



HEALTH IMPACT OF THE RUSSIAN INVASION IN UKRAINE

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AGENDA

- 1 War in numbers
- 2 Refugee health needs
- 3 Common misconceptions about the war in Ukraine
- 4 Health policy gaps

WAR IN NUMBERS

Adults

- 6,919 deaths
- 17,994 injuries
- > 100,000 dead in Mariupol

Children

- ½ displaced of whom ¼ left country
- 455 dead
- 897 injured

Refugees

7.4 mln in Europe
6 mln internally displaced
2.5 mln forcibly deported

Attack on Healthcare

- 826 medical facilities damaged
- 127 hospitals destroyed
- Attacks on evacuation routes



HEALTH NEEDS OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

- 1 Maternal and newborn health
- 2 Emergency obstetric care
- 3 Undernutrition of women and children
- 4 Continuity of care – treatments
- 5 Sexual violence and trafficking
- 6 Mental distress and trauma
- 7 Vaccinations
- 8 Cold and long journeys – infections
- 9 Injuries and trauma

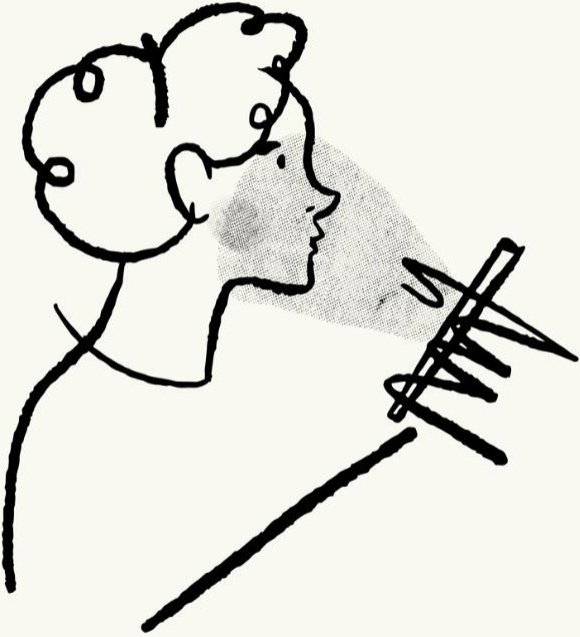




WHY UKRAINE IS DIFFERENT

- ✓ Largest in scale since WWII
- ✓ Aimed at destroying Ukraine as independent state
- ✓ Unprovoked ground invasion
- ✓ Internal vs external forces
- ✓ Autocracy against democracy
- ✓ War against collective West

ETHICS IN TELLING UKRAINE'S STORY



Russian propaganda

- high-volume and multichannel (e.g., Twitter removed 75,000 accounts)
- Rapid, continuous, and repetitive (first impressions are very resilient)
- No commitment to objective reality (manufactured evidence)
- No commitment to consistency (e.g., MH 17 disaster)

Russian disinformation campaign made invasion possible

- Claims of Russian genocide in Ukraine
- Legitimacy of the 2014 referendum in Crimea
- Questions about Ukrainian statehood



ORIGINS OF THE WAR: LINGUISTIC ROOT OF THE CONFLICT

- Russian colonialism is the reason former colonies have Russian speakers
- Being a Russian speaker does not mark one's ethnic or political identity
- In 2021, 26% spoke primarily Russian, 27% spoke both, but only 15% were ethnic Russians
- Russian speakers in Ukraine are freer than Russian speakers in Russia

ORIGINS OF THE WAR: WAR STARTED IN 2022

1917

USSR is established –
federation of Ukrainian,
Belarusian, and Caucasian
republics

