

War in Ukraine: women, minorities and children are the biggest victims

According to the study conducted by UN Women and the international humanitarian organization CARE, women and minorities are disproportionately influenced by the war in Ukraine¹.

More precisely, women are increasingly becoming heads of households and leaders in their communities as men are conscripted into the fighting, now in its third month. However, women remain largely excluded from formal decision-making processes related to humanitarian efforts, peace-making, and other areas that directly impact their lives.

The Rapid Gender Analysis found the war's impacts are particularly disproportionate for internally displaced people and marginalized groups, such as female-headed households, the Roma community, people with disabilities, and persons who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex or asexual (LGBTQIA+). Many Roma reported experiencing severe discrimination, both in their daily struggle and in access to humanitarian aid.

Gender roles are also changing. While many men have become unemployed or have been called up to serve in the armed forces, women have taken on new roles and multiple jobs to make up for lost household income. Women's unpaid care burden has increased significantly, due to the Russian invasion, with schools closed, as well as high demand for volunteer work, and the absence of men at the front.

Women and girls also highlighted poor access to healthcare services, especially for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), and pregnant, expecting, and new mothers. They also spoke of rising fears of GBV, and lack of food, especially for those in heavy conflict areas. On this point, it should be pointed out that sexual violence is the most hidden crime committed against Ukrainians².

The report contains several recommendations for governments, the international community, and others, such as prioritizing women and young people in leadership roles, and share decision-making responsibilities equally. Priority also should be

1 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/05/1117542>

2 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14926.doc.htm>

given to sexual and reproductive health, and to maternal, newborn, and child healthcare, including the clinical care of sexual assault survivors.

Children are also the great victims of this war. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) continues to highlight how the war is having a dramatic impact on the lives and futures of Ukraine's children. At least two children are killed every day during the war³. Health facilities and schools have been attacked while children fleeing violence faced a significant risk of family separation, abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1119432>