were separated from both parents, other relatives or legal representatives, without providing the opportunity to return to the territory of permanent residence or reunite with family members.

The exact number of deported children cannot be established due to the ongoing full-scale aggression, difficult access to the temporarily exact number of deported children, it is impossible to establish the occupied territories, and the failure of the Russian side to provide reliable information.

According to the Russian Federation Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, [Russia has "accepted" about 4.8 million Ukrainian residents on its territory](#) since the start of the "Special Military Operation" (full-scale invasion war on Ukraine) and more than [700,000](#) are children. The Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Rights of the Child Daria Herasymchuk said that this figure is purposefully overstated by Russia which describes the operation as "evacuation and rescue of children" behind which the reality is the illegal forceful displacement of hundreds of thousands of children from the occupied territories.

So far, Ukraine has collected personal data on only [19,546 deported children](#). **These are only children whose data – names, circumstances of deportation – have been established, so this figure does not fully reflect the real scale of deportation. Their number continues to grow.**

These children have become hostages of the war as they are under the rule of the enemy, who is constantly trying to Russify them.

On 1 September 2023, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Dmytro Lubinets, said that there is currently confirmation of the [adoption of 386 Ukrainian children](#) who were deported by the Russian Federation to its territories.

On 17 March 2023, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court in The Hague [issued arrest warrants for](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population and unlawful transfer of population from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, in prejudice of [Ukrainian children](#).

Qatar was the first international partner to return Ukrainian children

At the beginning of autumn 2023, Ukraine launched the implementation of the Project [«Bring Kids Back UA»](#), which is a comprehensive action plan that unites the efforts of all Ukrainian authorities, other states, international and non-governmental organizations for the return to their homeland of all Ukrainian children who were illegally deported by Russia.

As [noted by](#) Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets, during the full-scale war, Ukraine received many proposals from our international partners regarding the repatriation of Ukrainian children but the first country to be successful was Qatar.

According to him, this issue was debated at the forum in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) in early August 2023. The Qatari authorities managed to persuade the Kremlin to return Ukrainian children, without putting forward any conditions that would relate to the national interests of Ukraine.

Commenting on the cooperation with Ukraine about the return of Ukrainian children abducted by Russia, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani [said](#): "Qatar mediates in various conflicts that are taking place not only in this region, but even beyond that. This is the basis of our country's foreign policy and that's the main element we're concentrating on. We see this as the contribution of a small country to international peace and security."

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: Do not forget the thousands of Ukrainian children kidnapped and deported by Russia

Ukrainian families are desperately waiting for reunification.

Human Rights Without Frontiers: Press Release (8 December 2023)

On UN Human Rights Day, 10 December, thousands of Ukrainian children kidnapped and deported by Russia, whose parents are desperately searching for a way to get them home should not be forgotten by the international community, said the Brussels-based NGO, Human Rights Without Frontiers, in a press release issued today.

On 6 December, President Zelensky announced in his daily address that 6 children deported to Russia from Ukraine's Occupied Territories had been released with the [mediation of Qatar](#).

All in all, less than 400 Ukrainian minors have been rescued in various separate and individually designed special operations, according to [The platform "Children of War"](#) created on behalf of the Office of the President of Ukraine by various official Ukrainian institutions.

The same platform has posted the pictures, names and dates of birth with the place of disappearance of [19,546 deported children](#) and their number continues to grow.

Statistics: 20,000? 300,000? 700,000?

It is impossible to establish the exact number of deported children given the ongoing full-scale aggression, difficult access to the temporarily occupied territories and the failure of the Russian side to provide reliable information on this matter.

Daria Herasymchuk, Adviser to the President of Ukraine on Children's Rights and Children's Rehabilitation, [notes](#) that the aggressor country, Russia, could have illegally deported up to **300,000** children from Ukraine during the war.

As of June 2023, the Interdepartmental Coordination Headquarters of the Russian Federation for Humanitarian Response indicated in its [statement](#) that since 24 February 2022, **307,423** children have been taken from Ukraine to the territory of Russia.

Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova [said](#) that the number of such Ukrainian children is **more than 700,000**.

Russia cynically calls the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children an "evacuation," but the UN panel of inquiry concluded that none of the cases it examined was justified on safety or health grounds, nor did they meet the requirements of international humanitarian law."

Russian authorities are creating obstacles to prevent Ukrainian children from being reunited with their families.

In its report on the issue, the OSCE [notes](#) that the Russian authorities began working on the "transfer" of Ukrainian children for adoption or care by Russian families since 2014, after the occupation of Crimea.

According to the Russian program "[Train of Hope](#)", anyone from any part of the country could adopt Ukrainian children from Crimea, who were then granted Russian citizenship. At the end of September 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin [signed a decree](#) on the "accession" to the Russian Federation of the partially occupied regions of Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, Donetsk and the occupied region of Luhansk in Ukraine. After that, children from these newly occupied regions also began to be enrolled as citizens of the Russian Federation and forcefully adopted.

On 17 March 2023, the [International Criminal Court](#) issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for the war crime of unlawful deportation of population and unlawful transfer of population from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, in prejudice of Ukrainian children.

Recommendations

Human Rights Without Frontiers supports the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General, who urges

- Russia to ensure that no changes are made to the personal status of Ukrainian children, including their citizenship;
- all parties to continue to ensure that the best interests of all children are respected, including by facilitating family tracing and reunification of unaccompanied and/or separated children who find themselves outside borders or control lines without their families or guardians;
- parties to the conflict to grant child protection authorities access to these children to facilitate family reunification;
- his Special Representative on "Children and Armed Conflicts", together with United Nations agencies and partners, to consider ways to facilitate such processes.

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HOLODOMOR, Stalin's artificial famine in Ukraine was a genocide

28 countries, the Baltic Assembly, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recognized Holodomor as a genocide. Putin's Russia denies.



Memorial "Candle of Memory" to the National Museum "Memorial to the Victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine". Photo <http://vkieve.net>

By Dr Ievgeniia Gidulianova for Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (27.11.2023) – On 25 November, Ukraine celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor to commemorate those dark times in the early 1930s and our mourning for all the innocent victims of those times.

It was only at the beginning of the perestroika in 1985 that the authorities loosened the reins of censorship and the topic of the Holodomor of 1932-33 began to appear at the highest party level.

The Ukrainian diaspora in Canada and the United States organized an information campaign aimed at recognizing the Holodomor of 1932-33 as an act of genocide. In December 1985, the U.S. Congress created a commission to investigate this crime. The commission included six congressmen and six representatives of Ukrainian NGOs. The head of the commission was James Mace, an American researcher on the history of Ukraine.

During the four years of the commission's work, documents and testimonies of about 200 witnesses were collected. In 1988, the commission published a report [concluding](#) that the Holodomor of 1932-33 in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic was an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people.

Since mid-1988, the topic of the Holodomor in its scale and resonance has been on a par with Stalin's repressions and the Chernobyl disaster. For example, translations of chapters of the book "Harvest of Sorrow" were published and the weekly "Ukraine" accepted a column titled "Along the Paths of Pain and Torment" echoing testimonies about the tragedy.

