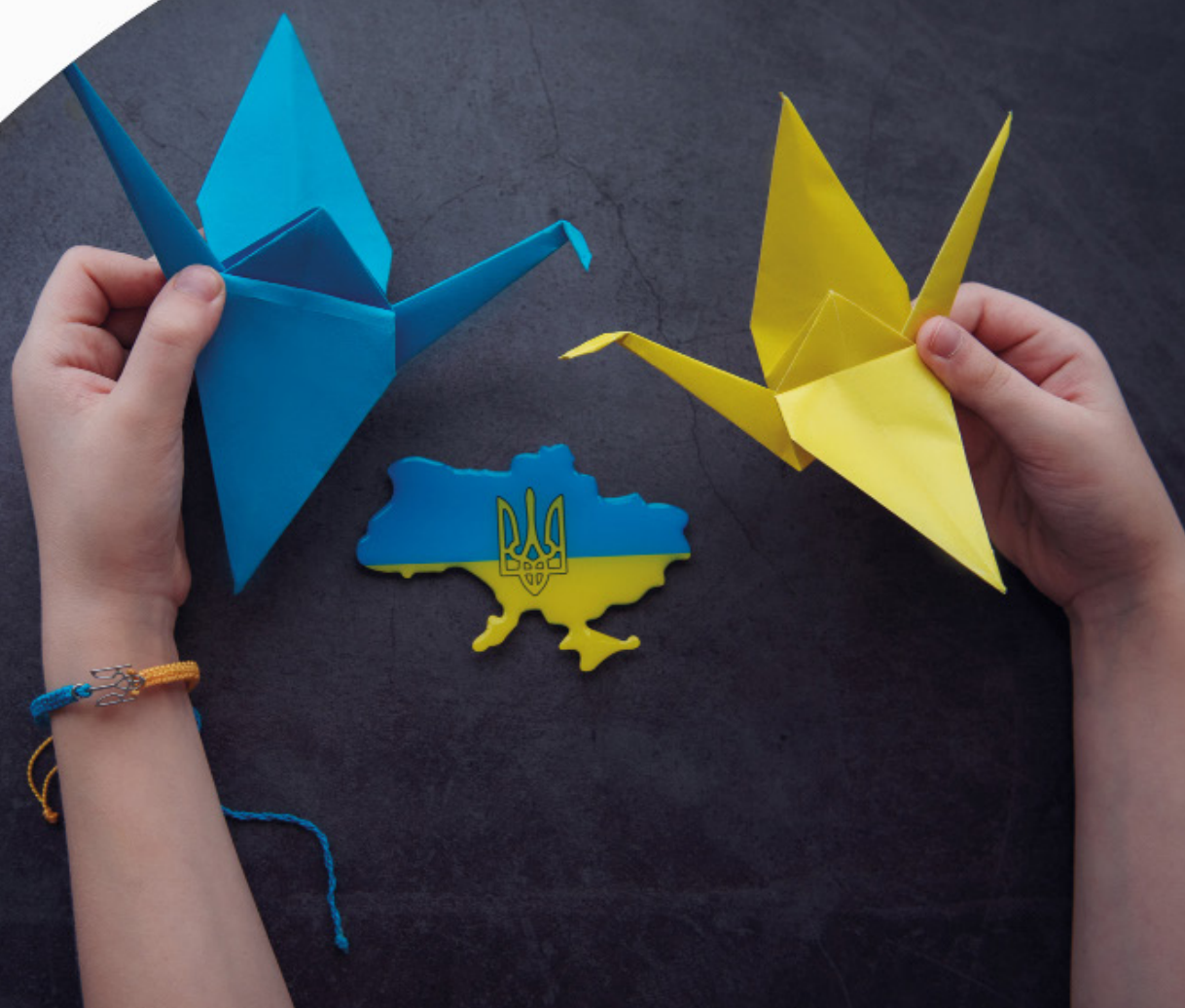


# CHILDHOOD IN WAR

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## INTERNATIONAL ARMED CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Part II. Right to education, health,  
identity.



This brochure is the second in a series of combined notes about childhood during the war. It is dedicated to children's rights, which used to be fulfilled in Ukraine on a high level (according to international reports, national analytical notes, and in-field practice), and became challenged because of the escalation of international armed conflict.

