

**5-th joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention)**

**(6-8 May 2024, Geneva)**

**Statement by Ukraine**

*After the adoption of the agenda of the meeting*

**Dear Chair,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

Thank you for giving me the floor. I'm taking it before the discussion on substantial issues, because it is related to each of the agenda items of this meeting and many other international meetings in the field of environment and international cooperation.

Today is eight hundred and third day of full-scale armed aggression and more than ten years of unprovoked and unjustified Russia's war against Ukraine. It is ongoing, causing significant human casualties among civilians as well as huge environmental disasters again and again.

One of the most terrible cases is the breach of the Kakhovka dam last year, a far-reaching environmental disaster that goes beyond Ukraine's borders; according to the UNEP report, the magnitude of which might not be clear for years or even decades to come.

Following this act of ecocide Russian forces have launched over 20 missiles at the Dnipro Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP) since the beginning of this year. In March this year Ukraine's largest HPP was hit with eight Russian missiles during one of the biggest attacks on the country's energy infrastructure (with more than 150 missiles), which reportedly led to the loss of a third of its capacity. Also, it led to a massive leakage of petroleum products into the Dnipro River.

Then in late March Russian troops targeted two other Ukrainian Hydroelectric Power Plants - the Kaniv and the Dnister.

Overall, 744 Ukrainian water infrastructure facilities have been damaged or destroyed. The main threats to the water security of my country remain the destruction of centralized water supply systems, damage and destruction of pumping equipment and pipelines, which affect negatively the humanitarian and social situations in the frontline regions of Ukraine.

As of today, the number of ecological war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine reaches four thousand seven hundred. Unfortunately, Russia

does not seem to be stopping in committing them, which is proved by ongoing everyday attacks against my country's critical infrastructure facilities, civil objects and residential areas, leading to significant human casualties, with nature being a silent victim of Russia's ecocide.

**Dear Colleagues,**

Hostilities are the cause of pollution of surface and groundwater. Heavy metals, petroleum products, toxic and dangerous compounds pollute water as a result of explosions, missile strikes, accidents and fires at oil depots, caused by the aggressor-state. Chemical substances released into the environment lead to the extinction of plants and animals, and also pollute sources of drinking water.

While Ukraine reaffirms its commitments to the implementation of the Water Convention, we would like to stress that our priority to protect the environment should be the restoration of peace in the region, which would be possible only when Russia withdraws its troops from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

**Dear Participants,**

We would like to reiterate our appreciation of the support and cooperation shown by many of the parties in facing these challenges.

Once again, Ukraine encourages distinguished delegations present here today to contribute to the implementation of the Ukraine's Peace Formula in order to ensure environmental security and address the environmental causes of Russia's war. United, we need to move forward in three directions:

- to assess environmental damage from the war;
- to hold the aggressor accountable for the environmental damage;
- to contribute to the ecological restoration and a green transition of the economy for the sake of the region.

We should remember. Russian aggression challenges the entire system of international law and global security. Different dictatorships can be inspired by the current Russian dictatorship - its cynicism, its malice.

The best we can do now is to prove that we are not just declaring our values, including the environmental rule of law, but also ready to defend them.

**Thank you.**

We would like this statement to be included in the report of the meeting.



МІНІСТЕРСТВО ЗАХИСТУ  
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## **Briefing on the environmental damage caused by the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (April 6 – April 19, 2024)**

On April 9th, Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Ruslan Strilets [met](#) with Jürgen Keinhorst, Special Representative of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety, and Consumer Protection of Germany and the OECD.

"Germany is a reliable friend and partner of Ukraine, providing comprehensive support for the implementation of point 8 of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Peace Formula, the Environmental Declaration, and the Environmental Compact for Ukraine," noted Ruslan Strilets.

In particular, discussions focused on the launch of the International Action Platform for Green Recovery in Ukraine during URC-2024. The platform will serve as a venue for coordinating international assistance provided to Ukraine by partners and organizations for green recovery efforts.

On April 10th, during the broadcast of the National Telethon "Yedyni Novyny", Minister Ruslan Strilets [discussed](#) the environmental consequences of ongoing russian shelling, missile attacks, and shahed attacks.

He reported that according to data from the State Environmental Inspection of Ukraine, the environmental damage to the Kharkiv region due to constant russian shelling has reached nearly 450 billion hryvnias.

