DEMOGRAPHIC ENGINEERING AND BUREAUCRATIC TERROR: RUSSIA'S POLICY TOWARD CIVILIANS IN OCCUPIED UKRAINE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The strategic logic of demographic engineering**
  The Russian occupation of Ukrainian territories constitutes a centralised state policy of "biopolitical engineering" designed to fundamentally alter the ethnic and social composition of the region. Unlike traditional military occupations focused on security, this operation prioritises the total management of the local population's biological existence. The overarching objective is to render the reintegration of these territories into Ukraine demographically and socially impossible by systematically replacing the indigenous Ukrainian population with loyal subjects from the Russian Federation.

- **Radicalisation of control methods**
  Following the failure of initial intelligence assessments that predicted rapid capitulation, the occupation administration shifted from a strategy of co-optation to one of systemic pacification. This transition necessitated the establishment of a pervasive "climate of fear", enforced through the arbitrary detention of community leaders, journalists, and veterans. In regions with high resistance, such as Kyiv and Chernihiv, this manifested as direct physical elimination and mass atrocities, whereas in the south, it evolved into a structured system of administrative terror.

- **The mechanism of filtration and deportation**
  A core instrument of this policy is the "filtration" system – a mandatory and abusive security screening process used to segregate the population. Residents who fail these screenings face detention or forcible transfer to the Russian Federation. This mechanism serves a dual purpose: the neutralisation of dissent and the facilitation

of mass deportations, particularly of children, whose removal is calculated to sever the generational continuity of the Ukrainian national identity.

- **Weaponisation of citizenship and "civil death"**
  The occupation has weaponised the legal status of residents, transforming the Russian passport from a travel document into a prerequisite for survival. Access to life-sustaining resources, including insulin and humanitarian aid, is strictly conditioned on naturalisation. Recent legislation has codified this coercion, stipulating that residents without Russian citizenship by 1 July 2024, will be classified as "foreign citizens", stripping them of property rights and subjecting them to potential deportation.

- **Settler colonialism and economic incentives**
  To consolidate control, Russia is implementing a state-sponsored program of settler colonialism. The Kremlin actively incentivises the migration of Russian citizens and Central Asian labour to the occupied territories through preferential economic instruments, such as mortgages at 2% per annum and "residential certificates". This influx of new residents is physically accommodated through the seizure of real estate belonging to displaced or deported Ukrainians, creating a new demographic reality on the ground.

- **Institutional dismantling and replacement**
  The occupier systematically dismantles Ukrainian governance structures, replacing them with a vertical of power staffed by imported Russian officials ("Varangians") and coerced local collaborators. This administrative substitution extends to the educational and legal systems, ensuring that all public institutions function as vectors for Russian state ideology. The recruitment of local staff often relies on leveraging compromised individuals or applying severe duress to essential workers, such as emergency responders.

- **Eradication of national identity**
  Ideological conformity is enforced through the total re-structuring of the information and educational space. By eradicating the Ukrainian curriculum and militarising youth organisations, the administration aims to "dena-tionalise" the younger generation. This cognitive occu-pation is designed to fracture the social consciousness of the population, framing the Russian presence as the only viable future while erasing the cultural markers of the Ukrainian state.

- **Legal qualification and international implications**
  The cumulative actions of the Russian Federation – en-compassing forced transfers, the imposition of citizen-ship, and the targeting of protected groups – constitute grave violations of International Humanitarian Law. Specifically, the systematic nature of the atrocities in Bucha, Irpin, and Mariupol, alongside the deportation of children, aligns with the legal qualifications of war crimes and potential genocide. The report concludes that these are not isolated incidents but components of a coordinated strategy requiring a robust international legal response.

INTRODUCTION

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation marks a watershed moment in European security, distinguished not only by its scale but by the nature of the aggressor's ambitions. While military operations secure the physical territory, the occupation regime is engaged in a comprehensive "biopolitical operation" targeting the civilian population itself. This analysis posits that Moscow's strategy transcends conventional territorial conquest, seeking instead to control the biological survival, cultural identity, and ethnic composition of the occupied regions.

To understand the brutality of the current occupation regime, one must analyse its origins in the strategic miscalculations of the pre-invasion phase. The Federal Security Service (FSB) operated on the flawed assumption that a combination of corruption fatigue, economic hardship, and religious ties would secure the loyalty of nearly half the Ukrainian population. This intelligence failure led to a chaotic initial occupation strategy that, upon facing massive social resistance, rapidly metastasised into a policy of systemic punishment and terror.

The trajectory of Russian policy has shifted from an initial, albeit brief, attempt at "soft" co-optation to a hardline variant of pacification. Unlike the hybrid tactics observed in 2014, the post-2022 reality is defined by the immediate and violent elimination of civil society. The occupier expanded its target list from perceived security threats to include anyone capable of organising community resilience, including local officials, activists, and volunteers.

The implementation of this policy has not been monolithic. In the northern regions of Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Sumy, where the Russian military presence was contested and transient, the occupation manifested primarily through direct violence, mass executions, and intimidation. Conversely,

in the southern and eastern territories, the longer duration of control allowed for the establishment of complex administrative structures, where physical repression was complemented by institutional integration and the systematic dismantling of Ukrainian governance.

A central theoretical framework for understanding this occupation is the concept of the "exchange of human substance". This entails a deliberate state-controlled migration policy characterised by bidirectional flows: the expulsion of the disloyal indigenous population and their replacement with loyal settlers. This demographic engineering is not an incidental consequence of war but a strategic objective aimed at severing the occupied territories' connection to Ukraine.

Beyond kinetic violence, the occupation administration employs sophisticated "administrative violence". This is most evident in the imposition of the Russian legal and social welfare systems, which are used to coerce loyalty. By creating an environment where legal existence is impossible without a Russian passport, the occupier forces the population into a state of dependency, effectively weaponising the provision of healthcare and property rights.

The occupation regime places equal weight on the domination of the cognitive domain. Through the imposition of the "Russkiy Mir" ideology, the aggressor seeks to reshape the social consciousness of the inhabitants. This involves the creation of a hermetically sealed information vacuum and the weaponisation of the education system, where curricula are rewritten to deny Ukrainian statehood and instil militarised patriotism in the youth.

