

RCE Salisbury - Ukraine Background Analysis Pre-Report

On 24 February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized a full-scale invasion of Ukraine to take it over and claim it as Russian territory. The buildup to this full-scale invasion attempt is a culmination of a conflict that had been raging for the past eight years before this point, a smaller-scale conflict nonetheless. This conflict involved the prolonged war in the Donbas and Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The invasion only expanded the scale of the war, and the Ukrainian Army, along with regular Ukrainian civilians, provided a stronger resistance the Russian intelligence expected. The Russians thought Ukraine would just fall in three days. However, Ukraine's military technology has improved dramatically recently, and NATO aid has only made it more advanced. Since the beginning of the war, Russia has suffered severe losses in military equipment and soldier casualties on the front lines. Ukraine's advancements and victories throughout the war have caused an internal rift within Russian society and the Russian military. The coup attempt by the Wagner Group Mercenaries, numerous anti-war protests across Russia, and Putin's generals turning on him quickly are all signs that the favorability of the war in Russia is declining.

Despite Ukraine's many recent victories on the battlefield and overall advancements throughout the war, numerous problems still exist in and around Ukraine as a result of the war. Despite proving to be the victor in this war, Ukraine has unfortunately been a hub for the human trafficking of refugees, especially women and children. As numerous women and children have fled to neighboring countries such as Poland, Belarus, Russia, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Moldova throughout the war, they have faced numerous challenges. However, the challenges they face are not as bad as the challenges that those who choose to stay behind in Ukraine face daily. In a neighboring country, the primary challenges for refugees, especially women, and children, are that there's a risk of human trafficking and falling victim to that, not having enough money to get around, not having family outside of the country or a place to stay, and risking possible homelessness and the lack of job opportunities. Within Ukraine, the primary challenge for internally displaced people, or those who choose to stay behind where they live during the war, are all the challenges mentioned in the previous sentence, but with the addition of worrying about becoming a victim of a missile strike, shelling, or a military battle.

For this project, we will partner with the US State Department's Diplomacy Lab to research Ukrainian women and girls experiencing transgenerational conflict through a transitional or restorative justice lens. There is a near-term and urgent focus on transitional justice but also a long-term focus on the healing and not spreading of intergenerational transmission of trauma. In response, the research team does not want an approach like in Bosnia or Northern Ireland, where peace was just negotiated on paper. We want to emphasize the dynamics on the ground as the context for building a localized approach that the

ICC could not focus on procedurally. Three sources of data will be used for this project: a literature review, interviews of key people in Ukraine, and collecting lessons from previous conflicts that can aid the Ukrainian post-war efforts (such as Bosnia, Colombia, Nepal, Northern Ireland, and South Africa).