In the same 1988 year, the newspaper "**Silski Visti**" made the first attempt in Ukraine to collect eyewitnesses' memories of the Holodomor. In response to the call, the organizers received six thousand letters, one thousand of which were included in the collection "**33: Famine. People's Book-Memorial**".

After the proclamation of its independence, Ukraine was given the opportunity to conduct a thorough investigation of the Holodomor.

According to the Law of Ukraine, the Holodomor of 1932-1933 was officially recognized as a crime of genocide of the Ukrainian people.

On 22 November 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine issued a Statement in connection with the 90th anniversary of the Holodomor of 1932-33.

This statement draws the attention of parliaments and governments of the world, international organizations, and the international community to the crime of genocide of the Ukrainian people.

The Verkhovna Rada expressed deep gratitude to foreign states and international organizations that recognized the Holodomor in Ukraine as an act of genocide (a total of 28 states, as well as the Baltic Assembly, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe).

The statement states that Ukraine recognizes the large-scale Russian armed aggression against Ukraine as a continuation of Russia's genocidal imperial policy, the purpose of which is to punish Ukrainians for their desire to build a modern successful democratic state and to be part of the European Union.

Russia, the legal successor of the former USSR, does not even recognize the fact of the Holodomor, as well as it does not recognize the war crimes in Bucha and other territories of Ukraine.

Once again, unpunished genocidal evil is returning to Ukraine.

HOLODOMOR, Stalin's artificial famine in Ukraine 90 years ago today

Millions of Ukrainians died



By Dr Ievgeniia Gidulianova for *Human Rights Without Frontiers*



HRWF (25.11.2023) - In Ukraine, it is not customary to throw away bread. Never.

"Bread is the head of everything" is one of the main Ukrainian proverbs.

And this is not only in gratitude to the fertile plant, which is supposedly born to give the best harvests. This is also a tribute to the difficult times that Ukraine was forced to go through.

This testament is passed down from generation to generation, because the grief through which Ukrainians have been preserved in them almost at the genetic level. The memory of the famine was preserved in the families of those who were able to survive it.

This year, on November 25, Ukraine celebrates Holodomor Remembrance Day. It is a day to commemorate those dark times and the 90th anniversary of our mourning for all the innocent victims of those times.

Available data on the number of victims of the Holodomor give us figures of at least 4.6 million dead. Some researchers point to much higher figures – up to 10.5 million.

This is another sorrowful page of Ukrainian history, when millions of human lives were lost for their struggle on the way to independence and self-reliance.

After the overthrow of the Ukrainian People's Republic in November 1920, the Bolshevik regime began active actions on its territory to prevent the restoration of an

independent Ukrainian state through a brutal repressive policy aimed at establishing a communist system and suppressing any parties and movements that defended the idea of Ukrainian independence.

Stalin Y.V., Molotov V.V., Kaganovich L.M., Postyshev P.P., Kosior S.V., Chubar V.Y. and Khatayevich M.M. used the repressive apparatus of the communist totalitarian regime on the territory of Ukraine in peacetime. A complete forced collectivization of agriculture and the deportation of Ukrainian peasant families, illegal confiscation of their property, repression and physical destruction of Ukrainians were initiated.

All this destroyed the traditional forms of agricultural production and deprived the Ukrainian peasants of the grain reserves necessary for normal life, which caused famine among the Ukrainian population in 1928-1929, after which mass anti-Soviet uprisings began on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR, which were suppressed with particular cruelty by punitive measures.

In order to suppress the resistance of the Ukrainian people in 1932-1933 in Ukraine, the communist totalitarian regime of the USSR planned and implemented the crime of exterminating millions of Ukrainians by creating an artificial famine. To denote this tragedy, Ukrainians use the word "Holodomor", which comes from the Ukrainian words "famine" and "pestilence". It was the premeditated murder of millions of Ukrainians in order to destroy the social foundations of the Ukrainian people, its age-old traditions, spiritual culture and ethnic identity.

The regime managed to hide its crime behind a wall of propaganda and lies within the USSR and abroad.



"Dead of starvation and people dying near the fence of the Ozeryanskaya Church in Kharkiv."

Photo from 1933 by Austrian chemical engineer Alexander Wienerberger.

In 1932-33 there was neither a significant drought nor other weather conditions that could lead to crop failure and eventually to mass starvation. Historian Viktor Brekhunenko

wrote in his book "[Myths about the Holodomor](#)" that the harvest of 1932 was smaller than the harvest of 1931 (12.8 million tons versus 17.7 million tons). The reason for the decrease in the harvest was the state policy on collectivization but even such a harvest was enough to feed people.

However, famine occurred in Ukraine and in those regions of the USSR where Ukrainians constituted the majority of the population: the Kuban (more than 50% of the population was Ukrainians, according to the 1926 census), some regions of the North Caucasus and the Middle and Lower Volga regions. During these times, there was no famine or crop failure in Ukraine's neighboring territories, such as Poland and Belarus. But it was impossible for Ukrainians dying of hunger to get there, as the USSR [closed](#) the borders to Ukrainian peasants.



Victims of famine. Kharkiv region, 1933. Photo courtesy of Alexander Wienerberge

As a first step, the Communist leaders planned unrealistic grain procurement figures, as they planned to take 53% from the 1932 harvest, although in 1931 this figure was 39%. And this was in conditions when it was quite clear that such actions would cause hunger.

The unrealistic grain procurement plan of 1932 was not fulfilled. Consequently, on 1 December 1932, it was [decided](#) to seize grain and other products from the peasants. Later, in January 1933, in order to implement the plan, the Kyiv Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine demanded "all available grain, including the so-called seed funds," that is, the grain that should be sown in the spring.

Peasants stopped paying "workdays", a payment in kind in the form of farm products for work on the collective farm. As a result, all the food was taken away from the peasants. At the same time, Stalin [considered](#) the impossibility of reaching the grain norm to be a "war against Soviet power" and the peasants were persecuted as enemies of the state.

From January-February 1932, grain began to be taken away in Ukraine and, accordingly, entire villages began to starve.*

On 15 January 1932, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine adopted a resolution titled "The Question of Grain Procurement", according to

which control over the activities of the regional leadership during the seizure of grain was strengthened.

Methods of grain requisition became more and more cruel. Collective farms, which were thus left without grain, were officially denied seed assistance. At the same time, a method of repression called "Black Boards" was actively used. Some villages (collective farms) for non-fulfillment of plans for the transfer of grain to the state ended up on the "black board" (they were published in newspapers and documents).

At that time, they stopped importing food and goods and the existing goods were exported. The exits from the villages were guarded by domestic troops, not letting the inhabitants out and hereby condemning them to starvation. At the same time, the search for enemies of the authorities continued. The repression was harsh. People were expelled from their homes, all their property was taken away and they were sent into exile or shot.

Analysis of 20,000 cases, conducted by N.A. Ivnitsky in his work "[The Repressive Policy of the Soviet Government in the Countryside \(1928-1933\)](#)" (The University of Toronto (Canada) shows that 83 percent of the prisoners were people from collective farms and individual peasants, and only 15 percent were "kulak-wealthy elements."

