

DOI <https://doi.org/10.51647/kelm.2022.3.33>**MIĘDZYNARODOWE PRAWO HUMANITARNE: LUDOBÓJSTWO UKRAIŃCÓW 2022****Oleksandra Kalmykova***kandydat nauk, docent Katedry Prawa Międzynarodowego Wydziału Prawa Uniwersytetu Stambulskiego
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Adnotacja. Wywiad naukowy analizuje zawłości prawne uznania ludobójstwa Ukraińców przez Federację Rosyjską. Znaczenie badania wynika z popełnienia zbrodni wojennych przeciwko ludności cywilnej podczas agresji wojskowej w Ukrainie. Masowość i okrucieństwo tych antyhumanistycznych przejawów zaktualizowało normy prawne Międzynarodowego Prawa Humanitarnego, które powstają jako jeden mechanizm rozpoznawania ludobójstwa Ukraińców i dalszego pociągania agresora do odpowiedzialności. Metody badawcze są skorelowane z normami prawa międzynarodowego i metodologią klastra praw humanitarnych. Proces rozpoznawania ludobójstwa wymaga jasnych wytycznych metodologicznych opartych na systematycznych, doktrynalnych i historycznych metodach badań prawnych. W związku z tym naród ukraiński i światowa społeczność demokratyczna potrzebują prawnego uzasadnienia zbrodni wojennych popełnionych podczas rosyjskiej agresji wojskowej. Zadaniem klastra prawnego jest ustalanie i ocena prawna zbrodni wojennych, co będzie warunkiem pociągnięcia do odpowiedzialności ich organizatorów i wykonawców.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska 2022, ludobójstwo Ukraińców, dyskurs humanitarno-prawny, prawo międzynarodowe, zbrodnia wojenna.

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Abstract

The scientific intelligence analyzes the legal subtleties of recognition of the genocide of Ukrainians by the Russian Federation. The relevance of the research is due to the commission of war crimes against the civilian population during the military aggression against Ukraine. Massive and cruelty of these anti-human manifestations actualized legal norms of International Humanitarian Law, which are the only mechanism of recognition of the genocide of Ukrainians and further prosecution of the aggressor. The methods of research correlate with the norms of international law and the methodology of the humanitarian law cluster. The process of genocide recognition requires clear methodological guidelines, which are based on the systemic, doctrinal, and historical methods of legal research. Consequently, the Ukrainian nation and the global democratic community need legal justification of war crimes committed during the Russian military aggression. The task of the legal cluster is the fixation and legal assessment of war crimes, which will be a prerequisite for bringing their organizers and perpetrators to justice.

Key words: Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022, genocide of Ukrainians, humanitarian legal discourse, international law, war crime.

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Анотація

У науковій розвідці аналізуються юридичні тонкощі визнання геноциду українців з боку Російської Федерації. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена скоєнням воєнних злочинів проти цивільного населення в ході військової агресії проти України. Масовість та жорстокість цих антигуманних проявів актуалізувала законодавчі норми Міжнародного гуманітарного права, які постають єдиним механізмом визнання геноциду українців та подальшого притягнення до відповідальності агресора. Методи дослідження корелюються з нормами міжнародного права та методологією гуманітарно-правового кластеру. Процес визнання геноциду потребує чітких методологічних настанов, які опираються на системний, доктринальний та історичний методи правових

досліджень. Отже, українська нація та світова демократична спільнота потребують юридичного обґрунтування воєнних злочинів, які здійснюються в ході російської військової агресії. Завданням юридичного кластеру є фіксація та правова оцінка воєнних злочинів, що стане передумовою притягнення до відповідальності їхніх організаторів та виконавців.

Ключові слова: російсько-українська війна 2022 року, геноцид українців, гуманітарно-правовий дискурс, міжнародне право, воєнний злочин.

Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian war was a real catastrophe of the twenty-first century, not only in the military-political aspect but also in the humanitarian aspect. The beginning of the war demonstrated to the entire civilized world not only military strategies but also war crimes.

From the first hours of the full-scale invasion, the aggressor's desire not only to achieve military and political goals (defeat of the Ukrainian armed forces, elimination of the legitimate authorities, establishment of the occupation regime) but also to commit actions in general that have all signs of the genocide of Ukrainians became evident.