The paper also examines the complex dynamics of collaboration and resistance. The formation of a loyal administrative apparatus has relied on a mix of corruption – attracting marginalised elements with promises of power – and extreme coercion. The pervasive "climate of fear", maintained through a network of torture chambers and filtration camps, complicates the moral assessment of compliance, as many

residents are forced to cooperate solely to ensure the survival of themselves and their families.

This paper provides a detailed examination of the mechanisms underpinning Russia's occupation strategy. It analyses the interplay between physical repression, administrative coercion, and ideological indoctrination. By dissecting the specific tools of control – from the "filtration" of civilians to the conscription of locals – the study exposes the totalitarian nature of the regime imposed on Ukrainian soil.

Finally, this analysis aims to inform the development of future reintegration strategies. Understanding the depth of the "biopolitical" trauma inflicted on the population is essential for the post-liberation period. The findings suggest that the de-occupation process must address not only the physical reconstruction of the territories but also the complex task of cognitive and social liberation for a population subjected to systemic denationalisation.

1.
THE BIOPOLITICAL DIMENSION OF RUSSIAN OCCUPATION POLICY IN UKRAINE

The armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has emerged as one of the most critical challenges in contemporary European history. Beyond conventional warfare, the aggressor actively employs diverse methods of influence over the civilian population in occupied territories, aiming to alter social consciousness, enforce submission to its authority, and fracture Ukrainian national identity. Russia's actions extend far beyond standard territorial occupation or conventional military operations, assuming the distinct character of a biopolitical operation. Its overarching objective is not merely territorial control but the total management of the population: its ethnic composition, cultural identity, and biological survival. These actions aim to permanently transform the demographic structure of the occupied regions through social engineering – denationalisation, forced assimilation, and the elimination of groups deemed "undesirable" or "hostile". The instruments of this policy encompass both brutal physical repression and sophisticated administrative violence.

Strategic miscalculations and the transition to systemic terror: The initial phase of the invasion was predicated on flawed analyses by the Federal Security Service (FSB). Intelligence assessments assumed that nearly half of Ukrainian society – due to ties with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in canonical connection with the Moscow Patriarchate, fatigue

with corruption, and economic hardship – would accept the new administration. The reality of the war brutally contradicted these forecasts; social resistance was massive. Consequently, the Kremlin did not abandon its original goals; it simply radicalised its methods of implementation. Instead of "soft" co-optation, a hardline variant of pacification was implemented, based on systemic terror, population filtration, and the elimination of local opinion leaders.

While Russian forces initially targeted individuals perceived as posing a security threat, they rapidly cast a wider net to include any person perceived to oppose the occupation. This included the widespread arbitrary detention of local officials, journalists, civil society activists, and war veterans. The resulting climate of fear was weaponised to solidify control, suppress dissent, and induce compliance among the remaining population.

Differentiation of occupation tactics: Recent experiences indicate that the aggressor applied different instruments of influence across various occupied territories. In the east and south of Ukraine, collaborators and traitors played a key role in establishing control, facilitating the integration of occupation administrations with the local environment. Russian authorities systematically imposed their own legal, administrative, and educational systems, effectively dismantling Ukrainian governance structures.

Conversely, in northern Ukraine – specifically in the Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Sumy regions – where social resistance was exceptionally strong, methods of direct terror were predominant: mass murders, abductions of civilians, intimidation, and the physical elimination of the active segment of the community. Stark examples include the crimes of Russian military personnel in Bucha, Irpin, and Mariupol, which have earned broad international assessment as manifestations of war crimes and potential elements of genocide. In the initial months alone, Russian forces carried out widespread arbitrary detentions often accompanied by torture, ill-treatment, and summary executions.

A key element of the Russian strategy is the "exchange of human substance", realised through state-controlled bi-directional migration flows. The primary objective is the displacement of the Ukrainian population. Deportations, including the particularly drastic practice of transferring Ukrainian orphans and children, aim to sever generational and cultural continuity.

This process is institutionalised through "filtration", a compulsory, punitive, and abusive security screening process that thousands of residents – particularly from the Mariupol area – were forced to undergo. During filtration, Russian authorities collected biometric data, conducted intrusive searches, and interrogated civilians about their political views. Those who "failed" this process were detained, while others were forcibly transferred to the Russian Federation, often under the duress of having no other safe route to flee hostilities. Russia has also fast-tracked citizenship for Ukrainian orphans and children without parental care, facilitating their adoption into Russia and effectively eradicating their identity.

Weaponised Citizenship and Marginalisation: Residents who refuse to accept Russian citizenship are systematically marginalised; deprived of access to medical care, essential medicines (e.g., insulin), humanitarian aid, and social benefits. The imposition of Russian passports has been successfully achieved by making survival impossible without them. A new Russian law stipulates that anyone in the occupied territories without a Russian passport by 1 July 2024, is considered a "foreign citizen" and subject to imprisonment or deportation[1].

This administrative violence extends to property rights; a Russian passport is now required to prove property

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[1] *Положение в области прав человека на временно оккупированных территориях Украины, включая Автономную Республику Крым и город Севастополь. Доклад Генерального секретаря*, ОНЗ, A/HRC/59/67, May 2025, pp. 6–13.

ownership, leading to the seizure of homes and business-
es deemed "abandoned" by the occupation administration.
Furthermore, accepting a passport exposes men in occupied
territories to conscription, forcing them to fight against
their own country.

Settler colonialism and economic inducements: Paral-
lel to the displacement of Ukrainians, a process of settler
colonisation is underway, involving the settlement of occu-
pied territories by citizens of the Russian Federation and
labour migrants from Central Asia. The Kremlin employs eco-
nomic incentives to drive this demographic shift, offering
preferential mortgage rates (2% per annum), "residential
certificates", and stipends to those willing to move to the
occupied territories.

Russian professionals, including doctors and teachers,
are imported to replace the local workforce, further cement-
ing Russian control over public institutions. This influx is
often facilitated by the seizure of property from displaced
Ukrainians; the homes of those who fled or were deported
are frequently taken over by Russian appointees or set-
tlers. This strategy mirrors actions taken in Crimea post-
2014, aiming to create a demographic fait accompli that
complicates any future reintegration of these territories
into Ukraine.