This brochure discloses the impact of war on children's rights to education, health, and identity. It is based on the gathering of statistics and cases from open sources, official data, and private stories. The publication is not aimed to include every case that has happened during the international armed conflict and doesn't reflect all the horrors have been happening in Ukraine because of the war. The purpose is to communicate examples of the current situation of children's rights in Ukraine with a hope to strengthen the call to action, to ensure children's rights and well-being on both national and international levels are guaranteed.

### **Brochure preparation.**

The brochure is initiated and developed by Polina Klykova within [childrenrights.info](https://childrenrights.info) initiative. Kyiv, Ukraine. December 2022

### **Acknowledgements.**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to Ally Dunhill & Zuzana Konradova from Eurochild for their support in the process of brochure preparation.

Designed by Vladimir Mordakov

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# RIGHT TO EDUCATION.

*“Intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to religion, education, ☐ hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not military objectives” are defined as serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict according to Rome Statute which jurisdiction was recognized by Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) for cases of crimes against humanity and war crimes<sup>1</sup>.*

Recognizing the diversity of forms of education, this publication is focused on children's access to schools (1st-11th grades) which is obligatory by national legislation.

## Overview of school-based education in Ukraine.

### Before 2014.

#### Since 1991 and before the war, there were many schools in Ukraine.

98,3% of children aged 6-18 years old attended the educational settings<sup>2</sup>.

At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year<sup>3</sup>, there were:

- over 19 000 comprehensive schools in Ukraine, with
- over 4 200 000 pupils, and
- over 500 000 teachers<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, compared to 1991 numbers of educational settings and pupils had been reducing annually<sup>5</sup>, as was the general population in Ukraine (52 000 000 population in 1991 compared to 45,5 millions in 2013<sup>6</sup>). So, the percentage of children integrated into the educational system was maintained at the same level.

1. Resolution of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine № 145-VIII, since the 4th of February 2015. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/145-19#Text>
2. National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine. National report, 2016 («Національна доповідь про стан і перспективи розвитку освіти в Україні»), page.51. <https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/nrk/Analitichni-materialy/7-natsionalna-dopovid-pro-stan-i-rozvitok-osviti-v-ukraini.pdf>  
**Note:** the source of statistics does not mention how children who may be invisible to government (particularly, because of their social and cultural background) were taken into the account.
3. **Note:** The school year in Ukraine starts on the 1st of September, and “the last bell” (a symbol of graduation) calls on the last week of May.
4. State Statistics Service of Ukraine. School settings. [https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2005/osv\\_rik/osv\\_u/znz\\_u.html](https://ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2005/osv_rik/osv_u/znz_u.html)
5. National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine. National report, 2016 («Національна доповідь про стан і перспективи розвитку освіти в Україні»), picture 5.1., page.259.
6. Source of Ukrainian Statistics <https://index.minfin.com.ua/ua/reference/people/>

<b>2014-2021.</b>	<p>Over 400 000 children study at the front line, under the risks of artillery fire, bombing, and being surrounded by mines<sup>7</sup>.</p> <p>Between 2017-2020, 104 schools were damaged, and 79 times schools had to pause their work or move to distance learning because of attacks; 19 schools were used for military purposes<sup>8</sup>.</p>
<b>2021-22 school year. Beginning</b>	<p>At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 13 991 schools (including boarding schools, social rehabilitation schools, and other types of school settings),</li> <li>• 4 230 358 pupils, and</li> <li>• 434 755 teachers<sup>9</sup>.</li> </ul>
<b>2021-22 school year. Since the 24th of February 2022</b>	<p>So far, the complex impact of migration (both in and outside Ukraine), occupation, and other war-caused problems remain unknown.</p> <p>Some of the difficulties in the learning process were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes in the lessons schedule;</li> <li>• changes of pupils in one class group;</li> <li>• changes and challenges in teacher's capacity to perform their job;</li> <li>• absence of pupils in the classrooms (including digital absence);</li> <li>• pupils being overwhelmed as they are working across 2 educational programmes (Ukrainian and foreign ones);</li> <li>• impossibility to enter higher or professional pre-higher education settings because of military occupation;</li> <li>• destructions of educational settings;</li> <li>• limited safety of educational settings (incl. the absence of bomb shelters).</li> </ul> <p>These and other difficulties remain for the 2022-2023 school year.</p>