The Minister once again reminded that on the Ministry of Environment's website, EcoZagroza 24/7, reliable data on the state of the environment is available. It contains all the essential environmental information, from water and air pollution indicators to

notifications of air alarms, chemical hazards, and instructions for handling environmental emergencies.



Also, these days mark two years since Minister Ruslan Strilets and his team have been working on shaping environmental protection policies and implementing relevant reforms in Ukraine. The Minister [discussed](#) this in an interview with "Ukrinform."

Much has been achieved during this time, with much more ahead. Among the highlights:

"War and Environmental Protection. In the first days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, people were saving themselves and the country. However, we understood that the environmental devastation caused by the war in Ukraine would soon become a case that would capture the world's attention. Therefore, we promptly developed methodologies for calculating the damages to nature from the war and created digital tools. Currently, almost 4,500 crimes by Russia against Ukrainian nature have been documented. The extent of the damage amounts to nearly 2.4 trillion hryvnias."

On April 18th, the Ukraine War Environmental Consequences Work Group [revitalized](#) the implementation process of the Environmental Compact for Ukraine.

Participants of the UWEC Working Group on the Environmental Consequences of War, co-chaired by the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Andriy Yermak and former Vice Prime Minister, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of

Sweden Margot Wallström, discussed the implementation of the provisions of the Environmental Compact for Ukraine and further work plans.

Ruslan Strilets announced that a whole government team is currently working on implementing the Environmental Compact, consisting of representatives from 14 government bodies. The inaugural meeting has already taken place.

## **Nuclear and radiation safety threats**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has [stated](#) the disinformation campaign intensified by the Russian regime surrounding the temporarily occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP).

"The only source of threats to ZNPP remains the unlawful and criminal actions of Russian aggressors. Russia is the sole state-terrorist in the world, which not only captured, militarized, and attempted to steal the nuclear power plant but also utilizes it as a platform for propaganda," the statement highlighted.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has appealed to the international community with a call to:

- Take a firm stance to neutralize the threats to nuclear security created by Russia at ZNPP and prevent the aggressor from implementing criminal scenarios in the future.
- Condemn Russian provocations at ZNPP and join in implementing President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's Peace Formula, one of the crucial points of which is the restoration of nuclear and radiation safety.
- Increase pressure on the aggressor state, including through sanctions in the field of nuclear energy, to prevent further provocations and facilitate the liberation of the plant.