1990s

Ukraine takes course of
becoming West-leaning
democracy

2014

massive protests, President
Yanukovich ousted, Russia
invades Crimea and Donbas

1930s

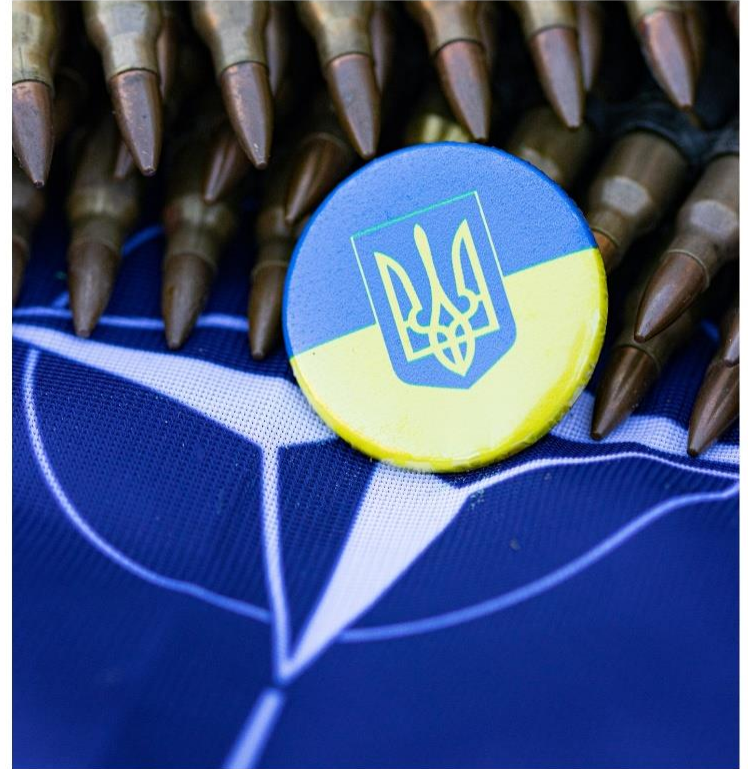
Ukrainian intelligentsia
murdered, 4 million dead in
artificial famine

2013

President Yanukovich tries to
alter this course, geopolitical
turn toward Russia

ORIGINS OF THE WAR: RUSSIA WAS THREATENED BY NATO

- Argument from Putin's speech (February), continuously repeated (e.g., Noam Chomsky)
- Putin's speech (July) – 'imperial war to return Russian land'
- NATO is not an offensive alliance, it is not expanding to facilitate an invasion of Russia
- Requests to join NATO (e.g., Sweden, Finland) is a direct response to Russian invasion





NATURE OF THE WAR: SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION

'Denazification' of Ukraine

military defeat, purges, and population-level 're-education' (RIA Novosti)

Genocide in Ukraine

efforts to exterminate a group through targeted killing.
Recognized by six states

Forced deportation

300,000 children forcibly deported for adoption in Russia (Article 2 section E, 1948 Genocide convention)

Execution of civilians

Point-blank executions of civilians, torture and rapes, Mariupol theater, mass graves



NATURE OF THE WAR: REGIONAL CONFLICT

- ✓ Fears of turning a 'regional war' into a global conflict. Reports of 'Ukrainian crisis'
- ✓ A global-scale challenge for political and security order, food supplies, and migration systems
- ✓ Ukraine is the world's leading food supplier, feeding 400 million people yearly
- ✓ Putin made it clear Russia is at war with the collective West

NATURE OF THE WAR: DEFENSE MEANS ESCALATION

- ✓ Acts of self-defense in a genocidal war are not escalation.
- ✓ Success in liberating sovereign territories is not escalation.
- ✓ Deescalate to prevent further suffering.
Ukrainian victories are the only way to prevent further suffering
- ✓ Dictators always escalate until they are stopped. Choosing less risk now guarantees more risk later.