7. Ministry of Education of Ukraine, Post «Діти повинні отримувати освіту у безпечних умовах», 2020. <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/news/diti-povinni-otrimuvati-osvitu-u-bezpechnih-umovah-sergij-shkarlet-v-mizhnarodnij-den-zahistu-osviti-vid-napadiv>
8. Ukraine Education Cluster. Report, May 2020: [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/attacks\\_on\\_education\\_situation\\_report\\_as\\_of\\_05.05.2020.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/attacks_on_education_situation_report_as_of_05.05.2020.pdf)
9. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Summary report on schools at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. <https://iea.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/76-ryk-vsi-formi-vlasnosti.pdf>



**2022-2023  
school year.**

On the 6th of September 2022,

- 5 497 schools run the curricula in distance learning format only,
- 3 539 schools provide education in classrooms;
- 3 087 – blended learning (schools combine distance and classroom formats of learning<sup>10</sup>).

Meantime, on the 5th of September, approximately 1 300 schools were in temporarily occupied territories<sup>11</sup>.

Because of Russian Federation war against Ukraine, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2022, 2719 educational settings were damaged (statistics include not only schools but also kindergartens, colleges, and universities), and 332 of them were totally destroyed<sup>12</sup>. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, 3126 educational settings were damaged, and 337 destroyed<sup>13</sup>. Numbers keep growing.



10. Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine within telethon, 0:35-0:57: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E8RvOvjvEk&ab\\_channel=MONUKRAINE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E8RvOvjvEk&ab_channel=MONUKRAINE) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E8RvOvjvEk&ab\\_channel=MONUKRAINE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0E8RvOvjvEk&ab_channel=MONUKRAINE)
11. Statement of the Chairman of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Education, Science and Innovation <https://t.me/SerhiiBabak/337>
12. Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine. News, 22.11.2022 <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-437-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-16387>
13. Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine. News, 28.12.2022: <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-450-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-17973>

## Impact of military actions on children's right to education.

Borodyanka, Kyiv region, one of the towns which was occupied in spring 2022.

Local school was used by Russian troops for military purposes.

Before the occupation, the school was well-equipped. Teachers had laptops, interactive screens, and other modern tools for contemporary education. Occupation impacted the lives of everyone in the town, and also the pedagogical workers.



Picture: screenshot of the journalist report <sup>14</sup>

### Svitlana's case.

Svitlana's son could not believe his mother kept teaching without a roof over her head and made a video of her working in a yard. He had published the video online, afterwards journalists came to Svitlana to learn about her story.

Russian troops turned Svitlana's school building into their headquarters. They took away and destroyed all the equipment. For this reason, the teacher works in the yard of her own home, as her house was also destroyed.

Svitlana says: **“Children's vision of the world has changed... they want to be better people than occupants, and ... they realize they have to re-build the country”**  
(с, 1:58... 2:09)



Video report by RadioSvoboda Media <http://surl.li/egvbr>

War impacts children's opportunities to fulfill their right to education in multiple ways. Some of these effects are described in the following chapters.

14. Picture: screenshot of the journalist report <https://www.facebook.com/radiosvoboda.org/videos/392455909595161/>

## Damage and destruction of educational settings.

Because of RF war against Ukraine, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2022,

# 3126

educational settings  
are damaged



# 337

of them are totally  
destroyed<sup>15</sup>.



Since March 2022, a web-site with region-based statistics about the damaged educational settings has been launched: <https://saveschools.in.ua/en/>

15. Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine. News, 28.12.2022: <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-450-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-17973>

16. Zhytomyr.Info Media: [https://www.zhitomir.info/news\\_206383.html](https://www.zhitomir.info/news_206383.html)



## Military use of schools.

*“...and children played around dead bodies...” (c)*

Since the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, the terrible military use of schools happened in Yahidne village, 15 km from Chernihiv city. People from the village (adults and children) were taken to the school as hostages and were held in inhumane conditions.