The architecture of domination: Information warfare, coercive naturalisation, and biopolitical control in occupied Ukraine

*Hegemonic control of the information space and the "Russ-
kiy Mir" ideology:* A fundamental pillar of the aggressor
state's strategy in the occupied territories of Ukraine is
the engineering of a hermetically sealed information envi-
ronment aimed at imposing the ideology of the so-called
"Russkiy Mir" (Russian World). This informational-psycho-
logical influence is deployed not merely as propaganda but
as a mechanism to legitimise occupation administrations,

erode Ukrainian national identity, and cultivate a sense of the inevitability of Russian rule among the local population.

The occupation forces systematically dismantle the existing information infrastructure to achieve this cognitive dominance. Upon seizing control of a region, the immediate priority is the appropriation or destruction of local television and radio infrastructure. Ukrainian broadcasting channels are routinely disabled and replaced with Russian state-controlled or pro-Kremlin media outlets. This creates a unilateral information vacuum where Russia is framed as a "liberator" and Ukraine as a hostile entity managed by Western powers. In cities such as Kherson and Melitopol, the occupation administration completely reconfigured the broadcasting landscape to transmit Russian news exclusively, while in Berdiansk and Mariupol, print media was seized and repurposed to distribute materials prepared by Kremlin propagandists.

Crucially, this control extends to the digital domain. Russian forces have rerouted internet traffic through Russian servers, allowing for the censorship of Ukrainian news sites and social media platforms, thereby isolating the population from independent information sources and their relatives in government-controlled territories. This "information blockade" is enforced through the persecution of journalists and media workers, who face detention, interrogation, and violence for refusing to align with the occupation's narrative.

Weaponised citizenship – passportisation as a tool of survival: The legal status of Ukrainians has been transformed into an instrument of coercion and blackmail. This strategy of "weaponised citizenship", piloted in Crimea in 2014, has escalated to a massive scale by 2025[2]. Russia utilises migration law instrumentally, engineering a socio-economic

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[2]   L. Hinnant et al., *Russia pushes passports in occupied Ukraine*, Associated Press, https://apnews.com/article/c43bbd1107a27f70ed6a37 097d5b9c59 [12.11.2025].

environment where legal existence without a Russian passport is rendered impossible.

- The imposition of citizenship has been aggressive and widespread. Official statistics indicate that by July 2023, over 2.8 million Ukrainians had accepted Russian citizenship. By 5 March 2025, Russian Minister of Internal Affairs, Vladimir Kolokoltsev, reported that this figure in the occupied regions of "Donbas and Novorossiya" had risen to 3.5 million[3].

- Between 2019 and 2022, regulations were introduced to simplify naturalisation procedures while simultaneously dismantling alternative forms of legal residency. Reports confirm that passportisation is not a matter of choice but a strategy for survival; refusal entails the risk of deportation, loss of property rights, and denial of access to essential services. The occupation authorities have successfully imposed passports by making survival impossible without them, conditioning access to healthcare, retirement benefits, and humanitarian aid on the possession of Russian documentation. In many cases, insulin and other vital medications are denied to those who don't receive a Russian passport. Furthermore, the acceptance of a passport exposes men to conscription into the Russian army, forcing them to fight against their own nation.

The decree issued by Vladimir Putin on 20 March 2025 marks a critical juncture in the Kremlin's biopolitical engineering, signalling the end of the "transitional period". This regulation introduces a regime of total registration and sanitary segregation, building upon earlier discriminatory decrees that classified Ukrainians without Russian passports as "foreigners" on their own land.

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[3]   *Обладателями новых паспортов РФ стали 3,5 млн жителей Донбасса и Новороссии*, Интерфакс, 5 March 2025.

- Registration ultimatum: The decree mandates that Ukrainian citizens within Russia must register by 10 September 2025, while residents of the occupied territories face a deadline of 31 December 2025. Failure to comply triggers automatic deportation. This effectively codified earlier practices where residents were threatened with expulsion for failing to regularise their status under Russian law.
- Medical and social segregation: A novel and draconian component of this policy is the requirement for mandatory medical examinations to screen for HIV, viral infections, and drug addiction. This represents a clear application of exclusionary biopolitics: under the guise of public health, Russia has established a legal framework to purge the population of "biologically undesirable" elements or those deemed a burden on the healthcare system.
- Exclusion of "high-risk" groups: The decree precludes the legalisation of residency for individuals with a criminal record (even if expunged) or those deemed a threat to state security. Given the broad interpretation of "security threats" and "extremism" in Russian law – which often includes pro-Ukrainian sentiment or opposition to the occupation – this provision serves as a tool for the systematic elimination of political opponents[4].

The control regime for "illegals" – "civil death" and marginalisation: Since February 2025, a specific control regime has been enforced for those who refuse passportisation or fail verification. These individuals are entered into a special controlled registry, subjecting them to a status analogous to "civil death".

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[4] A. Szabaciuk, *Dekret Władimira Putina o uregulowaniu statusu obywateli Ukrainy w Federacji Rosyjskiej z 20 marca 2025 r.*, "Komentarze IEŚ" 2025, no. 1323.

- Systemic restrictions: Individuals in this registry face severe prohibitions; they are banned from changing their place of residence, driving vehicles, and acquiring property. Crucially, they are denied access to banking services, pushing them into the shadow economy and making legal employment impossible. This mirrors earlier measures where residents were denied access to banking and social security benefits without a Russian passport, effectively cutting off their means of subsistence.
- Consequences of non-compliance: Violation of these restrictions results in detention in Ministry of Internal Affairs centres and subsequent forced deportation. This aligns with documented practices of arbitrary detention and the forced expulsion of civilians who refuse to cooperate with the occupation authorities or accept Russian citizenship. The cumulative effect of these measures is the total subjugation of the population through administrative terror and the erasure of legal identity for those who resist.

The ideological and administrative transformation of occupied territories: An analysis of Russian occupation policy

A distinct vector of Russian ideological influence in the occupied territories has been the fundamental restructuring of the education system. School curricula were systematically rewritten to align with Russian standards, effectively displacing the Ukrainian language, while history instruction was reoriented to reflect an exclusively pro-Russian perspective. This involved imposing narratives of "historical unity" between Russians and Ukrainians, denying the distinct existence of the Ukrainian state. By September 2022, occupation authorities had replaced the Ukrainian curriculum with Russian standards in many schools – a process described in more detail in the next part of the report – introducing textbooks that labelled the Ukrainian

government a "junta" and described the state as "ultra-nationalist". Teachers were coerced into undergoing retraining under the supervision of officials from Moscow. Between 2023 and 2024, reports intensified regarding the coercion of Ukrainian educators to sign employment contracts with Russian educational structures; refusal resulted in threats of dismissal, physical repression, or deportation. Furthermore, the system was utilised to militarise youth through organisations such as *Yunarmia*, aiming to instil loyalty to the occupying power from a young age[5].