Places of mass starvation were guarded by military border guards. It was impossible to buy railway tickets and people were not allowed into the cities.

On 29 March 1932, the decree "On Polissya" increased repression of peasants in the Ukrainian SSR. A first group of 5000 families from the districts of Polissya were deported to especially created settlements for the development of stone and clay quarries. In addition, the deportation of another 5,000 families from Ukraine was also decided and implemented.

On 7 August 1932, Stalin and Kaganovich organized the adoption by the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of the resolution "On the Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms, and Cooperatives and the Strengthening of Public (Socialist) Property," which introduced executions, confiscation of property, and prohibited the use of amnesty.

This law was popularly called the "[Law of Five Ears of Grain](#)". It even covered cases when starving peasants tried to collect grains in the field that were accidentally left after harvesting. Even children were punished. As early as 14 September, the People's Commissariat of Justice of the Ukrainian SSR testified about 250 death sentences in a memorandum.

On 25 October, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U adopted the Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U "On the Need to Overcome the Country's Lag in the Fulfillment of the Grain Requisition Plan."

It ordered the party organizations to achieve an immediate change in grain procurements and operational management of grain procurements, to organize a "struggle for bread", to make November and the last days of October decisive for the implementation of the grain requisition plan, to implement the annual plan ten times faster by the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution.

It advised "ruthlessly suppressing all attempts of the class enemy and its agents aimed at disrupting grain procurements." As early as November 1932, the Molotov Commission introduced a system of special brigades for grain requisition.

The tragedy of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine was officially denied by the Soviet authorities for many decades, and those who raised this issue were severely punished.

(*) At the same time, it should be noted that while Ukrainian peasants were starving, as of May 1933, 2.7 million tons of grain from the 1932 harvest had [been exported](#) through seaports. As a result, Ukraine fulfilled the plan for the supply of grain for export by 97%.

A pro-Russian propaganda school in occupied Ukraine

Mediatopol in south-east Ukraine : officially a journalism school, in reality a propaganda school in the service of the Kremlin

[RSF](#) (22.09.2023) - One year after the pseudo-annexation referendums organised by Russia in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, a movement backed by the occupation authorities is launching a crash course in "journalism". Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounces these insidious methods of teaching propaganda in Ukrainian territory.

With support from the Russian occupation forces, a group of enthusiastic young Ukrainians who like using English terms has been participating in a [course](#) in "journalism trades" at the Mediatopol centre in Melitopol, in the southeastern Zaporizhzhia region, since 4 September. The teenage participants in this first crash course, which is due to finish on 29 September, are supposed to learn how to take photos, to film, to organise a shoot and to edit video in the space of a few weeks. The school says it plans to organise four such courses, with 25 young people on each course. The goal is to prepare a total of 100 young people to work in the new propaganda media in the illegally annexed territories by the end of the year.

"Lacking journalists willing to collaborate, the new Kremlin-controlled propaganda organs are trying to recruit their future 'information soldiers' among the local youth. We denounce the use of such methods, which aim to integrate Ukrainian territories by means of a media landscape controlled by the occupation authorities."

Jeanne Cavelier, Head of RSF's Eastern Europe and Central Asia desk

Founded in November 2022, Mediatopol is officially headed by Aleksandr Gurov, a 20-year-old Ukrainian who is backed by the occupation authorities, and by Youg Molodoi ("Southern Youth"), an organisation of volunteers that organises pro-Russian events and demonstrations with young people.

A particularly active advocate of the Russian vision, Gurov was one of the winners of a competition organised this year by the Russian Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh) to reward projects created by young people in Zaporizhzhia.

In a video, Mediatopol says the school consists of a team of around 20 volunteers. No prerequisites are mentioned in the simple online form on Yandex, the Russian search engine, that enables young people to register for the Mediatopol course, which was widely advertised in propaganda media such as the Zaporizhzhia News Feed and Zaporizhzhia Press Agency.

Lacking qualified personnel, local propaganda media outlets are desperately seeking to recruit in order to be able to broadcast content more tailored to their audience than Russian national TV content, while providing a positive vision of Russia as a way to

integrate the Ukrainian population. This course is a new stone in the Russian propaganda edifice, which already has an extensive network.

Last April, RSF published a report about Alexander Malkevich, a Kremlin ally running a [propaganda factory network](#) in the occupied territories. Alexander Malkevich has displayed support for the Young Molodoi movement by participating in their events, including one in August, a forum in Berdiansk, in the Zaporizhzhia region.

The Tribunal for Putin: first legal assessment of genocide in Ukraine

On 28 August, the human rights initiative T4P launched its submission to the International Criminal Court, detailing the acts of genocide committed by Russia in and around the Ukrainian city of Mariupol.

KHPG (06.09.2023) - "We chose to document acts of genocide in Mariupol", said Yevgen Zakharov, director of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group, which co-founded the T4P initiative, "because it was the most challenging task. Since 2 March 2022 there has been no direct communication with Mariupol and public services have not been working there: it presented a particularly dire situation. We could only gather information about the war crimes committed in the city through direct communication with the victims and witnesses."

"We are convinced that acts of genocide were committed in Mariupol and the surrounding district," said [Mykhailo Romanov, a co-author of the submission](#): "and they took three forms: murder; creating conditions of life, calculated to destroy a protected group; and the deportation of children."

The authors of the submission estimated that the death toll resulting from Russia's siege and occupation of Mariupol was approximately 100,000 people. Mykhailo Romanov commented: "Back then, we could not determine the exact number. But by indirect means, i.e., by deducting from the total population those who reportedly had been evacuated, transferred to Russia or else, we calculated that around 100,000 must have been killed. They were murdered in different ways, using different methods and weapons, but in any case, these were murders."

The submission may be read in both [Ukrainian](#) and [English](#) in the online library on human rights. Earlier, [the T4P presented its submissions regarding Russian shelling of Ukraine](#): according to the initiative's data, 84 percent of war crimes are directed at the civilian population.

"We have finally moved from what we feel to what we want recognized as an international fact, to what we wish to be written down in history books," commented Oleksandra Romantsova, Executive Director of the Centre for Civil Liberties. "These are accusations not only against Putin but against the entire Russian regime during the last nine years. Mariupol is a vivid example of how thousands of people are suffering from the decision of Putin and his regime to wage war against Ukraine, to destroy the country and its people."

"It is actually very frightening," said Yevgen Zakharov. "The Russians methodically shelled and destroyed people's homes, one after another. Snipers shot people queuing up for water or cooking food on a fire outside. Some people died because they stayed on the upper floors with no access and died there of hunger and thirst; during bombardments, people jumped from the upper floors, unable to tolerate this nightmare. They committed suicide, as they no longer had the strength to cope with it and saw no opportunity to escape. There are so many stories like this."