Russian military took the higher floors and placed civilians in lower rooms without primary access to toilets. **Some people died because of lack of oxygen, lack of food, and absence of access to medications.** Russian soldiers removed the dead bodies several days after people died. Until then, everyone had to sit around, and children played around dead bodies (time 17:40 on video report).

People also recall (time 18:40 on video), that some people were taken to the kindergarten basement in Vyshneve village for interrogation<sup>17</sup>.



17. Interview with survivors in video report by Suspilne Media: <https://cutt.ly/1M2teQs>

## Obstacles in the educational process for pupils who stay in the territory of Ukraine.



The classroom in the school's bomb shelter, Kyiv city<sup>18</sup>.

### Direct impact of shelling and bombing.

In addition to risks of artillery shelling of the schools which are close to the front line, every school across the country is at risk of air strikes. Sirens interrupt the educational process almost every day to provide an opportunity to save lives.

### Indirect impact of shelling and bombing.

Damaged power plants, water supplies, and heating systems constrain the school's ability to function normally and also limits the provision of distance learning.

Even in locations that have some electricity, blackout schedules of teachers and pupils are different (so when a teacher has access to a computer and the internet, some pupils do not, and vice versa).



Some teachers make videos of lessons to enable every pupil to study, some teachers conduct lessons from the business locations (like a hall in the post department) which are open for people to charge their electronic devices.

18. Picture: Kyiv city administration [t.me/KyivCityOfficial/4963](https://t.me/KyivCityOfficial/4963)

## Obstacles in the educational process for pupils who stay in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine.

### Issues for graduation classes.

The key issue for pupils in graduation classes is the absence of adequate opportunities for further study at colleges or universities. Attempting to leave the occupied territory is a mortal risk to one's life, as civilian cars and buses are shelled by Russian soldiers; and even avoiding the roads is dangerous as the fields are mined.

### Changes in curricula.



*"We try to learn when we have an opportunity" (c)*

This quote is from an interview<sup>19</sup> with a mother of a school-aged girl in Kherson which was occupied till November 2022.

Picture of school students<sup>20</sup>

Despite the lack of a mobile connection, some children try to find access to the internet to follow the Ukrainian educational curricula.

Occupation changes the curricula in educational settings, puts pressure on teachers, and prohibits any Ukrainian identity. Anyone who continues teaching according to the Ukrainian curricula has to do this in secrecy.

People who try to survive during the occupation have to hide their own identities and views.

19. BBC News Ukraine. Victoriia Prysedska article «Просимо не розповідати про українські уроки». Як вчать на окупованій території». 25th September 2022 <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-62983478>

20. Picture of school students [https://freepik.com/free-photo/student-schooling-uniform-japanese-backpack\\_2861815.htm](https://freepik.com/free-photo/student-schooling-uniform-japanese-backpack_2861815.htm)

## Obstacles in the educational process for pupils who stay abroad.

Migration of pupils and teachers, necessity to be enrolled in other schools or to start homeschooling, uncertainty of educational perspectives are some of the difficulties that children, their parents, and teachers have to deal with. But this is not an exhaustive list.

Some of the most common concerns are reflected in this example when a father was looking for legal advice:

*"Good afternoon! My 12 y.o. son and wife are staying in evacuation in Germany. They got appropriate status, and son is enrolled in local German school. He accomplished the 6th grade in Ukraine. In Germany, he is enrolled in the 8th grade. We worry about the following issues: what if he stays to study there? If he comes back to Ukraine, what grade he will study in? what document will we need from German school?"*

2022-08-31 12:19<sup>21</sup>."

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2022, 8–24,2% of pupils (depending on the region) stayed abroad<sup>22</sup>.

Meanwhile, according to a survey managed by the Educational Ombudsman of Ukraine:

- Every tenth Ukrainian pupil (11%), who stays abroad learns only the foreign curriculum;
- Every third pupil (33,9%) learns only the Ukrainian curriculum, and
- The majority of pupils study both the Ukrainian (digitally or via weekend schools) and foreign curricula<sup>23</sup>.

The high number of children who combine curricula is due to different factors, including the language barrier (children need to learn the local language, or it is impossible for them to complete the foreign school programme).