Russian authorities have also actively exploited the religious factor to consolidate control. In the temporarily occupied territories, structures subordinate to the Russian Orthodox Church are supported to propagate the ideology of the "unity of the Orthodox people", negate Ukrainian statehood, and legitimise the Russian presence as a "Divine mission". This cultural hegemony was reinforced by the removal of Ukrainian symbols and the destruction of monuments, such as those commemorating the Holodomor. Additionally, "cultural events" were organised to disseminate Russian Federation symbolism, including "holiday parades" and performances designed to demonstrate the purportedly voluntary integration of these regions into the "Russian space".

A critical component of the occupation's informational strategy has been the intimidation of the population through aggressive information campaigns. Occupation authorities disseminated fake news regarding "local traitors", conducted public show trials, and coerced "confessions" of guilt. This created an atmosphere of pervasive fear, where any individual could become a target for the slightest manifestation of disloyalty. Residents were encouraged to denounce neighbours, and internet traffic was rerouted

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[5]   *Human rights situation during the Russian occupation of the territory of Ukraine and its aftermath, 24 February 2022 – 31 December 2023*, OHCHR, 20 March 2024, pp. 19–34.

through Russian networks to block independent information sources. According to international human rights reports, this informational-ideological influence functions as a systemic mechanism for the erasure of Ukrainian identity. These methods involve the simultaneous application of propaganda, administrative pressure, and educational assimilation, which collectively constitute a violation of Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949[6].

Beyond informational influence, the aggressor state has institutionalised the use of physical coercion and terror against the civilian population. These actions were designed not merely to establish physical control but to psychologically break the society, fostering an atmosphere of terror and total dependency on the occupation administration. The most resonant examples of this strategy include war crimes in Bucha, Irpin, and Mariupol. These cities witnessed mass killings of civilians, street executions, torture, and public executions.

- Bucha: Following the retreat of Russian forces in spring 2022, hundreds of civilian bodies were discovered, many bearing signs of torture and bound hands, acts qualified internationally as war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- Mariupol: The city was subjected to relentless bombardment of civilian infrastructure, including the airstrike on the Drama Theatre, where hundreds were sheltering. Amnesty International and other bodies assess this as the deliberate destruction of the civilian population. These crimes served a dual function: eliminating resistance and instilling terror in those remaining in the occupied territories.

Occupation administrations actively employed the practice of abducting civil society activists, journalists, and local

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6   *Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva*, 12 August 1949, https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949?activeTab= [12.11.2025].

government representatives. Individuals were detained in basements or filtration camps, where they were tortured, forced to sign collaboration agreements, or coerced into "confessing" to fabricated crimes. OHCHR documented widespread arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, often accompanied by torture – including electric shocks and mock executions – affecting approximately 90% of civilian detainees. A network of filtration camps operated across the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, processing tens of thousands of Ukrainians. The objective of this filtration system was the segregation of the population into "loyal" and "disloyal" categories, facilitating intimidation and control.

In the context of occupation, economic coercion was actively applied as a tool of governance. This included blocking humanitarian corridors, confiscating Ukrainian food products for the Russian army, and artificially creating shortages of medicine and fuel. This instrument dismantled the Ukrainian population's survival mechanisms while simultaneously enforcing dependency on "aid" from occupation authorities, which was framed as evidence of Russia's "protection and care". This dependency was further weaponised through the denial of humanitarian aid and healthcare to residents who refused to accept Russian passports.

- Enerhodar (Zaporizhzhia region): Abductions of nuclear power plant staff were recorded, with pressure exerted to force them to sign contracts with "Rosatom". The city operated under a regime of "fear and coercion", with staff subjected to torture and incommunicado detention to compel cooperation.
- Kherson region: There were regular abductions of pro-Ukrainian activists and local government officials, with numerous documented cases of torture in basements.
- Zaporizhzhia region: The occupiers organised "filtration camps" and carried out forced deportations of the population to the Russian Federation.

The application of physical coercion and terror has met with severe condemnation from the international community. The UN Human Rights Council and other bodies have repeatedly emphasised that the systemic nature of these crimes indicates a coordinated policy by the aggressor state.

One of the key elements of the occupation administration's policy was the formation of a loyal cadre apparatus to ensure the functioning of administrative, police, and economic systems in the temporarily occupied territories. To this end, Russia employed both coercion and a targeted personnel policy aimed at recruiting residents willing to collaborate. In every region, following the seizure of control, so-called "military-civilian administrations" were established. Key positions were filled by individuals with prior experience in local government or political structures who, for various reasons, were in opposition to the Ukrainian authorities. These individuals were often linked to pro-Russian parties (such as the OPZZ or the Party of Regions), held business interests, or sought personal gain.

Particular attention was paid to recruiting personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the prosecutor's office, and the penitentiary system. Many targeted individuals were retirees or those previously dismissed for abuse of office, corruption, or negligence. This category proved most susceptible to recruitment, as the occupiers offered reinstatement, financial remuneration according to Russian standards, immediate promotions to positions significantly higher than those previously held, "rehabilitation", and the restoration of lost privileges. For instance, police officers were coerced into swearing oaths of allegiance to the Russian Federation under threat of detention and violence against their families. Similarly, penitentiary staff were threatened with execution or harm to their relatives if they refused to continue working under the Russian system. In one illustrative case, the deputy head of the State Emergency Service in the Kherson region was offered a ministerial position in

the occupation administration structure intended to cover occupied territories.

Formation of coercive apparatuses and administrative structures

In the occupied territories, the Russian Federation established "police structures" primarily composed of former Ukrainian law enforcement officers who defected to the aggressor. These entities were tasked with ensuring physical control, participating in "filtration" measures, and executing repressions against disloyal citizens. A distinct demographic within this collaborative apparatus consisted of retirees and former officials who had previously faced disciplinary sanctions or dismissal due to compromising circumstances. For many in this group, collaboration represented a mechanism for regaining social status and securing financial stability.

