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VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE CATEGORIES DURING THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Topicality: The issue of violations of the rights of vulnerable categories during the war in Ukraine is highly topical in the current context. The armed conflict ongoing since 2014, as well as the full-scale invasion of Russia in 2022, has significantly aggravated the humanitarian crisis. Vulnerable categories, including women, children, persons with disabilities, internally displaced persons, the elderly, and ethnic minorities, have become subjects of human rights violations such as violence, discrimination, and restricted access to resources and healthcare. Analyzing these phenomena is essential for developing effective mechanisms to protect the rights of these groups at both national and international levels.

Purpose: The purpose of the research is to identify the main violations of the rights of vulnerable categories during the war in Ukraine, assess their scope and consequences, and develop recommendations for law enforcement agencies and international organizations to enhance the effectiveness of human rights protection in the context of armed conflict.

Main body:

Children's Rights During War

Children are one of the most vulnerable categories during wartime. Military actions have led to the deaths of hundreds of children and injuries to thousands. According to UNICEF, as of mid-2023, about 5.7 million children in Ukraine required humanitarian aid.

Violations include:

- Use of children in armed conflicts (violating Article 38 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).
- Forcible deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. In 2023, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Russian officials for such crimes.
- Loss of access to education: over 40% of schools in eastern

Ukraine have been destroyed or damaged (data from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine) [1].

Women and Gender-Based Violence

Women often become victims of sexual violence, forced displacement, and discrimination during war. According to a UN report, numerous cases of sexual violence by Russian soldiers have been documented in occupied territories. The Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention provides for the protection of such women, but wartime conditions limit these measures [2].

People with Disabilities

More than 2.7 million people with disabilities in Ukraine face unique challenges due to the war. Inaccessible shelters, healthcare, and evacuation services put their lives at risk. Ukraine's Law "On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities" guarantees their rights, but violations remain widespread [3].

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

As of 2023, over 5.5 million Ukrainians became IDPs (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs data). IDPs face challenges with housing, employment, and access to social services.

Statistics

- Over 500 children killed, more than 1,000 injured (data from the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine).
- 60% of IDPs reported difficulties finding work (IOM survey, 2023).
- Over 8 million Ukrainians fled abroad, many of them women and children (UN data).

Below, we outline detailed recommendations for law enforcement agencies and international organizations to enhance the effectiveness of human rights protection.

1. Strengthening Monitoring of Human Rights Violations

Effective monitoring is the cornerstone of combating human rights violations. Specialized teams of experts should be established to collect and analyze evidence of violations. For example, documenting war crimes should focus on crimes against civilians, particularly vulnerable groups. Advanced technologies such as satellite imagery, drones, and artificial intelligence can play a critical role in identifying destruction, violence, or forced deportation in real-time.

2. Ensuring Access to Justice

One of the key aspects of human rights protection is ensuring justice for victims. Law enforcement agencies should create hotlines for victims of violence, provide legal support, and protect witnesses. International organizations, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), can support the prosecution of war criminals and assist local courts. Special attention should be given to cases of sexual violence, often used as a weapon of war.

3. Expanding International Cooperation

Protecting human rights during war requires international solidarity. Coordination centers uniting international organizations, partner governments, and civil society should be established. For instance, collaboration among EU countries can ensure the rights of Ukrainian refugees seeking asylum. Additionally, international programs should support the rehabilitation of violence survivors and ensure dignified living conditions for displaced persons.

4. Providing Social Protection for Vulnerable Groups

Many citizens lose access to housing, employment, healthcare, and education during war. State bodies, together with international partners, must develop comprehensive social support programs. For example, mobile learning centers or distance education programs should be created for children deprived of education. Women and persons with disabilities should receive prioritized access to evacuation services and humanitarian aid.

5. Raising Awareness of Human Rights

Education and awareness-raising are essential components of human rights protection. Law enforcement, including police and military personnel, should undergo specialized training in international humanitarian law. Civil society organizations and media should inform the public about their rights and the available assistance during wartime.

Conclusions: Thus, this research highlights systemic human rights violations against vulnerable groups during the war in Ukraine, including violence, forced displacement, and restricted access to essential services. Children, women, persons with disabilities, and internally displaced persons face severe risks, requiring urgent intervention.

Key recommendations include strengthening human rights

monitoring, ensuring justice for victims, expanding international cooperation, and enhancing social protection programs. Effective legal measures and humanitarian aid are crucial to safeguarding the dignity and rights of affected populations.

Protecting vulnerable groups must remain a priority for both Ukraine and the global community to mitigate suffering and uphold fundamental human rights.

References:

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_021#Text

2. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, ratified by Ukraine in 2022). URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/994_001-11#Text

3. Law of Ukraine "On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine". URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/875-12#Text>

4. Geneva Convention relating to the protection of civilian population in time of war (of 12 August 1949). URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_154#Text

5. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), of 8 June 1977. URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_199#Text

6. The work also used official publications, reports and documents of the UN, the UN Children's Fund "UNICEF", statistical data of the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, data of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, data of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other sources taken from official websites, Internet channels, Facebook, Telegram, etc.