

Ukrainian Health Care Under Russian Occupation: Hospitals Repurposed into Military Bases, Patients Required to Change Nationality and Health Workers Harassed, New Evidence Reveals

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A [new case study](#) co-published today by [Insecurity Insight](#), [eyeWitness to Atrocities](#), [Media Initiative for Human Rights](#) and [Physicians for Human Rights](#) reveals the dire consequences for health care from policies and practices carried out by Russia during its occupation of Ukrainian territories. Among others, these include detaining health workers, requiring forced changes of nationality as a precondition for gaining access to health care and repurposing health facilities for nonmedical purposes. With outside access remaining limited, the study provides a rare window into how civilians, health care providers and Ukraine's health care system more broadly have suffered in occupied regions of Ukraine.

Based on the [dataset](#) jointly maintained by these independent organisations, since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion there have been at least:

- 16 reported incidents where a health facility, including a former children's hospital, was reportedly repurposed for nonmedical use, such as military bases and weapons storage facilities;
- 34 reported incidents where civilian patients were forcibly evicted from health facilities or denied access to health care, and the facilities had been reportedly repurposed for the use of wounded soldiers;
- 23 reported incidents where medical supplies were requisitioned by Russian forces;
- 15 reported incidents of "passportization," or denying medical care to people without a Russian passport or coercing civilians into obtaining one to access health care; and
- 68 health care workers who were detained in 17 separate incidents.

"Our research sheds new light on the grim realities that patients and providers alike are forced to endure in order to access and provide basic health services," said Christina Wille, the Director of Insecurity Insight. "For years, our organisation has [monitored attacks on health care](#) amid armed conflict across the world, and these coercive measures are part of a disturbing pattern of lack of protection of health care in conflict."

Across the Russian-occupied territories, there are many credible reports of Ukrainian health care workers being detained, arrested and persecuted by Russian forces. In some cases, these providers appear to have been forced to violate their professional and ethical obligations to their patients.

Press Release

Under international humanitarian law, conflict parties are obliged to take all feasible precautions to protect health workers, health facilities and civilians. These obligations must be upheld in Ukraine and all other applicable contexts.

Informed by in-depth interviews with Ukrainian health care workers and incident data drawn from audiovisual evidence and open-source research, the study underscores the harsh realities facing civilians and health care workers. It focuses on the period from Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 through to September 2023.

This study follows a February 2023 [report](#) from Insecurity Insight, Physicians for Human Rights, Media Initiative for Human Rights, eyeWitness to Atrocities and the Ukrainian Healthcare Center that documented extensive attacks against Ukraine's hospitals, health workers, and other medical infrastructure since February 2022.

Media contact

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As an H2H (humanitarian to humanitarian) association, [Insecurity Insight](#) supports the work of aid agencies, providers of healthcare, education, and protection services, and other civil society organisations by providing publicly available information for evidence-based policies. We collect and analyse data about violence against civilians and damage and destruction of vital civilian infrastructure in order to strengthen civilian protection and the delivery of aid in armed conflict.