In cities such as Kherson and Melitopol, occupation administrations systematically appointed former teachers, medical personnel, accountants, and municipal workers – often those dismissed under independent Ukraine for corruption or ethical violations – to positions of authority. These individuals assumed roles ranging from "district heads" to staff within pseudo-ministries of education, health, and municipal management. This personnel policy relied on utilising the most vulnerable and marginalised categories of the population, allowing for the rapid creation of a coercive apparatus while simultaneously exposing the structural weakness of an occupation regime dependent on discredited cadres.

Furthermore, to establish a system of control and crisis response, Russia actively recruited former officers of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SES), police, and security structures. Their operational mandates included controlling the population during "evacuations", blocking partisan movements, and suppressing resistance. In the

Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk regions, occupation authorities created so-called "rescue services", staffing them with former Ukrainian firefighters and civil defence personnel. While some collaborated voluntarily, a significant portion agreed under severe duress, facing threats of property confiscation or harm to their families. Documented instances indicate that refusal to cooperate frequently resulted in arbitrary detention, torture, and threats of execution. For example, SES personnel in the Kharkiv region were subjected to electric shocks and beatings to force cooperation.

Motivations and the "climate of fear": An analysis of the motivations driving these groups reveals a complex interplay of factors: economic incentives (promises of stable salaries often higher than the Ukrainian average), social rehabilitation, and ideological affinity. However, fear and coercion emerged as dominant drivers. The occupation created a pervasive "climate of fear" utilised to compel cooperation.

The recruitment process often involved blackmail or direct threats against relatives. This environment complicates the post-liberation legal and moral assessment of these individuals. While some collaborated for personal gain, others acted under the threat of "the basement" (torture chambers). Consequently, the occupation's personnel policy has generated profound social tensions in liberated territories, necessitating a nuanced distinction between voluntary treason and forced survival strategies[7].

Regional case studies of occupation practices: The analysis of the aggressor's methods requires examining specific regional contexts, which, despite a shared logic of terror, manifested in distinct forms.

- Enerhodar and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP): Enerhodar became a symbol of the strategy

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[7] *Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine, 1 June 2025 – 30 November 2025*, OHCHR, pp. 16–18.

to transform a city into a "bastion of fear". The Russian occupation administration exerted extreme pressure on the specialised staff of the ZNPP to sign contracts with the Russian state corporation "Rosatom". Those who refused faced abduction, torture, or threats against their families; OHCHR documented cases of ZNPP employees being detained incommunicado, tortured with electric shocks, and in at least one verified case, tortured to death. The city saw the establishment of a regime of total surveillance, including checkpoints and "security checks" where residents were coerced into denouncing neighbours. This combination of physical coercion, economic blackmail, and information isolation dismantled the community's social fabric.

- Zaporizhzhia Region and Passportisation as a Weapon: This region became a testing ground for the administrative integration of occupied territories through aggressive passportisation. The acceptance of Russian citizenship was imposed not merely as a bureaucratic formality but as a condition for biological survival. Possession of a Russian passport became a prerequisite for access to insulin, humanitarian aid, and emergency healthcare. The refusal to accept a passport was equated with disloyalty, leading to the denial of property rights and inclusion in registries of "foreign citizens", who face deportation after July 1, 2024. This policy was accompanied by demographic engineering; there are documented instances of the deportation of Ukrainian citizens and the simultaneous resettlement of Russian nationals to these areas to alter the ethnic composition. In September 2022, a pseudo-referendum on annexation was conducted under the direct pressure of armed personnel, with reports of coerced voting "at gunpoint". This case demonstrates the fusion of administrative biopolitics with propaganda to manufacture an illusion of legitimacy.

- Izium (Kharkiv Region): Occupied from March to September 2022, Izium illustrates the moral complexity of survival versus resistance. While some residents collaborated to secure food or safety, others actively assisted the Russian administration in propaganda and the persecution of pro-Ukrainian activists. Following the de-occupation, the discovery of mass graves containing hundreds of bodies confirmed the systematic use of lethal terror. The city now faces the challenge of social reintegration, complicated by the difficulty of distinguishing between those who acted under duress – such as a gas company employee working to ensure heating for the town – and those who collaborated ideologically.

Legal Framework and International Violations: The actions of the Russian Federation systematically violate key norms of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Specifically, the forcible transfer of civilians and pressure to swear allegiance to a hostile power contravene Articles 49 and 51 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949). Furthermore, the imposition of Russian laws, education systems, and conscription campaigns in occupied territories represents a violation of the occupying power's obligation to respect the status quo ante.

In response, Ukraine has implemented legal instruments to combat collaboration and document crimes:

- The Law on the Legal Regime of the Temporarily Occupied Territory (2014): Defines the status of these territories and liability for collaboration[8].
- Amendments to the Criminal Code (2022): Article 111-1 introduced broad criminal liability for collaboration. However, analysis suggests this provision is overly vague, potentially criminalising essential activities (e.g., utility work, emergency services) performed under

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[8] *Про забезпечення прав і свобод громадян та правовий режим на тимчасово окупованій території України*, "Відомості Верховної Ради" 2014, no. 26, art. 892.

duress to maintain population survival. This has led to "double victimisation", where individuals abused by the occupiers face prosecution by Ukraine for conduct compelled by the laws of occupation.

- Documentation of War Crimes: A systemic effort to record violations for future international prosecution, including the exhumation of bodies and forensic analysis in liberated areas like Izium.

According to reports from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2024) and Human Rights Watch, the methods employed by the Russian Federation against the population in occupied Ukrainian territories are systemic, integrating violence, administrative coercion, and informational suppression. Investigations have further documented numerous instances of torture, abductions, and extrajudicial executions[9].

Significantly, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants in 2023 for Russian President Vladimir Putin and Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova regarding the unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children. This ruling underscores the international recognition of systemic crimes committed against civilians[10].

An analysis of the legal framework allows the actions of the occupation authorities to be classified as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, it establishes a foundation for future international litigation and strategies for the reintegration of liberated territories. The legal context explicitly demonstrates that Russia's occupation practices are not merely political or military instruments, but criminal acts that must be thoroughly documented and adjudicated by international tribunals.

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[9] *Human rights situation during…*, pp. 17–20.
[10] *Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova*, International Criminal Court, Press Release: 17 March 2023, https://www.legal -tools.org/doc/ux75v4/pdf [20.11.2025].