Testimonies about events in Mariupol were earlier published in [Voices of War: Mariupol](#), a volume of 24 interviews with people who managed to escape from the city and were interviewed by the

Kharkiv Human Rights Group. The book will be presented later this year at the Frankfurt Book Fair. In Ukraine, it is available for sale in the Knyharnia Ye bookshop network.

Press conference with English translation: https://youtu.be/Y1_3IxTIP00

Moscow's deportation of 20,000 Ukrainian children to Russia, says a report filed with the UN

Less than 400 have found a way back home

HRWF (31.08.2023) - On the eve of the 54th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, the Brussels-based NGO *Human Rights Without Frontiers* filed a report taking stock about the deportation of Ukrainian children by Russia from the territories occupied since the beginning of the war.

According to the Adviser-Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Children's Rights and Children's Rehabilitation Daria Gerasymchuk, the Ukrainian authorities have collected personal data of about 20,000 cases although there might be ten times more according to incontrollable figures circulating both in Russia and in Ukraine.

The report "[Ukrainian Children in Search of a Way Home from Russia](#)" reveals that only 386 children have found a way back home. They could not be returned through negotiations with the Russian side but every time it could only be achieved through a specific rescue operation.

On 17 March 2023, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court in The Hague [issued arrest warrants](#) for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova for unlawful deportation of children. In the meantime, a number of them have been illegally adopted by Russian families.

"Today there is no international structure that could offer an effective mechanism for the return of our deported children," Gerasymchuk said in an [exclusive interview with Interfax-Ukraine](#).

A controversy broke out in July between Kyiv and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) when Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba claimed that Ukrainian children were in Belarus and the Belarusian representative of the Red Cross, Dmitry Shevtsov, was seen in camouflage with a chevron of the occupiers with the letter Z.

Ukraine [responsibly cooperates with the Special Representative of the UN](#) Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) in order to stop and prevent violations against children during the conflict, and calls on the UN to fundamentally and persistently demand from the Russian Federation cooperation with the CAAC mechanism, access to all temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, as well as to its territory, since the CAAC mandate includes child abduction crimes.

In Ukraine, several cooperation structures between relevant ministries, the UN and UNICEF have been put in place.

In its recommendations, *Human Rights Without Frontiers* urges

- Russia to ensure that no changes are made to the personal status of Ukrainian children, including their citizenship;
- all parties to continue to ensure that the best interests of all children are respected, including by facilitating family tracing and reunification of unaccompanied and/or separated children who find themselves outside borders or control lines without their families or guardians;
- parties to the conflict to grant child protection authorities access to these children to facilitate family reunification;

- the UN Special Representative on "Children and Armed Conflicts", together with other UN agencies and partners, to consider ways to facilitate such processes.

The full report in three languages (English, Ukrainian and Russian) is available on the website of *Human Rights Without Frontiers*: <https://hrwf.eu/российские-новости/>

For more information or interviews in English, Ukrainian or Russian, please contact international.secretariat@hrwf.org

Депортація Москвою 20 тисяч українських дітей до Росії – доповідь, подана до ООН

Менше 400 знайшли дорогу додому

HRWF (31.08.2023) - Напередодні 54-ї сесії Ради ООН з прав людини брюссельська неурядова організація «Права людини без кордонів» оприлюднила доповідь, в якій підбила підсумки депортації українських дітей Росією з територій, окупованих з початку війни.

За словами радника-уповноваженої Президента України з прав дитини та реабілітації дітей Дар'ї Герасимчук, українська влада зібрала персональні дані близько про 20 000 таких випадків, хоча їх, за неофіційними даними, що фігурують як в Україні, так і в Росії, може бути вдесятеро більше.

Звіт «[Українські діти в пошуках шляху додому](#)» показує, що лише 386 дітей знайшли дорогу додому. Повернути їх шляхом переговорів з російською стороною було неможливим і кожного разу це вдалося досягти лише за допомогою конкретної рятувальної операції.

17 березня 2023 року Досудова палата Міжнародного кримінального суду в Гаазі [видала ордери на арешт](#) президента Росії Володимира Путіна та уповноваженої з прав дитини Марії Львова-Бєлової за незаконну депортацію дітей. В цей час деякі з дітей вже були незаконно усиновлені російськими сім'ями.

"Сьогодні немає жодної міжнародної структури, яка могла б запропонувати ефективний механізм повернення наших депортованих дітей", - сказала Герасимчук в ексклюзивному [інтерв'ю агентству "Інтерфакс-Україна"](#).

У липні між Києвом і Міжнародним комітетом Червоного Хреста (МКЧХ) спалахнула полеміка, коли міністр закордонних справ України Дмитро Кулеба заявив, що українські діти перебувають у Білорусі, а білоруського представника Червоного Хреста Дмитра Шевцова бачили в камуфляжі з шевроном окупантів з літерою Z.

Україна [відповідально співпрацює зі Спеціальним представником Генерального секретаря ООН з питань дітей під час збройних конфліктів \(ЦПК\)](#) з метою припинення та попередження порушень щодо дітей під час конфлікту та закликає ООН принципово та наполегливо вимагати від Російської Федерації співпраці з механізмом СААС, доступу до всіх тимчасово окупованих територій України, а також на свою територію, оскільки мандат СААС включає злочини з викрадення дітей.

В Україні створено кілька структур співпраці між профільними міністерствами, ООН та ЮНІСЕФ.

У своїх рекомендаціях *Правозахисна організація «Права людини без кордонів»* закликає:

- Росію - гарантувати, що не буде внесено змін до особистого статусу українських дітей, включаючи їхнє громадянство;
- всі сторони - продовжувати забезпечувати дотримання найкращих інтересів усіх дітей, у тому числі шляхом сприяння розшуку сімей та возз'єднанню дітей без супроводу та/або розлучених з сім'єю, які опинилися за межами кордонів або ліній контролю без своїх сімей або опікунів;
- сторонам конфлікту надати органам захисту дітей доступ до цих дітей для сприяння возз'єднанню сім'ї;

- Спеціальному представнику ООН з питань дітей та збройних конфліктів разом з іншими агенціями та партнерами ООН розглянути шляхи сприяння таким процесам.

Повна доповідь трьома мовами (англійською, українською та російською) доступна на сайті БФ «Права людини без кордонів»: <https://hrwf.eu/российские-новости/>

Для отримання додаткової інформації або інтерв'ю англійською, українською або російською мовами, будь ласка, зв'яжіться з international.secretariat.brussels@hrwf.org

Москва депортировала 20 000 украинских детей в Россию, говорится в докладе, поданном в ООН

Менее 400 нашли дорогу домой

HRWF (31.08.2023) - Накануне 54-й сессии Совета ООН по правам человека базирующаяся в Брюсселе неправительственная организация «Права человека без границ» подала доклад, в котором подвела итоги депортации Россией украинских детей с оккупированных с начала войны территорий.

По словам советника-уполномоченной Президента Украины по правам ребенка и детской реабилитации Дарьи Герасимчук, украинские власти собрали персональные данные про порядка 20 000 таких случаев, хотя, по неофициальным данным, фигурирующим как в Украине, так и в России, их количество может быть в десять раз больше.