UKRAINE AND RUSSIA ARE BROTHERLY NATIONS

- ✓ Concept used by Emmanuel Macron and Pope Francis – calls for solidarity between brotherly nations
- ✓ Concept developed by USSR with 'big brother' (Russia) governing 'small brothers'
- ✓ Concept used by USSR in their invasion of Poland and Czechoslovakia
- ✓ Calls for reconciliation sound similar to calls for reconciliation between Jews and Germany in WWII

UKRAINIAN AGENCY

- ✓ Passive periphery, fate of which decided by Russia, US, and the West
- ✓ Protests of 2014 happened because US tried to detach Ukraine from Russian influence.
- ✓ Massive underestimation of Ukrainian agency, resilience, civil society, army and government
- ✓ Ukraine is not a disposable buffer state doomed to being enslaved due to geographical misfortune





UKRAINE IS DIVIDED IN TWO PARTS

- ✓ "Pro-Russian separatists" "Breakaway republics" vs "Russian occupation forces" and "Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia"
- ✓ No Ukrainian territory have ever considered joining Russia. Russia annexed those territories
- ✓ This annexation more than any Ukrainian policy has led to massive Ukrainization
- ✓ Ukrainian Orthodox Church has formally split from Russia. Monuments replaced, streets renamed.

PUTIN'S WAR

- ✓ Attempts to distinguish between the Kremlin's actions and Russian attitudes
- ✓ Levada Center (deemed 'foreign agent'): Putin's approval went up from 69% in January to 83% in March
- ✓ Sociological experiments to distinguish between stated and private preferences — approval at 53%
- ✓ How people behave in public sphere can be a reliable indicator of their attitudes (Z campaigns)





IS RUSSIA A TERRORIST STATE

- ✓ Recent bipartisan resolution to designate Russia as state sponsor of terrorism. EU Parliament voted for a similar resolution in November 2022.
- ✓ The US criminal code defines terrorism as an intimidation campaign using violence.
- ✓ The bombing of a shopping mall, railway station, apartment blocks, universities and healthcare facilities can be described as terrorism. Similar actions in Syria, Georgia, Chechnya.
- ✓ Over 2 million Ukrainians went through 66 filtration camps. Reports of interrogations and torture.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

“ FOR ME, IT WASN'T ENOUGH TO KNOW THEY DIDN'T HAVE MY VOICE SUPPORTING THEM. FOR ME, IT MATTERED THAT THEY WOULDN'T HEAR MY VOICE AGAINST IT... IF I HADN'T DONE IT [PROTESTED], I WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED MYSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR THOSE ACTIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT, JUST AS ALL ADULT CITIZENS OF OUR COUNTRY BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL THE ACTIONS OF OUR GOVERNMENT... IT WAS NOT A QUESTION OF WHAT GOOD IT [PROTEST] WOULD DO, BUT OF MY PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. ”

Larisa Borogaz, 1968 dissident





HOW THE WAR ENDS: NUCLEAR POWER CANNOT LOSE A WAR

- ✓ Nuclear powers lost wars in places like Vietnam and Afghanistan and never used nuclear weapons.
- ✓ When we give in to the nuclear blackmail, we empower dictators to use it again, encourage worldwide nuclear proliferation, and make nuclear war more likely.
- ✓ Concession to Russia will not reduce the probability of a nuclear war but will lead to escalation.
- ✓ Russia is not the only nuclear power in the world.

HOW THIS WAR ENDS: UKRAINE NEEDS TO SURRENDER

- ✓ 'Is there a limit to civilian casualties in your country that you are willing to accept?'
- ✓ "We intend to remain alive. Our neighbors want to see us dead. This is not a question that leaves much room for compromise."
- ✓ Ukraine is not fighting for its statehood or independence but its existence. There is no Quebec or Wallonia scenario.
- ✓ Surrendering for peace is not possible in a genocidal war.



HOW THE WAR ENDS: PUTIN NEEDS AN OFF-RAMP



- ✓ Putin's speech - Russia will defend its interests in Ukraine until the end.
- ✓ The off-ramp idea is built on the assumption that Russia will stick to the agreements and promises.
- ✓ Putin considers every off-ramp as an entrance to the road leading to his next target.
- ✓ The best outcome in this war is an outright Ukrainian victory; anything else is simply a pause.