2.
THE FORCIBLE TRANSFER AND DEPORTATION OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN: POLICY OBJECTIVES AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL QUALIFICATION

Objectives and strategic vectors of the deportation policy

An analysis of the Russian Federation's policy regarding Ukrainian children reveals a systematic strategy of coercion and control. This policy is driven by four distinct yet interconnected vectors that function to erase Ukrainian identity and integrate these minors into the Russian socio-political sphere.

- Russification and forced assimilation through militarisation: The first vector focuses on the eradication of Ukrainian identity through the imposition of Russian educational standards and "patriotic-military" upbringing. This process involves the introduction of new state rituals and the suppression of the Ukrainian curriculum, aiming for the accelerated ideological integration of children into the Russian state. Concurrently, this vector utilises youth movements to militarise children; organisations such as *Yunarmia* and "Movement of the Firsts" are employed to instil Russian patriotism and prepare youth for service in the Russian armed forces, in direct

violation of the prohibition on enlisting children from occupied territories.

- Instrumentalisation of legal frameworks: The second vector involves the weaponisation of legal mechanisms to sever the legal ties between children and their homeland. This is characterised by the fast-tracking of Russian citizenship for Ukrainian orphans and children without parental care. By legally rooting these deportees within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation, the occupying power creates significant administrative barriers to their future repatriation and facilitates their permanent adoption into Russian families.
- Demographic and propagandistic logic: The third vector operates on a demographic-propagandistic axis. In public discourse, the forcible transfer of children is framed as humanitarian "evacuation" and "rescue" operations. The placement of these children into Russian foster families is frequently publicised through state media as "success stories", serving to legitimise political decisions domestically while obscuring the coercive nature of the transfers. This narrative attempts to mask violations of international law, which prohibit displacement unless absolutely necessary for the security of the population.
- Externalisation of influence: The fourth vector entails the externalisation of these operations, evidenced by the involvement of the Belarusian regime. According to data from the Yale Humanitarian Research Lab, between 2022 and 2023, at least 2,442 children were transported to 13 facilities in Belarus, where they were subjected to re-education and military training. As we already mentioned, official Ukrainian records indicate that the total number of abducted and deported children exceeds 19,500[11]. This demonstrates a coordinated,

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[11] 19,500 children were deported, according to data from the National Information Bureau operating under the now-defunct Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine (as of March 2024), https://www.europarl

transnational effort to remove children from the Ukrainian cultural environment.

International legal qualification

The actions described above are subject to rigorous assessment under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), which provide the normative framework for protecting civilians during armed conflict. The foundational norms are established in the 1949 Geneva Conventions – specifically the Fourth Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War – and their 1977 Additional Protocols.

- Violations of the Geneva Conventions: IHL Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly prohibits individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying power or to that of any other country, regardless of motive. Furthermore, the occupying power is prohibited from altering the family or personal status of children or their nationality and enlisting them in formations or organisations subordinate to it.

- Genocide and erasure of identity: These violations are further compounded by breaches of the Hague Conventions (1899, 1907) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which collectively forbid the alteration of cultural identity and the adoption of children from occupied territories by the aggressor state. Most critically, under Article II(e) of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the forcible transfer of children from one group to another, with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, constitutes an act of

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.europa.eu/news/en/agenda/briefing/2024-03-11/12/ukrainian
-children-deported-to-russia-plenary-debaten [24.03.2025].

genocide. The systematic imposition of Russian citizenship and the erasure of Ukrainian identity align with the legal definition of "eradication of identity".

The Legal Framework of International Responsibility

Accountability for the actions in question – specifically the unlawful deportation and forced assimilation of populations – is predicated on a dualistic framework involving both State and individual criminal responsibility.

Individual Criminal Responsibility

In the penal dimension, the International Criminal Court (ICC) plays a pivotal role. Under Article 8(2)(a)(vii) of the Rome Statute, unlawful deportation or transfer is qualified as a war crime. Based on this provision, on 17 March 2023, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber issued arrest warrants for the President of the Russian Federation and the Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights.

The principles of liability are rigorous:

- Universal applicability: Article 25 of the Rome Statute establishes individual criminal responsibility regardless of the perpetrator's official capacity.
- Removal of immunities: Article 27 explicitly nullifies immunities attaching to official capacity, including that of Heads of State.
- Command responsibility: Article 28 establishes the liability of military commanders and civilian superiors for acts committed by subordinates under their effective control.
- Non-applicability of statutory limitations: In accordance with the 1968 Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity, these offences are not subject to time limits for prosecution.

Parallel to criminal proceedings, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) adjudicates interstate disputes, including proceedings initiated by Ukraine regarding allegations of violations of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Jurisprudence and legal qualification

The legal characterisation of these acts draws upon the jurisprudential legacy of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the *ad hoc* tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR), which solidified the qualification of deportation and forced assimilation as both war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Currently, there is an active discourse within the international community regarding the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. Such a body would serve as an institutional complement to the jurisdiction of the ICC, addressing the jurisdictional gap regarding the crime of aggression. Furthermore, systematic documentation of these violations is being conducted by the United Nations (OHCHR), the OSCE (Moscow Mechanism), and the Council of Europe. Notably, the European Parliament, in its 2025 resolution, recognised these actions as bearing the hallmarks of genocide.

Table 1. International legal qualification of the abduction of children

Qualification	International source	Essence of the violation
War crime	Rome Statute, Art. 8	Unlawful deportation or transfer of the civilian population.
Crime against humanity	Rome Statute, Art. 7	Forcible transfer of population committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack.
Constitutive element of genocide	1948 Genocide Convention, Art. II(e)	Forcible transfer of children of the group to another group.

Qualification	International source	Essence of the violation
Violation of children's rights	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Arts. 11, 35	Illicit transfer, non-return, sale, or trafficking of children.
Violation of the law of occupation	Fourth Geneva Convention, Art. 49	Individual or mass forcible transfers from occupied territory.

The political architecture of perpetration

The circle of decision-makers and executors responsible for these policies has been precisely identified. It encompasses the highest political leadership of the Russian Federation (Vladimir Putin), the architects of the assimilationist ideology (Maria Lvova-Belova, Sergey Kiriyenko), and the executive operational level (regional administrations, youth organisations such as *Yunarmia*, and camp facilities like "Artek")[12].