В докладе «[Украинские дети в поисках пути домой](#)» говорится, что только 386 детей нашли дорогу домой. Они не могли быть возвращены путем переговоров с российской стороной и каждый раз их возвращение стало возможным только путем конкретной спасательной операции.

17 марта 2023 года Палата предварительного производства Международного уголовного суда в Гааге [выдала ордера на арест](#) президента России Владимира Путина и уполномоченного по правам ребенка Марии Львовой-Беловой за незаконную депортацию украинских детей. В это время некоторые из украинских детей уже были незаконно усыновлены российскими семьями.

"На сегодняшний день нет международной структуры, которая могла бы предложить эффективный механизм возвращения наших депортированных детей", - сказал Герасимчук в эксклюзивном [интервью агентству "Интерфакс-Украина"](#).

В июле между Киевом и Международным комитетом Красного Креста (МККК) разгорелся спор, когда министр иностранных дел Украины Дмитрий Кулеба заявил, что в Беларуси находятся украинские дети, а белорусский представитель Красного Креста Дмитрий Шевцов был замечен в камуфляже с шевроном оккупантов с буквой Z.

Украина [ответственно сотрудничает со Специальным представителем](#) Генерального секретаря ООН по вопросам о детях и вооруженных конфликтах (СААС) с целью прекращения и предотвращения нарушений в отношении детей во время конфликта, и призывает ООН принципиально и настойчиво требовать от Российской Федерации сотрудничества с механизмом СААС, доступа ко всем временно оккупированным территориям Украины, а также на свою территорию, поскольку мандат СААС включает преступления, связанные с похищением детей.

В Украине создано несколько структур сотрудничества между профильными министерствами, ООН и ЮНИСЕФ.

В своих рекомендациях организация «Права человека без границ» настоятельно призывает:

- Россию – не вносить изменения в личный статус украинских детей, в том числе в их гражданство;
- все стороны продолжать обеспечивать уважение наилучших интересов всех детей, в том числе путем содействия розыску и воссоединению семей несопровождаемых и/или разлученных с семьями детей, оказавшихся за пределами границ или линий контроля без своих семей или опекунов;
- сторонам в конфликте предоставить органам по защите детей доступ к этим детям для содействия воссоединению семей;
- Специальному представителю ООН по вопросу: «Дети и вооруженные конфликты» совместно с другими учреждениями и партнерами ООН рассмотреть пути содействия таким процессам.

Полный текст доклада на трех языках (английском, украинском и русском) доступен на сайте организации «Права человека без границ»: <https://hrwf.eu/российские-новости/>

Для получения дополнительной информации или интервью на английском, украинском или русском языках, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с international.secretariat.brussels@hrwf.org

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Ukrainian journalist Volodymyr Sedov assaulted after investigating crime

Ukrainian authorities should swiftly investigate the latest attack on anti-corruption journalist Volodymyr Sedov and hold the perpetrators to account, the Committee to Protect Journalists said Friday.

[CPJ](#) (04.08.2023) - Sedov, editor-in-chief of the newspaper Visti Ananivshchyna, told CPJ that unidentified people attacked him from behind in a park near his home in the southern city of Ananiv on July 12, knocked him unconscious and trampled on his right hand, breaking two of his fingers.

“CPJ condemns the attack on veteran journalist Volodymyr Sedov and calls on Ukrainian authorities to ensure timely investigations. No journalist should be subjected to such brutal violence for investigative reporting in the public interest,” said Gulnoza Said, CPJ’s Europe and Central Asia program coordinator. “Ukrainian authorities must hold the alleged assailants to account and ensure that Sedov can work safely.”

Sedov, 68, posted a [video](#) and [photographs](#) on Facebook showing his bruised face and bloodied fingers shortly after the attack, which was also covered by [local media](#), Ukrainian press freedom group [Institute of Mass Information](#), and the [National Union of Journalists of Ukraine](#).

Sedov told CPJ that an unknown number of attackers hit him on the head, knocking him out for a few seconds. When he regained consciousness, Sedov said he saw a local gangster—who Sedov has published articles about in Visti Ananivshchyna and on social media—running away.

“I woke up with pain in my fingers,” said Sedov, who was diagnosed with a concussion, adding that he believed his assailants stepped on his fingers to stop him writing.

Sedov told CPJ that he believed the attack was related to his journalism as he has [reported](#) “many times” on allegations of corruption involving his alleged assailant and local authorities, and posts regularly about [crime](#) and [graft](#) on Facebook.

The police headquarters for Odesa Region, where Ananiv is located, did not respond to CPJ’s emailed request for comment. In an email to CPJ after publication, Ananiv city council said “in no way are we aware of criminal groups that operate in the territory of the Anani municipality.”

The police said in a [statement](#) on July 12 that they were investigating the assault and had [opened a criminal case](#) for “violence against a journalist in connection with ... their lawful professional activity.”

Sedov told CPJ that he was “convinced that nothing will happen” as crimes committed by the gang usually went unpunished.

Sedov said that armed men in military fatigues burst into his wife’s office about a year ago and “began to insult her and threaten that if I write anything against the authorities, they will kill her, me and the whole family.” The journalist said explosive packages were also detonated on the site of his wife’s office and car tires were slashed, and he reported all of the incidents to the police but no one was arrested.

“I do not rely on the police and the law,” he told CPJ. “I think that my persecution as a journalist will continue more severely, and I may have to leave Ukraine in order not to put my family at risk. I am 68 years old now. I have children, grandchildren, and I do not see any way out of this lawlessness and corruption.”

Sedov told CPJ that he returned to work on August 4.

Separately, on June 15, the [car](#) of journalist [Vlad Isaev](#) was set on fire by unidentified people in Ukraine’s northern region of Rivne. On the night of June 15, in Rivne, [unknown people](#) also attempted to burn down the house of former journalist [Oleksandr Namozov](#). CPJ is investigating both incidents to determine whether they were linked to the reporters’ journalistic activities.

[Editor’s note: *This alert has been updated with a response from the Ananiv city council in the eighth paragraph.*]

The Ukrainian region of Kirovohrad in search of partnerships in Brussels to feed the world

By Willy Fautré, director of Human Rights Without Frontiers

[European Times](#) (17.03.2023) - On 9-10 March, the head of the regional council of Kirovohrad Oblast (region), Sergii Shulga, visited European institutions in Brussels to raise awareness about the future of his region in the EU and the global context. Kirovohrad Oblast is a region in central Ukraine that had a population of about a million inhabitants before the war. Only a limited number of local Ukrainians have decided to leave this highly agricultural region as the population mainly lives off the land but with the war raging in the Donbass, about 100,000 displaced persons have suddenly modified and increased the local demography.

Human Rights Without Frontiers met Sergii Shulga and interviewed him.

HRWF: Russia has invaded parts of Ukraine and has caused a lot of damage. Was your region affected as well?

S. Shulga: Since February 2022, Russia has launched over 20 missile attacks on the Kirovohrad region. Last night, there was a hit on the infrastructure again. But we are strong. And we believe in victory. So after it, we will rebuild our economy.