CLINICAL TRIAL CONTINUATION

- ✓ 500 clinical trials, 40% were cancer therapies, majority – phase III trials
- ✓ Importance to ensure trial continuation for refugees in EU countries
- ✓ Facilitate locating nearby trial centers
- ✓ Sponsor needs to transfer data to the new PI to facilitate handover
- ✓ Allowing former participants access to the product under compassionate use
- ✓ Simplifying consent requirements and re-certification process for Ukrainian physicians



SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION WITH RUSSIA



Cancelled projects

- European Space Agency
- Suspension from CERN
- Cancelled scientific conferences
- Journals frozen out from databases

Official positions

White House will “wind down institutional, administrative, funding, and personnel relationships and research collaborations in the fields of science and technology with Russian government-affiliated research institutions.” Similar statement from EU

Union of Rectors

“Very important to support the country’s army and president,” “fundamental duty is to teach our students to be patriotic and to strive to help their motherland”

Ethics of collaboration

- Sanctions targeting institutions vs. individuals
- Need for public statements from Western Scientific Societies and Universities
- Expand research collaboration with Ukraine
- WWII analogy



ABORTION SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

- ✓ Over 2 million refugees in Poland, 90% are women and children, at least 400 accounts of rape by Russian soldiers.
- ✓ Ukraine has liberal abortion regulations. Abortion in Poland is almost completely outlawed.
- ✓ Information about of Polish NGOs working to facilitate access to reproductive health services. Include provision of emergency sexual and reproductive healthcare in all humanitarian aid.
- ✓ The cross-border access to sexual and reproductive health needs to be facilitated without fears of legal repercussion.

COMMERCIAL SURROGACY

- Ukraine is an international surrogacy hub, about 2500 babies born each year.
- Should surrogate mothers decide where to seek shelter? Contacts restrict mothers' right to travel.
- Refuge in a third country. Poland and Hungary are neighbors with restrictive surrogacy laws, Czech Republic is further but less restrictive.
- Abandoned babies with the unsolved question of their citizenship and legal status.
- Adaptations needed to ensure citizenship (third party application, removal of genetic requirement)





EVERYONE IS
WELCOME

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF UKRAINIAN REFUGEES

- ✓ Temporary Protection Directive, which allows 4.7 mln Ukrainian refugees reside, seek employment, and attend school in the EU for three years, without official asylum approval.
- ✓ Dr. Ghebreyesus (WHO Director) criticized the global community's focus on the war in Ukraine, arguing that crises elsewhere are not being given equal considerations.
- ✓ Potential reasons: racism, islamophobia, geopolitics and symbolic opposition to Russian regime, proximity of Ukraine to EU.
- ✓ Growing resentment toward Ukrainian refugees in receiving countries (e.g., arson in Germany).
- ✓ World Vision report - unless hosting countries change their approaches to how they integrate Ukrainian refugees, tensions may quickly degenerate into increased levels of xenophobia and violence.



PROTECTING MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS

Potential persecution

One of the goals of the invasion is to fight back against the “sexual permissiveness” and “moral decay of the West.” LGBTQ community fears potential persecution.

LGBTQ military

lack of legal rights for them and their partners. Recent petition with over 30,000 signatures received a reply from Zelensky alluding to the possibility of recognition same-sex unions.

People who use drugs

346,000 people who inject drugs reside in Ukraine, 19% of whom are infected with HIV, and only 6% are enrolled in MOUD.

Access to medication

Methadone production compromised, cuts in public funds, dosages reduced, threat of Russian occupation, high level of discrimination , need to ration MOUD while finding other required treatments



RESPONSIBILITY FOR ATTACKS ON HEALTHCARE

Hospitals destroyed

Russian forces have damaged 826 medical facilities; among them, 127 hospitals were destroyed

Prohibited by IL

- forbids attacks on healthcare
- requires humanitarian access and corridors
- supplies and evacuation

War crimes

30,000 cases of war crimes, UN Human Rights inquiry. Open investigation by the ICC

Moral responsibility

Advocacy as a moral responsibility of healthcare professionals

THOUGHTS? **QUESTIONS?**