Table 2. Political architecture and accountability

Level	Actors	Role in the system	Evidence
Supreme	Vladimir Putin; Presidential Administration of the RF	Political endorsement, issuance of decrees, strategic logistics.	ICC Arrest Warrant
Central	Maria Lvova-Belova	Legitimisation of deportations, inter-agency coordination.	ICC Arrest Warrant; Public statements.
Ideological	Sergey Kiriyenko; *Yunarmia*	Indoctrination, integration into the Russian educational system.	Intelligence data regarding school curricula.
Regional	Governors; Camp Network	Relocation logistics, detention/holding of transferees.	Yale HRL: Identification of over 210 facilities[13].

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[12]   M. Mentzelopoulou et al., *Russia's war on Ukraine: Forcibly displaced Ukrainian children*, European Parliamentary Research Service (PE 747.093), February 2025, pp. 2–5.

[13]   *Belarus' Collaboration with Russia in the Systematic Deportation of Ukraine's Children*, Yale School of Public Health, Humanitarian Research Lab, December 2023, pp. 2–25.

Level	Actors	Role in the system	Evidence
Foreign	Belarusian regime	Transit support, re-education, paramilitary training.	Yale HRL (transfer of 2,442 children to Belarus)[14].

Institutional response and evidence gathering

Ukraine, in cooperation with international partners, has operationalised a multi-level legal and institutional strategy to address these violations. Key components of this architecture include:

- The International Register of Damage: A mechanism to record evidence of claims for damage, loss, or injury.
- The International Coordination Mechanism for the Return of Children: Specifically, the "Children of War" platform.
- Evidence Collection: The utilisation of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), witness testimonies, and captured documentation to build case files for the ICC.
- International Policing: The use of biometric databases and Interpol channels to trace missing persons.

The international legal system provides a cohesive mechanism for prosecution because the actions in question are systemic in nature, simultaneously violating multiple conventions and treaties.

Mechanisms of deportation and data verification

The implementation of the deportation policy adheres to a highly structured operational framework, progressing from initial filtration to transit, followed by ideological indoctrination and forced passportisation. These stages are calculated to sever the victims' ties with their homeland and preclude their return. As of 2025, investigations have identified approximately 210 detention facilities and

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[14]   Ibid., p. 2.

at least 314 specific cases of adoption within the Russian Federation.

Barriers to repatriation include a complex system of administrative restrictions and information isolation imposed by the occupying power. Despite these systemic obstacles, limited repatriation is being achieved through small groups, often facilitated by diplomatic mediation (including Qatar).

Table 3. Typology of forced displacement stages

Stage	Actions and instruments	Key actors
1. Filtration	Identification within holding facilities, application of psychological pressure, and separation of families.	Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, occupation administrations.
2. Transit	Logistical transport operations utilising routes through Crimea and the territory of the Russian Federation.	Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation, special services.
3. Re-education	Ideological indoctrination and militarised training.	*Yunarmia*, the Russian education system
4. Legal engineering	Forced passportisation and the alteration of personal data.	Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) of the Russian Federation, guardianship authorities.
5. Adoption	Placement into Russian foster families or adoption.	Courts of the Russian Federation, regional authorities.
6. Blockade of return	Bureaucratic barriers and the intentional obstruction of contact with families/ guardians	Administration of the Russian Federation.

While reports regarding illicit organ trafficking have emerged within the information space, it is imperative to emphasise that leading international bodies (UN, Human Rights Watch, Yale HRL) have not substantiated these allegations regarding deported Ukrainian children as of the current stage. Existing reports indicate the necessity of verifying the medical status of repatriated children. In academic discourse, claims of organ trafficking should be treated as unverified and require further investigative research.

The analysis demonstrates that the abduction and deportation of Ukrainian children constitute a centralised state policy, amalgamating physical violence, legal engineering, and propaganda. The strategic objective is the permanent assimilation and the erasure of the Ukrainian national identity of the youngest generation.

Priorities for the Government of Ukraine and the international community include:

- Expansion of identification mechanisms: Developing shared data exchange protocols (e.g., "child acts") to track missing minors.
- Diplomatic mediation: Reinforcing diplomatic channels to facilitate returns.
- Reintegration strategy: Developing a comprehensive strategy for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children upon their return.
- Legal accountability: Consistently gathering evidentiary material for proceedings before the International Criminal Court (ICC) and national courts exercising universal jurisdiction.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the Russian Federation's actions in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine reveals a fundamental shift in the paradigm of modern warfare: the transition from conventional military occupation to a total biopolitical operation. The aggressor does not view the civilian population as a protected category under International Humanitarian Law, but rather as a raw demographic resource subject to social engineering. By employing the "exchange of human substance" – the simultaneous deportation of the indigenous Ukrainian population and the settlement of Russian citizens and Central Asian migrants – Moscow aims to permanently alter the ethnic structure of the region. This strategy is designed to create a demographic *fait accompli* that will render the future reintegration of these territories into Ukraine existentially impossible, replicating the "Crimean model" on a macro scale.

A critical finding of this paper is the direct link between the failure of Russian intelligence assessments and the radicalisation of occupation tactics. The FSB's initial strategic miscalculation – predicting that nearly half of Ukrainian society would accept the new administration due to corruption fatigue and religious ties – collapsed in the face of massive social resistance. Consequently, the Kremlin was forced to abandon its planned "soft co-optation" in favour of systemic terror. Violence in the occupied territories is, therefore, not merely a tool of punishment but a primary instrument of governance, intended to compensate for the total lack of political legitimacy. The systematic elimination of local opinion leaders and the widespread use of torture are calculated measures to paralyse the social organism through fear.

The report identifies "bureaucratic terror" and the weaponisation of citizenship as the most sophisticated and

dangerous elements of this occupation regime. Russia has successfully transformed passportisation from an administrative formality into a mechanism of existential blackmail. By creating an environment where the lack of a Russian passport equates to "civil death" – denial of insulin, humanitarian aid, and property rights – the occupation administration has weaponised the basic necessities of life. The legislative classification of Ukrainians without Russian passports as "foreign citizens" subject to deportation after July 1, 2024, represents the final stage of the legal exclusion and physical removal of the "disloyal" segment of the population.