HRWF: Why did you come to Brussels and who did you meet?

S. Shulga: Up to now, no Ukrainian region has taken the initiative to send its highest representatives to Brussels to contact there the missions of the EU regions and identify possible partners for the reconstruction.

I met and talked with Lucas Mandel, an Austrian member of the European Parliament. He is a reliable supporter of Ukraine. He visited our country a few times. He knows our realities and he is quite supportive of any initiative that can be beneficial to Ukraine.

What is important for us in Ukraine is to have concrete solidarity partnerships, not only with regions but also with organizations of the European Union.

I had a meeting with the Secretary General of the Assembly of European Regions, Mr. Christian Spahr, to discuss some joint cooperation in the Regional Youth Council, where the Kirovohrad Region has delegated two representatives. One of them has recently become the head of the Mental Health Committee.

I also talked with Mathieu Mori, the Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. He is a key person for the future development of our network between the Kirovohrad region and the EU regions as he was elected in October 2022 for a period of five years.

As Sweden is currently holding the EU presidency until 30 June, I discussed with the Head of the Southern Sweden Office which represents five regions to envisage potential partnerships. I also had talks with the head of the Lower Austrian Region, the head of the Representation of Carinthia Land as well as representatives of two regions of Slovakia: Bratislava region and Trnava region. The purpose is to put in place various forms of collaboration with our region.

HRWF: What are your current needs?

S. Shulga: The economy of our region is massively of agrarian nature. Ninety-five percent of the income of our region comes from our agricultural activities. In our region, there are 2 million hectares of rich lands to be cultivated. They were rather spared from the war as the Russian shelling was mainly targeting energy infrastructure and housing: no explosions, no mines and no demining necessity, no holes, no tank carcasses, no toxic products or pollution in our fields.

Last year, through the ports of Mikolayev, Kherson and Odessa we exported four million tons of our grain, corn, sugar beet and sunflower seeds, mainly to the Middle East and Africa. We all know how difficult the negotiations were to break Russia's blockade of our ports and how fragile this agreement with Russia remains. Brussels needed to know that the Kirovohrad Region helps feed the world with its rich lands. That is also the reason why

I needed to come to Brussels. Ukraine needs to get back its Russian occupied territories, especially along the sea.

HRWF: What will be your objective when you are back in your oblast?

S. Shulga: I would like to organize a conference in Brussels in May to give the opportunity to the Kirovohrad Region to present themselves to the European Union. I informed the Head of the Ukrainian Mission to the EU, Mr. Vsevolod Chentsov, about this project and already invited him. This will be part of the process of opening the road to our EU membership. We need and love the EU but the EU also shows with its massive investments that it needs Ukraine and loves Ukraine.

The monument to the Russian Empress Catherine II in Odesa dismantled

A Ukrainian answer to the de-ukrainization of the occupied territories by the Russians and the more global debate among former Western colonial countries to remove statues of and rename streets named after controversial historical figures (HRWF)

Ievgeniia Gidulianova for HRWF

HRWF (05.01.2023) - *Photo 1: Over the last week the issue of demolition of the monument "Founders of Odessa", better known as the "Monument to Catherine II" in the city of Odessa, Ukraine, has attracted attention, perhaps, of all world news outlets.*

Photo 2: The new monument exactly repeats the 1900 monument. Parts and elements of the original monument, preserved till that time in the Local History Museum, and also historical documents and photos from the archives of Odessa, Kiev and St. Petersburg were used during the restoration.

The history of this architectural composition can rightly be called one of the most unusual.

In 1890, at the joint meeting of the City Council headed by Gregory Marazli and the Commission on the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Odessa, it was decided to hold a competition to erect a monument dedicated to the foundation of the city. The project "Odessa Port" by architect [Yuri Dmitrenko](#) was awarded first prize. It was a monument to [Catherine the Great](#) and her associates - [Prince Grigory Potemkin](#), [Joseph de Ribas](#), [Franz de Volan](#) and [Platon Zubov](#).

In January 1893 Emperor Alexander III granted his permission for the monument to be built. The place of its location was chosen as the Catherine Square (later - the square), where in the late 1790s the Church of St. Catherine of Alexandria was laid but never built.

In 1901, during the Paris architectural conference, Catherine's Square with the monument erected on it was acknowledged as the best civil architectural complex in Europe. Catherine Square complex became one of the main attractions of Odessa.

When Bolsheviks came to power in Ukraine, the square was named after Karl Marx and the monument "Founders of Odessa" was deemed to be inadequate for the times. The dismantling of the monument was carried out by the soldiers of the cavalry brigade during the May Day subbotnik in 1920. The pedestal and the column remained in their original position. During dismantling, the figure of the Empress was damaged and partially destroyed, while the bronze statues of the associates were removed and sent for storage to the Odessa Museum of Local Lore. According to legend, they wanted to use the figures for making shells, but one of the sailors had the foresight to say: "It would be wrong to have shells of non-proletarian origin". And the bronze statues were forgotten for a long time.

The pedestal was later used for a sculpture of Karl Marx, but it didn't stay there long because a strong wind blew it down.

The square later turned into a flowerbed, until in 1965 a monument to the sailors who took part in the mutiny on the battleship "Potemkin" in 1905 was erected.

Ideas about reconstructing the monument to the founders of Odessa were initiated in the 1990s, after the USSR collapse.

In 2007, already at the time of Ukrainian independence, the Odessa city council has decided to carry out a comprehensive restoration of St. Catherine's Square with the restoration of its historical image and the monument "The Founders of Odessa".

The pedestal and the bronze sculpture of the Empress had to be created anew, and the statues of Potemkin, Zubov, de Ribas and de Volan were installed using the original ones, having previously restored them.

On the whole, the monument was reconstructed in its historical form. At the same time, four new bronze plaques bearing the names of the empress's associates were installed. The architect Vladimir Glazyrin and sculptors Nikolai Oleinik and Oleg Chernovikov did the work. The project was sponsored by businessman Ruslan Tarpan.

At the same time the square was reconstructed, the stucco and cast iron elements of buildings' decoration were recreated, a square with flower beds was created, granite tiles were laid, a special system of architectural illumination was applied, etc.

The decision of Odessa authorities to restore the monument, supported by the majority of citizens at that time, caused a serious controversy in the Ukrainian society.

A part of the residents of Odessa supported the monument's reconstruction. The main argument was that Catherine Square in its historical form is a [unique architectural ensemble](#), reflecting the significant historical periods of life of the city and is harmonically connected with all the other historical architectural ensembles of Odessa, forming the architectural historical area of the city. Besides, Odessa has for a long time had the intention to nominate its historical area to the [World Heritage List of UNESCO](#) (the corresponding Nomination Dossier of Odessa was submitted only on the 4th of October 2022. [Odessa](#) is nominated according to two criteria: unique multiculturalism and unique urban planning solution).