21. Requests from the base of legal consultations.

22. Analytical report "Ukrainian education during martial law", 2022 («Освіта України в умовах воєнного стану»), 2022. [https://iea.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/education-of-ukraine\\_2022.pdf](https://iea.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/education-of-ukraine_2022.pdf), page.72, picture. 3.3.3

23. Office of Education Ombudsman of Ukraine. Survey summary, August 2022 ( «Результати опитування батьків, чиї діти знаходяться за кордоном»). <https://eo.gov.ua/chym-zakordonni-shkoly-vidriznaiutsia-vid-ukrainskykh-rezultaty-opytuvannia-batkiv-chyi-dity-znakhodiatsia-za-kordonom/2022/08/23/>



The practice of following two educational programmes exhausts children a lot.

So far, the mechanism of recognizing foreign education by the Ukrainian system of education remains unclear. Here are some of the main challenges:

- different countries have different curricula for the same subjects;
- part of the national curriculum (Ukrainian language, literature, history) is not a part of the foreign school programmes.



## **Predictable issues associated with the weakening of the education system.**

### **Learning losses.**

War disturbed the possibility of ongoing and comprehensive educational process. In addition to the circumstances described above, it affected the educational system's capacity due to:

- migration (internal (internally displaced teachers and students) and abroad);
- teachers quitting their positions in educational settings (for different reasons);
- military mobilization of teachers;
- other circumstances, which include but aren't limited to, war impact on emotional and cognitive capabilities, deaths caused by shelling and bombing, etc.

### **Abuse and Exploitation.**

National legislation recognizes educational settings as actors in child protection, where staff are responsible to identify and report cases of child maltreatment. If a child is absent from the class for 10 days without an absence note from parents, schools are obligated to report it to the child protection services (according to p.13 of the Act of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine #684).

This is also applied to missing distance learning classes.

The absence of pupils in the class (both in-person and digital) are understandable: physical risks to life because of shelling and bombing, power outages, no signals for mobile connections and internet. But school settings remain the centers for child support and protection from any maltreatment, including domestic violence.

If parents don't report the reasons for the child's absence, and schools don't report to Child Protection Services — we then do not know how many children are not attending school, and how many are at other risks.



## **“While others post pictures from their last bells<sup>24</sup>– we are waiting for our last air raid siren” (c)**

This comment was posted by one of the schoolgirls in the backstage video and photo session “Graduation on Ruins” (the backstage video: <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMF4ByyNx/>)

The photo session was initiated and organized by photographer Stanislav Senyk for graduates from the schools in Chernihiv city. Because of air strikes, especially during February-April 2022, major schools here were damaged or destroyed; the last bell at the end of the school year was not organized. The graduates had no official celebrations.



Photo: Stanislav Senyk <https://www.instagram.com/senykstas/>

24. Last bell ceremony is a celebration of the end of secondary school study. Pupils from graduation classes commonly dance waltz, teachers encourage pupils for further life, and the 1st grade girl rings a bell (the similar tradition is to welcome new pupils with the first bell on the 1st of September).



# RIGHT TO HEALTH.

*«States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services».*

*(Article 24 (1) UNCRC)*

Children's right to health is also emphasized by the Ukrainian national legislation, particularly article 6 of the Act on Childhood Protection, and under other laws and bylaws.



Photo: post on Facebook made by Hromadske Media..<sup>25</sup>

After the missile attack on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November which ruined infrastructure across the country, most Ukrainians were left without electricity.

The girl was taken to a gas station with electricity to connect her medical device to power.

The number of children who had no access to critically important medical equipment because of missiles attacks on infrastructure stays unknown.

25. Photo: post on Facebook made by Hromadske Media. <https://www.facebook.com/hromadskeua/posts/pfbid02KetjLsdM1WLiBtAMZ3aat5xbE8s6QAgyAo81TyzMENamZLwxodm6bsnFpAXoB8il>

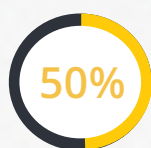


## OBSTACLES TO THE RIGHT TO HEALTH CAUSED OR EXACERBATED BY WAR.

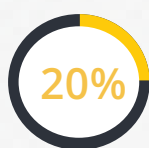
### Restricted access to healthcare and medicines.