## **Recent attacks on infrastructure and industry sites**

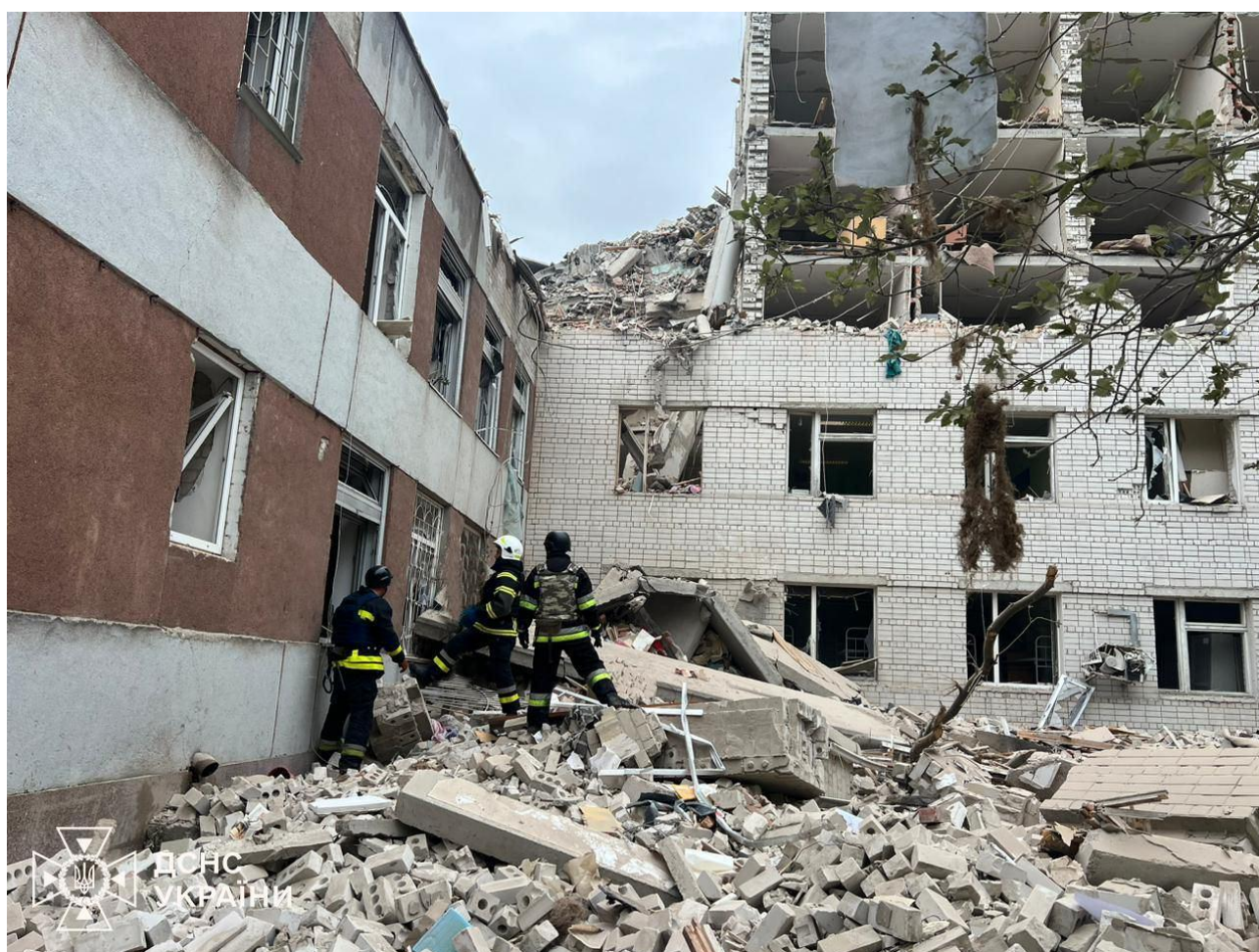
On April 7th, the armed forces of the Russian Federation [shelled](#) a residential neighbourhood in the Shevchenkivskyi district of Kharkiv. At least 13 high-rise buildings and private houses, educational institutions, cafés, dormitories, hotels, cars, and garages were damaged.

On April 11th, Russians [launched](#) over 40 missiles and approximately 40 strike drones across Ukraine.

During the shelling, the Trypillia Thermal Power Plant in Kyiv region was completely [destroyed](#). Andriy Hota, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of "Centrenergo," [stated](#) that during the overnight missile-drone attack, the station was hit, resulting in a massive fire in the turbine hall.

On April 17th, the enemy [targeted](#) Chernihiv with three missiles, striking almost the city centre. A non-critical social facility was attacked, leading to the visible destruction of the walls of a building from the 3rd to the 6th floor and its annexes, as well as nearby vehicles. A medical facility was also damaged.

On April 19th, Russia [launched](#) a massive attack on Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. There are damages to 3 infrastructure objects (including "Ukrzaliznytsia" – the operation of the Dnipro station has been suspended) and 8 buildings. Four residential buildings have been partially destroyed.



## **Pollution caused directly by hostilities**

[According](#) to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SESU), from February 24, 2022, to April 19, 2024, a total of 486,385 explosive objects have been neutralized on the territory of Ukraine. An area of 1268 square kilometres has been surveyed.

Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine Ruslan Strilets has [announced](#) on his Facebook page another act of ecocide:

"The constant shelling and mining are turning Ukrainian forests into wastelands and fields with craters where there is no life. Russian munitions not only turn trees into coal but also kill and force forest inhabitants to leave their homes. Over 6,500 hectares of forests in the Limanskyi forestry enterprise have already been destroyed by fire, with 100 hectares lost in just the past week."



Russians continue to turn temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine into large landfills, establishing unauthorized dumping sites.

This was reported by the [Center for National Resistance](#).

Under the guise of a recycling plant, the new landfill "Luhansk," the occupiers are organizing near Rodakove on the border of the Lutuhyne and Sloviánoserb'sk districts. This is one of six planned Russian landfills in the Luhansk region alone. There is also information about two more in Severodonetsk and Anthracite.