[Opponents of reconstructing the monument](#) demanded its removal, arguing that it glorifies Russia's imperial policies. Viktor Yushchenko's pro-presidential party (2005-2010) "Our Ukraine" called the monument "a symbol of foreign enslavement" since the Zaporizhian Sich was destroyed on the order of Catherine II and the democratic system of

Ukraine was eliminated. Representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people and local activists opposed the restoration of the monument. The opening ceremony of the monument, reconstructed in 2007, was accompanied by protests. Opponents of the restoration of the monument were forced out of the square and said they would seek the demolition of the monument through the courts.

[The litigation over the reconstruction](#) of the monument to "The Founders of Odessa" in Catherine's Square became the subject of numerous instances of judicial review over the next twelve years. The formal reason was the appeal against the decision of the Odessa City Council to transfer the monument "Potemkinites - descendants" to another location and to install instead the monument to the founders of Odessa at Ekaterininskaya Square. The final point in the legal procedure was set by the Supreme Court of Ukraine in April 2019. It rejected a complaint by the Sich Cossack Association against the decision to move the monument to Potemkin's Descendants to Odessa's Customs Square, thereby recognising the installation of the monument to the founders of Odessa on Catherine's Square to be lawful.

According to the news outlet Suspilne Noviny, after the Russian invasion the Odessa city [authorities changed their opinion](#) about the monument to the "Founders of Odessa" several times; at first, officials spoke out against "destroying history".

On 28 June 2022, the Day of Constitution of Ukraine, the official website of the President of Ukraine registered an [electronic petition 22/145072-ep](#) with a proposal to tear down the monument to Catherine the Great in Odessa. In less than two months this petition has collected 26504 votes (according to the law the petition has to get 25000 votes as a condition of consideration) and has been transferred to the President.

On August 1, 2022, Volodymyr Zelensky [thanked](#) everyone who joined this petition for their active civic position in defending national interests and clearing the public space from objects and monuments that perpetuate Russian propaganda anti-Ukrainian narratives in Ukraine. In accordance with the rules stipulated by law, the President of Ukraine [referred the resolution](#) of this issue to the Odessa City Council in accordance with their competence.

In the meantime, numerous public actions reminded the Odessa authorities that consideration of the issue was among the urgent ones. [The monument has been repeatedly doused with red paint](#) to symbolise the blood of the Ukrainians on Catherine's hands, and before that the monument was marked in red with "[Catherine=Putin](#)".

On 12 September 2022, an electronic petition created by Rodion Burlutsky from Odessa was posted on the Ukrainian president's website, in which the head of state was urged to "pay attention to the actions and expressions of the mayor of Odessa". According to the author of the petition, Trukhanov demonstrates his pro-Russian position by "sabotaging the dismantling" of the monument to Catherine the Great. On 29 October, the Ukrainian president instructed the Security Service and the Interior Ministry to check the Odessa mayor's statements.

On 19 September 2022, Odessa City Council held an online conference with the public of Odessa to discuss the fate of the monument "Founder of Odessa". Anyone could register and take part in the discussion. The Internet conference lasted for six hours and everyone was given an opportunity to speak.

[Odessa Mayor Gennadiy Trukhanov](#) proposed creating a park complex of "the imperial and Soviet past" in Odessa and moving some of the city's monuments, including the monument to Catherine the Great, there.

Taking into account the proposals received during the discussion at the Internet conference, an electronic poll was conducted on the [web portal "Socially Active Citizen"](#) from September 20 to October 20, 2022.

On 5 November, the Odessa authorities said that the majority of the citizens who had participated in the voting via a special application ["Socially Active Citizen"](#) voted in favour of dismantling the "Founders of Odessa" monument.

Work began on Wednesday, 28 December, in Odessa to dismantle the [Monument](#) to the Founders of Odessa. It was finally removed at night. The plaque was removed from the pedestal, and the sculptures of Catherine's favourites were also removed from the pedestal. The sculptural composition was moved to the storage of the Odessa National Museum of Art. As Kirill Lipatov, head of the Scientific Exposition Department of the Odessa Museum of Art, [told](#) at a press conference, they are in no hurry to install them as museum exhibits, but they will be preserved.

Instead of dismantled sculptures on Catherine Square, the flag of Ukraine is still flying.

Photo 3: In 2022, with the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the debate over the fate of the monument flared up with renewed vigour

Памятник российской императрице Екатерине II в Одессе демонтирован

Украинский ответ на деукраинизацию оккупированных территорий россиянами и более глобальные дебаты среди бывших западных колониальных стран о снятии статуй и переименовании улиц в честь спорных исторических фигур (HRWF)

Евгения Гидулянов для HRWF

HRWF (05.01.2023) - Фото 1: Последнюю неделю внимание, пожалуй, всех мировых новостных изданий привлек вопрос о сносе памятника «Основателям Одессы», более известного под названием «памятника Екатерине II» в городе Одессе, Украина.

Фото 2: Новый монумент в точности повторил памятник 1900 года. При восстановлении использовались части и элементы оригинального памятника, хранившиеся до того времени в краеведческом музее, а также исторические документы и фотографии из архивов Одессы, Киева и Санкт-Петербурга.

Историю данной архитектурной композиции можно по праву назвать одной из самых необычных.

В 1890 году на совместном заседании городской управы под руководством Григория Маразли и комиссии по вопросу о праздновании 100-летия Одессы было принято решение объявить конкурс на возведение памятника, посвященного основанию города. Первую премию конкурса получил проект "Одесский порт" архитектора [Юрия Дмитренко](#). Он представлял собой памятник [Екатерине II](#) и ее сподвижникам - князю [Григорию Потемкину](#), [Иосифу де Рибасу](#), [Францу де Волану](#) и [Платону Зубову](#).

В январе 1893 года император Александр III дал соизволение на возведение монумента. Местом его размещения был выбран Екатерининский сквер (впоследствии - площадь), где в конце 1790-х годов был заложен, но так и не построен храм во имя святой Екатерины Александрийской.

В 1901 году на Парижской архитектурной конференции Екатерининская площадь с установленным на ней монументом была признана лучшим гражданским архитектурным комплексом в Европе. Комплекс Екатерининской площади стал одной из главных достопримечательностей Одессы.

С приходом в Украину власти большевиков площади присвоили имя Карла Маркса, а памятник «Основателям Одессы» сочли не отвечающим требованиям времени. Демонтаж монумента был осуществлён бойцами кавалерийской бригады в ходе первомайского субботника 1920 г. Пьедестал и колонна остались на прежнем месте. При демонтаже фигура императрицы была повреждена и частично уничтожена, а бронзовые статуи сподвижников были сняты и отправлены на хранение в Одесский краеведческий музей. По легенде, фигуры хотели пустить на изготовление снарядов, но один из матросов дальновидно заметил: «Негоже иметь снаряды непролетарского происхождения». И о бронзовых статуях на долгое время забыли.

В последующем пьедестал памятника использовали для установки скульптуры Карла Маркса, но простояла она не долго, поскольку ее повалил сильный ветер.

Далее площадь представляла из себя цветочную клумбу, пока в 1965 году на ней не был сооружен памятник матросам – участникам восстания на броненосце «Потемкин» в 1905 году.

Идеи о воссоздании памятника основателям Одессы стали выдвигаться в 1990-х годах, после распада СССР.