Access to adequate healthcare and medicines has been limited because ports and airports are closed and delivery of supply became more difficult, the prices have increased, medical workers are mobilized by the army, are some of the reasons.

Since the first days of the full-scaled war, healthcare workers have been called for mobilization. Not everyone is taken to the frontline, but even the ones who work in regular clinics treat (treatment, surgery, dental services) mainly those who were injured in the



of respondents («every second») had issues with access to medical services,



(«every fifth») could not obtain the necessary medicines during the martial law, according to the WHO survey<sup>26</sup>.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of July (when the last briefing of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine related to this issue was held), attempts to deliver medicines to the occupied territories were unsuccessful because **Russian Federation had never opened the humanitarian corridor<sup>27</sup>.**

### Russian attacks against the humanitarian aid. Damages of medical settings; deaths of medical workers.

During the same briefing, the Minister of Health of Ukraine reported:

- 817 healthcare settings were damaged, 122 were totally destroyed;
- 481 pharmacies were damaged, 43 were totally destroyed;
- more than 60 medical workers who worked in civilian hospitals were injured or killed as a consequence of shelling;
- 85 emergency cars were destroyed, 105 were captured;
- 469 healthcare settings were in the temporarily occupied territory<sup>28</sup>.

26. United Nations Ukraine. Press Release "Accessing health care in Ukraine after 8 months of war..." <https://ukraine.un.org/uk/204466-dostup-do-medychnykh-posluh-v-ukrayini-pislya-vosmy-misyatsiv-viyny-systema-okhorony>

27. Minister of Health of Ukraine; telethop as part of the telethon "Medical services during the war" 6 July 2022; 7:55-8:58, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S4k0OLMUT8&ab\\_channel=UkrinformTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S4k0OLMUT8&ab_channel=UkrinformTV)

28. Minister of Health of Ukraine; telethop as part of the telethon "Medical services during the war" 6 July 2022; 2:50-4:56, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S4k0OLMUT8&ab\\_channel=UkrinformTV](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S4k0OLMUT8&ab_channel=UkrinformTV)

*“Civilian hospitals organized to give care to the wounded and sick, the infirm and maternity cases, may in no circumstances be the object of attack, but shall at all times be respected and protected by the Parties to the conflict”.*

*(Article 18(1) Geneva Convention  
Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War).*

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2022, the Russian army bombed Mariupol, the city in Donetsk region which had a population of over 400 000.



The bombs were dropped on a children’s hospital and maternity hospital. The buildings were destroyed, 3 people were killed and 17 people (children, women, and healthcare workers) were injured. Later, two more people died: a woman and her newborn child, who were also injured in the maternity hospital<sup>29</sup>.



Photo: Child hospital after bombing in Mariupol<sup>30</sup>.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October as a consequence of missile attacks on Kyiv, a doctor from Okhmatdyt (National Children's Specialized Hospital) who had specialized in bone marrow transplantation died<sup>31</sup>.

However, there have been many other losses that have had a great impact on the provision of health care for children.

29. Video of damages, Hromadske Media: <https://hromadske.ua/posts/rosijski-okupanti-skinuli-na-pologovij-ta-likarnyu-v-mariupoli-kilkist-postrazhdalih-nevidoma>

30. Photo: <https://cutt.ly/v2rOB59>

31. National Children's Specialized Hospital, post on 11.10.2022: <https://www.facebook.com/ndslohmatdyt/posts/pfbid032rr5BXVZnd67rLEMK4fivGU9kYhCfljrxmdey9wNGDSNfpsFhtFUUAruSm8SMuWYI>

## Minefields posing risks for children.

Since the war broke out in 2014, Ukraine has become one of the most mined countries in the world. East of the country in particular<sup>32</sup>, and since February 2022 mines have been spread to other regions.

Since March 2022, there are multiple cases where children received mine-related injuries, especially in the de-occupied territories and around the front line. This includes, three teenagers close to Melitopol<sup>33</sup>, two teenagers in Kharkiv<sup>34</sup>, and others. Accurate statistics do not exist or are not publicly available.

## Children are born in places that are not equipped for childbirth and newborns.



Mia is one of children who was born in a bomb shelter (Kyiv city underground), while the air raid sirens were screaming.