Today, the occupied territories of Ukraine are simply drowning in rubbish. Unauthorized landfills, unsanitary conditions, rats – this has become a common phenomenon even on the streets of major cities.

## Damage to natural reserves and protected ecosystems

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has destroyed over 60,000 hectares of forests in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories. Its cost reaches at least 14 billion hryvnias.

This is [stated](#) in the investigation by NGL.media.

Journalists of the publication, using satellite images, have determined that over two years of war, Russians have completely destroyed over 60,000 hectares of forests in the territories they occupy.

Among the natural areas most affected in the Donetsk region is the "Holy Mountains" National Nature Park, located in the Kramatorsk and Bahmut districts. Since the Russian Federation's invasion, this area has been the site of hostilities, resulting in the destruction of 80% of the park. Additionally, occupiers are actively engaged in deforestation in the Luhansk region, where forests occupied only 11% of the territory before the war. In the predominant steppe region of Luhansk, forests play a crucial role in preventing sandstorms, retaining moisture, and preventing soil erosion.



The Russian army has [inflicted](#) and continues to inflict significant damage to the environment, according to scientists, putting many birds, including those listed in the Red Book, at risk of extinction.

Birds are victims of war, although people may not yet realize it. Birds perish from explosions, their nests burn, and they seek new places to nest. Ornithologists are convinced that some species may disappear forever. For example, scientists are concerned about pink flamingos, which nested for the first time in Ukraine last year – in the Odesa region. At that time, scientists counted almost two hundred chicks.



"Flamingos migrate daily from one lagoon to another - we have 13 lagoons. But at night, it is very noisy, and we worry about their future -- that they won't be able to choose a lagoon for nesting," says the head of the scientific department of the Tuzly Estuary National Park, Ivan Rusiev.

For instance, the critically endangered Demoiselle Cranes (a close relative of cranes) have nested only on the Kerch Peninsula in recent years. According to ornithologists, their chances of survival are minimal. This applies to many Red Book birds from the steppe zone. It is emphasized that we will face a catastrophic situation with these species in Ukraine. It is most likely that they will simply disappear.

### **Damage to freshwater resources**

The downing of enemy drones and the discharge of substances into the Danube River could have long-term ecological consequences for the Black Sea and the region.

Scientists have repeatedly emphasized the ecological consequences of Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, particularly in the Odesa region, in the context of both the region itself and the Black Sea. However, it should be noted that the basin of the Danube River is also affected by the enemy's actions.

During the Second Black Sea Security Conference, Birgit Vogel, Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, provided more details on this, as reported by the "[Ukraine Media Center](#)".

The current threat to the Danube, which directly affects the Black Sea as well, is the potential release of hazardous substances such as oil products or chemicals, as well as pollution from downed enemy drones, which could have long-term negative impacts.

Birgit Vogel emphasized that there is a direct link between the ecological situation in the Danube basin and the Black Sea.

### **Black and Azov Seas**

On April 18th, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [adopted](#) an important resolution on the security of seas and oceans as a component of the human right to a clean environment.

The report on the resolution "Towards Council of Europe strategies for healthy seas and oceans to counteract the climate crisis" was presented by the author of the

resolution, a member of the Ukrainian delegation, Yuliya Ovchinnikova. The resolution was passed with 68 votes in favour.

The document calls for the adoption of an Environmental Compact for Ukraine and highlights the issues concerning the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov in connection with Russia's war against Ukraine. It also contains a recommendation to consider the proposals of the High-Level Ukraine War Environmental Consequences Work Group, as outlined in the report "Environmental Compact for Ukraine."



## Previous Reports

Previous reports of the Ministry of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine on environmental crimes committed by Russian troops since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine [are available here](#).