В 2007 году уже во времена независимости Украины городской совет Одессы принял решение провести комплексную реставрацию Екатерининской площади с восстановлением ее исторического облика и памятника «Основателям Одессы».

Постамент и бронзовую скульптуру императрицы пришлось создавать заново, а изваяния Потемкина, Зубова, де Рибаса и де Волана установили оригинальные, предварительно их отреставрировав.

В целом монумент был воссоздан в своем историческом виде. При этом авторы установили четыре новые бронзовые таблички с именами сподвижников императрицы. Работы вели архитектор Владимир Глазырин, скульпторы Николай

Олейник и Олег Черноиванов. Спонсором проекта выступил предприниматель Руслан Тарпан.

Одновременно была проведена реконструкция площади, в том числе воссозданы лепные и чугунные элементы декора зданий, разбит сквер с цветниками, уложена гранитная плитка, применена особая система архитектурной подсветки и др.

Решение властей Одессы о восстановлении памятника, поддержанное на тот момент большинством горожан, вызвало серьезные разногласия в украинском обществе.

Часть жителей Одессы поддерживала воссоздание монумента. Главным аргументом было то, что Екатерининская площадь в своем историческом виде является [уникальным архитектурным ансамблем](#), отображающим значимые исторические периоды жизни города и гармонично связана со всеми иными историческими архитектурными ансамблями Одессы, образуя архитектурный исторический ареал города. К тому же, Одесса давно имела намерение номинироваться на включение своего исторического ареала в Список всемирного наследия ЮНЕСКО (соответствующее [Номинационное досье Одессы](#) подано только 4 октября 2022 года. [Одесса номинируется](#) по двум критериям: уникальная мультикультурность и уникальное градостроительное решение).

[Противники воссоздания памятника](#) требовали убрать его, утверждая, что он прославляет имперскую политику России. Пропрезидентская партия Виктора Ющенко (2005-2010) "Наша Украина" назвала монумент "символом чужеземного порабощения", поскольку по приказу Екатерины II была разрушена Запорожская Сечь и ликвидировано демократическое устройство Украины". Против восстановления памятника выступили представители Меджлиса крымско-татарского народа и местные активисты. Церемония открытия воссозданного в 2007 году памятника сопровождалась акциями протеста. Вытесненные с площади противники восстановления памятника заявили, что будут добиваться сноса памятника через суд.

[Судебные тяжбы](#), связанные с воссозданием на Екатерининской площади памятника «Основателям Одессы» стали предметом рассмотрения многочисленных судебных инстанций в течение последующих более чем двенадцати лет. Формальным поводом выступило обжалование решение Одесского городского совета о переносе памятника «Потёмкинцам - потомки» в иную локацию и установке на Екатерининской площади вместо него памятника основателям Одессы. Финальной точкой в судебной процедуре поставил Верховный суд Украины в апреле 2019 года. Он отклонил жалобу ассоциации казацких обществ "Сич" на решение о переносе памятника "Потёмкинцам - потомки" на Таможенную площадь Одессы, тем самым признав законной установку памятника основателям Одессы на Екатерининской площади.

По утверждению новостного издания «Суспільне Новини» городские власти Одессы уже после российского вторжения [не раз меняли свое мнение](#) по поводу памятника «Основателям Одессы»; вначале чиновники высказывались против «уничтожения истории».

28 июня 2022 года, в День Конституции Украины, на официальном сайте интернет-представительства Президента Украины была зарегистрирована электронная [петиция № 22/145072-ен](#) с предложением снести памятник Екатерине II в Одессе. Менее чем за два месяца данная петиция набрала 26504 голоса (согласно закону в качестве условия для рассмотрения петиция должны получить 25000 голосов) и была передана Президенту.

1 августа 2022 года Владимир Зеленский [поблагодарил](#) всех, кто присоединился к этой петиции, за активную гражданскую позицию в защите национальных интересов, очищении общественного пространства от объектов и памятников, которые закрепляют в Украине российские пропагандистские антиукраинские нарративы. В соответствии с предусмотренными законом правилами Президент Украины [передал](#) разрешение данного вопроса Одесскому городскому совету в соответствии с их компетенцией.

Тем временем многочисленные общественные акции напоминали одесским властям о том, что рассмотрение данного вопроса относится к числу неотложных. Памятник неоднократно обливали красной краской [обливали красной краской](#), что символизировало кровь украинцев на руках Екатерины, а до этого на памятнике появилась надпись красным [«Екатерина=Путин»](#).

12 сентября 2022 года на сайте президента Украины была размещена электронная петиция, созданная одесситом Родионом Бурлуцким, в которой главу государства призвали "обратить внимание на действия и выражения мэра Одессы". [По мнению автора обращения](#), Труханов демонстрирует свою пророссийскую позицию путем "саботирования демонтажа" памятника Екатерине II. 29 октября президент Украины поручил Службе безопасности и МВД провести проверку высказываний мэра Одессы.

19 сентября 2022 года Одесский городской совет провел [интернет-конференцию](#) с общественностью города Одессы с целью обсуждения судьбы памятника «Основателя Одессы». Зарегистрироваться и принять участие в обсуждении мог каждый желающий. Интернет-конференция длилась шесть часов, всем желающим была предоставлена возможность выступить.

Мэр города Одессы Геннадий Труханов [выступил с предложением](#) создать в Одессе парковый комплекс "имперского и советского прошлого" и перевезти туда часть городских памятников, включая памятник Екатерине II.

С учетом предложений, полученных в ходе обсуждения на интернет-конференции, в период с 20 сентября по 20 октября 2022 года был проведен электронный опрос на [веб-портале «Социально активный гражданин»](#).

5 ноября власти Одессы сообщили, что большинство горожан, участвовавших в голосовании через специальное приложение "Социально активный гражданин" [проголосовали](#) за демонтаж памятника «Основателям Одессы».

24 ноября за проект решения о демонтаже памятника [проголосовал](#) исполнительный комитет Одесского городского совета. **Окончательно решение о демонтаже и переносе памятника было принято 30 ноября 2022 года Одесским городским советом во время сессионного заседания.** За демонтаж памятника проголосовали 43 депутата.

В среду, 28 декабря, в Одессе начались работы по демонтажу памятника «Основателям Одессы». Ночью его убрали окончательно. С постамента сняли табличку, также демонтировали скульптуры фаворитов Екатерины с постамента. Скульптурная композиция была перемещена на хранение в Одесский национальный художественный музей. Как [рассказал](#) на пресс-конференции начальник департамента научно-экспозиционной работы Одесского художественного музея Кирилл Липатов, устанавливать их в качестве музейных экспонатов пока не спешат, но сохранность обеспечат.

Вместо демонтированных скульптур на, пока еще, Екатерининской площади развевается флаг Украины.

Фото 3: В 2022 году, с началом полномасштабного вторжения России в Украину, споры о судьбе памятника вспыхнули с новой силой.

Photo of the inauguration of the statue of Catherine II in Odesa on 27 October 2007.
Credit: HRWF