On the same day, children were born in other cities, including bomb shelters and basements in Kherson before its occupation<sup>35</sup>.

The data on number of children who were born during 2022 was not published until now. Interim data doesn't include information on conditions and circumstances of childbirth and newborns support<sup>36</sup>.

*"1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health□*

*2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures: ...*

*(d) To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers;"*

*(Article 24 UNCRC)*

32. United Nations Ukraine. Post "Landmines Still Pose a Threat to Two Million Ukrainians". 05 April 2021 <https://ukraine.un.org/en/123917-landmines-still-pose-threat-two-million-ukrainians>

33. Administration of Zaporizhzhia region, 24.03.2022 <https://www.facebook.com/zoda.gov.ua/posts/278501194459739>

34. The State Emergency Service of Ukraine, post on 11.11.2022: [https://t.me/dsns\\_telegram/10812](https://t.me/dsns_telegram/10812)

35. TSN Media: <https://tsn.ua/ukrayina/narodzheni-pid-obstrilami-v-ukrayini-v-ukrityah-z-yavlyayutsya-malyuki-1989238.html>

36. Ministry of Health of Ukraine, post on 02.06.2022: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=386718970148992&set=a.294419049378985> :



## Seriously ill children stay in underground shelters.



Air strikes forced people, including children requiring hospital care, to hide underground and stay there for a few hours per day, and sometimes — all day long.

## Negative consequences for mental health caused by traumatic experience.

Children fall asleep and wake up to the noise of explosions, they are separated from their friends and commonly from close family members too, some lose their parents forever, and often see news about other deaths and other losses. It is more than stress caused by routine conflicts or poor school performance; it is a traumatic experience that touched (almost) everyone who lives in Ukraine, and who lives abroad but is related to Ukraine emotionally.

Certain risks to health are caused by direct attacks by the Russian army. As of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, 868 children have been injured, data is not finalized as reports from some front line territories come with delays<sup>38</sup>). It is impossible to maintain all prevention measures against COVID-19 in the shelters for civilians, there are fewer spaces and opportunities to rest and for recreation (because of mined territories which are commonly used for health and recreation), and a range of other difficulties.

37. Photo: Facebook post by Anastasiya Magerramova, on the 10th of October during the missiles attack <https://www.facebook.com/anastasiya.magerramova/posts/pfbid026K91HCWj1Zguz2shui98ckKYquQ49hYeaouUHPajcrTfLHXGb hJmK1jtrU415ijcl>

38. Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine. News, 28.12.2022: <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/posts/yuvenalni-prokurori-450-ditei-zaginulo-vnaslidok-zbroinoyi-agresiyi-rf-v-ukrayini-17973>





# RIGHT TO IDENTITY.

## **Identity: nationality and ethnical origin, language, religion.**

By the end of August 2022<sup>39</sup>, 205 religious buildings (churches, mosques, and synagogues) were damaged as a result of military actions.

Persecution on a religious basis (especially against Protestant churches) has been taking place in the occupied territory of Ukraine since 2014 (in Crimea, part of Donetsk and Luhansk regions). The scope of these persecutions and their impact on children remains unknown.

Meanwhile, all the schools in the occupied territories are required by the Russian Federation to follow a special curricula under the programme called “denazification of education”<sup>40</sup>. A brief overview of learning process is mentioned on page 11 in the “Right to Education” chapter.

## **Identity: family relations.**

Each evacuation (both within the country and abroad) affects a child’s sense of belonging to their own community, its traditions, and separate family members.

The problems of deportations and parental abductions are described in the first part of “Childhood in War” brochure series: <https://childrenrights.info/dytynstvo-u-period-vijny-chastyna-1/>.

On the 28th of December 2022, **13876 children were deported to Russia based on the Ukrainian National Information Bureau**; and over 700 000 children according to Russian data (the factual data cannot be verified at this time).

Mass deportation of children from recently occupied territories to Crimea and the Russian Federation was reported by the Ukrainian Ombudsman, and by NGO “Crimean Tatar Resource Center”, emphasizing that the majority of children are not orphans. They are enrolled in Russian schools and are expected then to remain living in RF.

