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## THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEVASTATION OF UKRAINE: A RESULT OF RUSSIA'S WAR CRIMES

**Viacheslav Kharchenko\*, Andriy Kotynsky, Igor Yakymenko**

*National University of Food Technologies, Kyiv, Ukraine*

*\*Speaker: [graf\\_geo\\_ua@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:graf_geo_ua@yahoo.co.uk)*

In 2014, the Russian-Ukrainian war began. The Russian army occupied the Crimea, and then invaded Donbas. For 8 years, thousands of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians were killed by the attacks of enemy troops, the enemy destroyed settlements and caused an environmental crisis. On February 24, 2022, Russia started a full-scale invasion, and its war crimes spread to the entire territory of our country. Russia is waging a war against Ukraine in the manner of war crimes. The whole complex of such crimes can be divided into 8 classes (Stakhiv & Demydenko, 2023). One of the classes of such crimes is environmental degradation. During the full-scale war, 4 744 facts of causing damage and losses to the environment because of Russian armed aggression were documented. Almost 105 million tons of pollutants and 82 tons of poisonous substances were released into the air due to fires at industrial facilities and forests. Millions of square meters of land were contaminated and clogged. Tens of thousands of tons of foreign objects, materials, waste and/or other substances were dumped into water bodies. And even more pollutants have entered seawater. Environmental damages in Ukraine due to Russian war's crimes calculated by the State Environmental Inspection of Ukraine in accordance with approved methods are more than 57 billion euros (EcoZagroza, 2024).

Russia's war crime with the greatest one-time damage to the environment was the destruction of the dam of the Kakhovka Reservoir. 61 settlements (4 341 houses and 856 gardens) were flooded. As a result of the explosion, at least 150 tons of oil have leaked into the Dnipro River. 333 species of animals and plants, which have various conservation statuses, as well as 25 types of habitats, are at risk of destruction. The estimated damage caused by the catastrophe only to water resources is approximately EUR 50 mln (EcoZagroza, 2024).

In conclusion, the damage to the environment of Ukraine due to Russian war's crimes currently exceeds 57 billion euros. And these war's crimes continue. The revenues of the state budget of Ukraine in 2021 (before the destruction of our economy by the war) amounted about 42 billion euros (MinFin, 2024). Thus, the scale of environmental crimes of Russian invaders in Ukraine is huge and need to be stopped and fully compensated by Russian regime. International support of Ukraine is crucial for both these needs.

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