UKRAINE/RUSSIAN FEDERATION: Impact of sexual and gender-based violence in the context of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine

June 2026

IMPACT ON VICTIMS

Sexual violence has caused long-term multifaceted harms for the victims.

> ***It's unbearably painful — to relive that day over and over, the pain is always with me. People say that time heals... that's not true. I can't sleep properly, I have serious mental and physical problems. I keep thinking about what I could have done differently to avoid all of this."***
>
> *— 42-year-old woman raped in a military administration office*

PHYSICAL IMPACT

- Injury to organs and pain
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Miscarriage
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Reproductive health concerns

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

- Depression and anxiety
- Shame
- Fear
- Self-blame
- Suicidal thoughts

OTHER CONSEQUENCES AND CHALLENGES

> ***I want to confront my tormentors and demand an explanation for their violence, to gaze into their eyes and ask why they did all of that to us."***
>
> *— 33-year-old man, victim of rape as a form of torture during detention*

- Personal safety challenges
- Stigma
- Disruption of family relations and social networks
- Culture of silence linked to fear, gender stereotypes, social ostracization
- Reluctance to seek medical care and other support, and to report cases
- Disproportionate impact on women due to economic inequalities and family responsibilities
- Displacement
- Loss of housing and income
- Disrupted education for girls
- Limited availability of and access to support and rehabilitation services

ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine has so far recorded hundreds of cases of sexual violence in connection with the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation.
- The Commission is not aware of judicial prosecutions by Russian authorities concerning cases of sexual violence.
- Judicial and non-judicial accountability are an essential part of recovery.
- Judicial accountability at the national or international level: identifying and holding the perpetrators and their commanders to account, to break the cycle of impunity.
- Non-judicial accountability: measures of truth, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence.

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