



Red Flag Alert for Genocide

RUSSIA

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In light of the Russian Ballistic missile attacks on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities on October 10 and 11, as well as Russia's September 21 mobilization of reservists, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention is issuing a Red Flag Alert for a dangerous escalation in Russia's military tactics in Ukraine. In particular, we are concerned about the Russian state's increasingly alarmist claims that it faces an existential threat from the West and that Russia must fight back in self-defense. States and elites that feel themselves to be existentially threatened are particularly vulnerable to committing the mass murder pattern of genocide, including the omnicide implied by the use of nuclear weapons.

Russia's ballistic missile attacks were launched as a response to the Ukrainian strike on the Kerch Bridge, a symbol of Russian domination of Crimea and an important supply link for Russian soldiers. Russia has, increasingly, been threatening the overall existence of Ukraine with the use of nuclear weapons. These threats to Ukraine – as well as its neighbors – further demonstrate that Russia's ultimate goal is to destroy the Ukrainian identity. Putin's nuclear threats also reflect the extent to which Putin has framed Russia's war of aggression as an act of self-defense.

Growing Russian failures in the conflict – evidenced by the success of the Ukrainian counter offensive – have driven the state to further extremism. The recent mobilization decree was only the third time in the nation's history – and the first time since World War II – that the state has mobilized its reserve forces. The decree calls for 300,000 reservists to join the war against Ukraine and its "Western backers". The Lemkin Institute is concerned that the impact of this mobilization is being felt most heavily by the historically persecuted ethnic minority populations in the Russian Federation, such as Muslim minorities in Dagestan and Chechnya, as well as Russian Armenians, in an internal attempt to build a new Russia under Putin's ethnonationalist idea of racial purity.

To this point, on September 30, France 24 reported that men sent to Ukraine from areas such as Dagestan and Tuva have faced losses at a rate sometimes ten times as high as those from Russia's

core regions. This could imply a genocidal intent to eliminate the ethnic minorities (through a significant loss of 'part' of their populations) by placing them in the most dangerous positions.

Russia's brutality in Ukraine and the disproportionate burden of war placed on ethnic minority men exist in tandem, with the consequence that the language of the Russian Federation coupled with its actions in its increasingly desperate war is a grave threat to the peoples of both Russia and Ukraine. The Lemkin Institute is concerned that, as the war progresses and the actions of the Russian state become more desperate, we will see an increase in the genocidal activity of the Russian military, Russian soldiers, and Russian state officials. This has already had a catastrophic impact on the people of Ukraine; now it is also threatening the destruction of historically marginalized peoples from inside the Russian state. Further escalation of the already devastating conflict could draw the world's major powers into direct confrontations in Ukraine and elsewhere, with catastrophic global implications.

The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention urges everyone opposed to this genocidal war against Ukrainians to step up efforts towards the protection and rescue of civilians as well as to offer safe harbor to Russian nationals, especially young men, seeking to flee the Russian war machine. We also urge the Western powers to engage carefully and diplomatically with Russia as much as possible in other regions, such as the Middle East, South Caucasus, and Central Asia, where Russia has important strategic interests and where great power rivalry could threaten the lives of millions more ordinary people.