That is why the scientific and legal community of Ukraine and the civilized world have an important task to assess these inhuman actions and to create an appropriate legal framework for further prosecution and adequate punishment of all violators of international law.

Atrocities on the international legal global scale are classified as:

- war crimes;
- crimes against humanity;
- genocide (O'Brien, 2022).

It should be noted that the Russian full-scale military invasion of Ukraine actualizes all components of international crimes. While war crimes by the Russian army and genocide carried out by the military and political leadership of the Russian Federation concern mainly Ukrainians, nuclear threats (including nuclear power facilities in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territory) and provoking a food crisis are problems of planetary scale.

Martz (2022) and Kulick (2022) assess war crimes in terms of international humanitarian law. The problem of the genocide of Ukrainians is raised by Etkind (2022) and Mälksoo (2022) in their scientific legal surveys.

The potential of the international humanitarian law system to solve the problem of genocide was highlighted by Lichterman (2022), Van Dijk (2022), and Straus (2022).

Ukrainians now feel the actualization of the principle of the humanitarian instinct – the desire to help another who is in trouble (Kapila, 2022). The help and sympathy of the entire civilized world are very important for Ukraine today. One component of this assistance is legal support for Ukrainians facing a policy of genocide initiated by the Russian military and political leadership. Consequently, thanks to the joint efforts of the Ukrainian legal system and institutions of international humanitarian law there is an opportunity to record and prove facts of the war crimes of the Russian aggressor with subsequent prosecution for inhuman actions.

The atrocities committed by Russian aggressors in Ukraine activate the “responsibility to protect” as a norm of public international law that authorizes international actors to support Ukraine's sovereignty and the rights of its citizens (Georgiev, 2022). While military support is the prerogative of the UN Security Council (respectively, blocked by the Russian Federation) and the decision of collective (NATO) or state military institutions that do not dare to enter into open conflict with a nuclear state, legal support and legal accompaniment are provided to Ukraine by the civilized world in practice without limitation.

Study methods

The methodology of scientific exploration is concentrated in three main clusters:

- General scientific methods, through which a general picture of humanitarian and legal understanding of the events, potentially the policy of genocide of Ukrainians during the Russian-Ukrainian war is formed. Systemic and comparative analysis, inductive and deductive dimensions allow forming strategic rules of legal assessment of genocide manifestations.

- Specific scientific and legal methods, namely: systemic, doctrinal, historical, and experimental methods of legal research, through which a practically oriented cluster of the legal field of the future process of recognition of the genocide of Ukrainians is formed. Let us note that the historical context has changed the principles of international humanitarian law quite significantly (Van Dijk, 2022).

- Synergetic and dialectical methodology, close to philosophical-legal attitudes, helps to understand the nature and essence of manifestations of genocide and the cultural-legal component of their measurement.

Note that it is the synergetic constants, although mostly scientific-philosophical components, which are designed to form the necessary unification of the entire methodological potential for effective assessment of events and contribute to the observance of all principles of the rule of law.

Results

First of all, a clear definition of genocide must be given. According to Article 2 of the Geneva Convention, genocide means “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, any national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, by means of killing, bodily or mental harm, causing disadvantageous living conditions, preventing childbirth, carrying out forced emigration”(Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949).

Theoretical and legal support for the implementation of the Geneva Convention and other international legal codes is centered in the cluster of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), the system of rules controlling the consequences

of hostilities on civilians. The responsibility of parties to an armed conflict is indicated. The issues of humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians are considered to be key. These components usually become safeguards against the potential danger of genocide (International Humanitarian Law. Factsheet, 2022).

In its turn, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine with its resolution of April 14, 2022, began the process of recognizing the actions of the Russian aggressor as genocide of Ukrainians at the legislative level. An important element of the policy of genocide was the destruction of civilian infrastructure, non-admission of humanitarian missions, and prevention of the evacuation of civilians from the war zone. Such inhumane methods of warfare are an obvious manifestation of genocide. Facts of atrocities were noted in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, which were subsequently liberated from Russian aggressors or remain occupied (Bucha, Irpen, Borodyanka, Mariupol, and many other settlements). Genocide was revealed in “numerous cases of murders, kidnappings, imprisonment of people, their torture, rape, mockery over the bodies of those killed and tortured, shooting of people, entire families, including children, who tried to evacuate from the occupied settlements of Donetsk, Kyiv, Luhansk, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson, Chernihiv regions” (Explanatory Note to the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine On Declaration of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the Genocide Committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, 2022).