39. Ministry of Culture of Ukraine. Post “6 months of full-scale war” (“Півроку повномасштабної агресії росії...”). 31.08.2022. <https://mkip.gov.ua/news/7627.html>

40. RF news quoting Vice-Speaker of RF, <https://www.socialinform.ru/detskij-dom-rostok-v-kaliningradskoj-oblasti-skryvaet-razvratnye-dejstviya-svoih-podopechnyh/>

41. Informational source: <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/>

## Citizenship in the territories which are temporarily occupied.

According to Ukrainian legislation, Ukrainian citizenship may be received by children when at least one of the parents is Ukrainian or if they were born in Ukraine; foreigners can acquire citizenship according to legal procedures.

But people in temporarily occupied territories do not have opportunity to choose or keep own citizenship. 14-year-olds, who have a Ukrainian birth certificate, are blocked from getting Ukrainian citizenship, and have to accept the Russian citizenship. Previously, they had to accept citizenship of Donetsk and Luhansk National Republics.

«The Occupying Power shall take all necessary steps to facilitate the identification of children and the registration of their parentage. **It may not, in any case, change their personal status,** nor enlist them in formations or organizations subordinate to it.»

(Article 50(2) Geneva Convention  
Relative to the Protection of Civilian  
Persons in Time of War)

Forced passports have been in place in the occupied territories since 2014.

In 2022, the special Act of Russian Federation on Kherson region (which used to be occupied on the date of the Act) defines that citizenship of the Russia Federation is provided to children under 14 y.o. upon their parents' request (article 7), for orphans and children deprived of parental care, and other children in residential governmental care regardless their age; the request is submitted by the authority that ensures caregiving (article 10)<sup>44</sup>. This way changing the citizenship of children living in residential care happens automatically.

Also, the Act states that people “can request to give up Ukrainian citizenship”, at the same time a stateless person and foreigners who have the legal right to live in Ukrainian territory, obtain the same right within RF and may get the Russian citizenship or to keep foreigner/stateless status. An opportunity to stay and live on the occupied Ukrainian territory with Ukrainian citizenship is not defined as an option.

42. Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights. News, 05/11/2022 14:13. <https://cutt.ly/t2TUSk4>

43. CTRC News. <https://cutt.ly/w2TPcTe>

44. Federal Act since 04.10.2022 #8-FKZ “On adoption of Kherson region into Russia Federation...” (N 8-ФКЗ “О принятии в Российскую Федерацию Херсонской области и образовании в составе Российской Федерации нового субъекта - Херсонской области”). <https://www.garant.ru/hotlaw/federal/1569812/>

Meantime, in the last half of 2022, there has been an increase in the number of children and youth from territories occupied since 2014, who want to re-establish their own Ukrainian identities.

For example:

“ Good afternoon, I’m staying in the territory of temporarily occupied Donetsk since 2014□ I wanna get to know how can I get Ukrainian passport when I’m 18?.. By now I’m 16. I have dnr passport.»

**Tetiana, 30.09.2022 17:49 ”**

«Good afternoon, I have a question on citizenship. I am from Ukraine, from occupied Sevastopol. I live in Montenegro. In 2016 (when I was 14) my parents received russian citizenships for them and for me. My key questions are:

- is the citizenship assigned on the occupied territory valid?
- if yes, how can I refuse this document?

2022-12-09 10:45.»<sup>45</sup>

## **Citizenship in European, American, and other Ukraine-friendly countries.**

Most of the issues related to passports arise for those who left Ukraine because of the war (especially children who supposed to get their first internal passports (ID cards) at 14 or to update the card at 18), but this service is usually provided in Ukrainian territory only.

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine passed an Act that temporarily allows ID cards to be delivered abroad<sup>46</sup>.

In December 2022, Poland was the only country, where this service is available. For more information <https://warszawa.pasport.org.ua/services/id-card-pl>.

45. Quotes (without lexical or grammar corrections) requests from data base of legal support.

46. Act of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine #678 since 10.06.2022 “On pilot project of issuance of a passport of a citizen of Ukraine ... for citizens of Ukraine who stay abroad”. («Про реалізацію експериментального проекту щодо оформлення паспорта громадянина України та паспорта громадянина України для виїзду за кордон громадянам України, які перебувають за межами України»). <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/678-2022-n#Text>