**Please feel free to [subscribe here](#) to receive weekly email updates on the environmental damage caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine directly to your inbox.**



Ministry of Environmental Protection  
and Natural Resources of Ukraine

# ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

CAUSED BY THE RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION



# ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

due to the large-scale  
Russian invasion of Ukraine

**57,3** EUR bln  
ESTIMATED LOSSES,  
INCLUDING:

≈ **4744**

CASES OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
DAMAGE RECORDED

EUR bln  
**25,7** land pollution  
with waste

EUR bln  
**28,9** air pollution

Over EUR mln  
**371** soil pollution

EUR bln  
**2,03** pollution, clogging of water  
objects and sea waters



# GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS CAUSED BY WAR

**54,7** million  
tons  
of Co<sub>2</sub>eq

**POTENTIAL EMISSIONS OF  
GREENHOUSE GASES DUE TO THE  
RECONSTRUCTION  
OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
BUILDINGS DESTROYED OR DAMAGED  
DURING WAR**

AT LEAST

**150** million  
tons  
of Co<sub>2</sub>eq

**THE TOTAL ESTIMATE OF  
GREENHOUSE GAS  
EMISSIONS  
DIRECTLY RELATED  
TO RUSSIA'S ARMED  
AGGRESSION  
AGAINST UKRAINE**



# POLLUTION CAUSED DIRECTLY BY HOSTILITIES

From 24 February

over

# 493 422

**EXPLOSIVE DEVICES  
WERE NEUTRALIZED**

RUSSIAN TROOPS REGULARLY  
USE PHOSPHORUS SHELLS  
BANNED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL LAW

OF FIELDS, FORESTS, RIVERS,  
AND LAKES ARE TURNED INTO  
NORMAL CIRCULATION

thousand sq. km

# 18

**STILL NEED TO  
CLEAR**

thousand sq. km

# 156

**ARE CONTAMINATED  
WITH MINES**

This constitutes

# 25%

**OF THE ENTIRE  
TERRITORY**

# DAMAGE TO FORESTS

## UNDER OCCUPATION:

thousand hectares

# 850

of forests occupied  
or in the hostilities zone

# 40

Forestry enterprises

## HAVE BEEN LIBERATED FROM OCCUPATION AND NEED TO BE RESTORED

mln hectares

# 2,4

of forests

# 32

Forestry enterprises



# DAMAGE TO NATURAL RESERVES AND PROTECTED ECOSYSTEMS

## ARE UNDER OCCUPATION

**10**

national  
parks

**8**

nature  
reserves

**2**

biosphere  
reserves

## UNDER THREAT OF DESTRUCTION

**160 = 2,9** mln  
hectares

Emerald Network sites

**812** protected areas  
under threat

**17 = 627,3** thousands  
of hectares

Ramsar sites

**1,2** mln hectares of protected  
areas suffer from the  
effects of war

rushists are establishing military training grounds within the waters of the hydrological reserve of national importance "Molochne Liman" and the national natural park "Dzharilgach," where the occupiers have connected the island to the mainland. This could lead to the degradation of the entire bay's ecosystems.



# DAMAGE TO BIODIVERSITY

## AT RISK OF EXTINCTION

approximately

# 600

animal species

approximately

# 750

species of plants and fungi, including rare species listed in the Red Book

approximately

# 800

deaths of representatives of the dolphin family in the Ukrainian part of the Black Sea~

approximately

# 122

the number of population losses of three species of Black Sea cetaceans

\* Losses according to the expert assessment of the specialists of the Tuzly Estuaries National Park



# DAMAGE TO WATER RESOURCES

**744**

**WATER MANAGEMENT  
FACILITIES  
HAVE BEEN DAMAGED OR  
DESTROYED**

EUR mln

**13,2**

**estimated  
amount of  
losses**

EUR bln

**7,71**

**will be required for  
restoration of irrigation,  
drainage and  
hyrotechnical structures\***



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF RF'S TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE KAKHOVKA DAM

The Kakhovka water reservoir:

BEFORE THE ATTACK

**18**

cubic km of freshwater

LOST

**14.775**

cubic km of freshwater or over 70%

ESTIMATED  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
DAMAGE

**3,82**

EUR bln



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF RF'S TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE KAKHOVKA DAM

## FLOODED:

**64,000**      **150 000**

ha of forests

ha of nature reserves

## UNDER THREAT:

**160**

thousand of birds

**20**

thousand of wild animals

**5**

wetlands of international  
Importance – 107,880 ha

**9**

Emerald Network sites – 611,325 ha

## DAMAGE TO NATIONAL PARKS:

«Lower Dnipro »  
Park

**1,16**

EUR bln

«Kamianska Sich»  
Park

**1,9**

EUR bln

«Great Meadow»  
(Velykyi Luh) Park

**0,36**

EUR bln

«Oleshkivsky Sands»  
Park

**0,03**

EUR bln

