



Updated Statement on Genocide in Ukraine

Released 09 April 2022

Given recent revelations of atrocity in Russian-occupied Ukraine, *the Lemkin Institute wishes to underscore its conviction that Russia is committing genocide in Ukraine.*

In particular, reports of genocidal forms of rape, life force atrocities, mass deportations of Ukrainians to Russia, and the kidnapping and transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia are highly indicative of genocidal intent.

Putin's early statements denying the existence and legitimacy of the Ukrainian nation and state, and thus of the national identity of its inhabitants, appear to be informing the behavior of Russia's military and Russian troops in Ukraine and reveal the possible existence of a state plan or policy aimed at totally or partially destroying Ukrainian national identity. In addition to the indiscriminate bombing and shelling of Ukrainian cities and towns and the blockade of Mariupol, both of which have led to high numbers of civilian casualties and a humanitarian catastrophe, Russian troops have engaged in pronounced life force atrocities against Ukrainian civilians and have engaged in policies that directly contravene the Genocide Convention.

In the cases of rape that are coming to our attention, we see a high level of gang rape, enhanced cruelty, rape of children, and life force atrocities that target the visible and invisible bonds that make community life possible. In one reported instance, Russian soldiers found a family of three in their home. They killed the man and raped the woman for days in front of her child. In another case, Russian soldiers raped an 11-year-old boy while his mother was tied to a chair and forced to watch. These sorts of ritualized rapes and rape-murders are common atrocities during genocide.

Russia's Ambassador to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia, informed the UN Security Council on Thursday, April 7 that Russia had "evacuated" 600,000 people from Ukraine to Russia in the past month and a half. While Nebenzia argues that these deportations were voluntary, the conditions of Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine precludes such a determination. These deportations harken back to one of Stalin's favorite modes of genocide, which was to combine execution, starvation, and forced deportation in an effort to break the historical agency and power of subject nations.

According to the Ukrainian Ombudswoman for Human Rights, 121,000 of the deported Ukrainians have been children, many of them orphaned by Russia's war. Russia is reportedly working on legislation to fast track the adoption of these children. This policy contravenes Article II.e. of the Genocide Convention, which proscribes the forcible transfer of "children of

the group to another group.” It also conforms to Pattern 8 (“Appropriation of Biological Resources”) of the Lemkin Institute’s Ten Patterns of Genocide.

We remind the world that there is an important distinction between an unfolding genocidal process and a determination of genocide in a court of law. Whether or not Putin and other political and military leaders can be found individually responsible for genocide in an international legal proceeding at some later date remains to be seen. In the meantime, it is important that policy makers understand the shape and the dynamic of this particular conflict in order to devise the best possible responses to limit the loss of life and protect the Ukrainian identity from long-term devastation.

There can be no doubt that the reports emerging from Ukraine are evidence of genocide.

This statement is meant to be read as an addition to our statement from 20 March 2022, in which we delineated our reasons for issuing a statement on genocide after almost one month of war.