The policy regarding Ukrainian children constitutes a centralised state strategy that bears the hallmarks of genocide under the 1948 Convention. This strategy is executed through four interconnected vectors: forced Russification, legal instrumentalisation (fast-tracked citizenship), demographic propaganda, and the externalisation of detention to regimes like Belarus. Unlike chaotic wartime displacement, these are coordinated actions involving the highest political leadership, including Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova. The intent is clear: to sever the generational continuity of the Ukrainian nation by erasing the identity of its youngest members and assimilating them into the Russian socio-political body.

The occupation's informational and educational dimensions demonstrate a pursuit of total cognitive hegemony. By destroying Ukrainian media infrastructure and rerouting internet traffic through Russian servers, the occupier has created a hermetically sealed information vacuum. This isolation is compounded by the aggressive militarisation of the education system, where organisations like *Yunarmia* are used to indoctrinate youth. Russia is not merely occupying territory; it is engaging in the "colonisation of consciousness", attempting to forge a new demographic class loyal to the occupier and hostile to their own heritage.

The analysis also exposes a profound moral and legal dilemma regarding the functioning of the administrative apparatus in occupied areas. Russian personnel policy cynically targets marginalised groups, retirees, and individuals with criminal records by offering them social advancement, while simultaneously applying brutal coercion against essential specialists (e.g., nuclear energy workers in Enerhodar or emergency service personnel). This dynamic creates a trap of "double victimisation", where professionals forced to work at gunpoint to maintain critical infrastructure risk being legally classified as collaborators by Ukraine, complicating future transitional justice processes.

The systemic violations documented – ranging from forced conscription and mass deportations to the seizure of property under the guise of it being "abandoned" – are not incidental excesses of war but methods codified in Russian legislation. These actions systematically violate the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague Regulations. The establishment of criminal liability for these acts, both at the individual level (via the ICC) and state level, is essential to maintaining the credibility of the international justice system.

Ultimately, the Russian occupation of Ukraine serves as a dangerous precedent for modern authoritarian regimes, demonstrating how administrative, digital, and social welfare tools can be weaponised for rapid territorial incorporation and population pacification. Without a robust international response and the implementation of accountability mechanisms, this model – based on bureaucratic terror and demographic engineering – threatens to become a permanent feature of Russian expansionist doctrine, posing a long-term security threat to the entire Central and Eastern European region.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Legal differentiation of collaboration and protection of "double victims". The Government of Ukraine must urgently amend its legislation regarding collaboration, specifically Article 111-1 of the Criminal Code. The law must clearly distinguish between "active collaboration" driven by ideological or material motives and "survival strategies" forced by the occupation regime.
   - Recommendation: Introduce legal safeguards for workers in critical infrastructure sectors (healthcare, utilities, emergency services, nuclear energy) who continued their duties under duress to ensure the biological survival of the population. Criminalising these individuals would be counterproductive to social reintegration and exacerbates the "double victimisation" phenomenon.
2. Countering "civil death" and forced passportisation. Ukraine, in coordination with international partners, must develop a strategy to mitigate the consequences of coercive naturalisation.
   - Recommendation: While maintaining the stance that Russian documents issued in occupied territories are null and void, Ukraine should decriminalise their acquisition by citizens acting under the threat of "civil death" (denial of insulin, threat of deportation).
   - Recommendation: Implement digital mechanisms (e.g., via the *Diia* platform) to securely register property rights and verify identity remotely, countering Russian attempts to seize "abandoned" homes of those who refused passports or fled.
3. International sanctions mechanism against settler colonialism. The international community must recognise

Russia's settlement and "mortgage" policies in occupied territories as a distinct war crime and a tool of demographic engineering.

- Recommendation: Impose targeted sanctions on Russian financial institutions offering preferential mortgage rates (e.g., the 2% rate) for properties in occupied Ukraine, as well as construction companies operating there.
- Recommendation: Issue a joint international declaration stating that all property transfers executed under the occupation administration are legally void, creating a risk premium that deters potential Russian settlers.

4. Intensification of child repatriation and genocide documentation. Diplomatic efforts to recover deported children must move from ad hoc cases to systemic solutions, leveraging the mediation of third-party states (e.g., Qatar, Holy See).

- Recommendation: Establish an integrated biometric database and "child files" in cooperation with Interpol to trace minors whose personal data (names, birthplaces) have been altered during the Russification and adoption process.
- Recommendation: Systematically gather evidence for the ICC specifically proving the "intent to destroy" the group, qualifying the transfers not just as war crimes but as elements of genocide under Article II(e) of the 1948 Convention.

5. Strategy for "cognitive de-occupation" and breaking the info-blockade. The Government of Ukraine should prepare a comprehensive "Cognitive De-occupation" program to address the long-term effects of indoctrination.

- Recommendation: Develop specialised training for educators and psychologists to work with youth who have been subjected to years of militarised propaganda in the *Yunarmia* system.

- Recommendation: Invest in technologies to breach the digital blockade (e.g., satellite internet solutions, secure communication protocols) to provide residents with access to independent information, countering the "Russkiy Mir" narrative and the isolation caused by traffic rerouting.

6. Mapping the "chain of command" for international tribunals. Investigative bodies must focus on mapping the full political architecture of perpetration described in the paper.
    - Recommendation: Collect evidence not only against top leadership (V. Putin, M. Lvova-Belova) but also against mid-level implementation actors: regional governors, camp directors, and educational officials who enforce militarisation. This is crucial for proving the systemic, state-led nature of these crimes in future tribunals, including a potential Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression.

7. Medical verification and rehabilitation for torture survivors. Given the widespread use of torture in filtration camps and "basements", a post-liberation medical response plan is essential.
    - Recommendation: Establish specialised rehabilitation centres for victims of sexual violence and torture.
    - Recommendation: Conduct rigorous medical verification of repatriated children to assess their health status, while treating unverified reports of organ trafficking with caution to avoid spreading disinformation that lacks evidentiary support from international bodies.

8. Utilisation of frozen assets for reparations. In light of the massive seizure of private and public property, Ukraine and its allies must operationalise the International Register of Damage.
    - Recommendation: Develop legal mechanisms to direct frozen Russian sovereign assets towards the

compensation of victims of "bureaucratic terror" – specifically those who were illegally dispossessed of their homes or forced to pay bribes to survive filtration. Reparations must cover not just physical destruction, but the administrative theft of assets.

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