Let us note the acts for the implementation of which criminal liability is prescribed, namely: genocide; conspiracy to commit genocide, incitement to genocide, complicity in genocide (Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949).

The methodology and unanimity of all international legal structures in holding Russia accountable for the war crimes committed is important. In particular, the International Court of Justice has also expressed its condemnation of the actions of the Russian aggressors. Such a signal could potentially have significant consequences in future international legal proceedings for war crimes against Ukrainians (Kulick, 2022).

At present, Ukraine has managed to launch appropriate legal mechanisms, which will allow engaging the appropriate arsenal (both human and procedural) in the matter of bringing the Russian aggressor to justice at the international level (Fedorenko & Fedorenko, 2022).

On February 28, 2022, ICC Prosecutor, Karim A. A. Khan announced his decision to request permission to open an investigation into the situation in Ukraine, since crimes committed by Russian aggressors fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The 39 participating states of the Rome Statute have availed themselves of Article 14 of this Code and have initiated the acceleration of an active investigation into war crimes in Ukraine. The ICC office began the process of identifying potential cases of war crimes and genocide in Ukraine that resulted from the full-scale invasion by Russian troops. ICC lawyers usually organize the interaction of all stakeholders and parties to the conflict during investigations, ensuring the conditions for an independent and objective process. The principle of complementarity becomes a key synergistic method for lawyers to work effectively.

Ukrainian investigative teams are assisted by international intercollegiate investigative teams that collect reports, photos, and video evidence of crimes that occurred in Ukraine (Martz, 2022). This format is relevant not only in purely professional assistance to Ukrainian lawyers but is also important in disseminating first-hand, reliable facts about the atrocities committed by Russian troops. The countries that delegated their experts to document and legally support the Ukrainian legal system have the opportunity to get information from primary sources. Consequently, the factor of investigative bias on the part of Ukrainian lawyers is rejected because they are considered a party to the conflict. The international nature of the investigative teams will be a weighty argument against accusations of distorting facts or staging atrocities by the Russian army.

Relevant now are the issues associated with the emergence of public international law, which makes the procedural activity more accessible and understandable to the public (Rogers, 2022).

In addition to the practice-oriented dimension of genocide recognition, an important cluster is the theoretical-legal scientific discourse on the issue. The period since February 2022 has been a real boom of scholarly research aimed at positioning war crimes as genocide of Ukrainians.

Aladekomo's (2022) scientific intelligence relies on natural law theory, which is the basis of international humanitarian law and uses the doctrinal method of research. Major international legal doctrines prioritize the protection of civilians from the effects of hostilities and the rules of engagement.

One of the important areas of work of legal scholars is the study of patterns of civil victimization, which determine the level of threat to civilians, develop algorithms for action under conditions of uncertainty, and organize the functioning of humanitarian activity (Straus, 2022).

Discussion

Note that genocide has not only scientific-legal axiological manifestations but also forms existential philosophical-legal precepts. It is noted, “the incompatibility of the logic of sovereignty (Ukraine) and imperialism (Russia) in conflict” (Mälksoo, 2022). Consequently, the legal field in which war crimes are evaluated must include not only factual material but also use the existential nature of genocide (in the global, geopolitical, and cultural-historical dimensions).

The genocide of the Ukrainian people is an obvious consequence of the Russo-Ukrainian war. The hot phase of hostilities is now underway and every day we receive evidence of military casualties and civilian casualties and destruction. The war crimes and atrocities of the Russian Kafirs have become part of contemporary events in Ukraine. Of course, society is now overwhelmed with emotion, which translates into a desire for a swift and effective investigation of war crimes and the swift prosecution of all perpetrators.

As cynical as it may sound, jurisprudence does not tolerate quick and unreasonable decisions, because such results may have a positive short-term effect, undermining fundamental principles of the rule of law. Therefore, we consider it expedient to put aside emotions (and better to refocus them on helping the Ukrainian nation in its fight against the aggressor) when considering the problem concerning international law. And in matters of recognition of the genocide of the Ukrainian people during the Russian military aggression focus on the procedure, methodology, and algorithms that will provide a complete and indisputable evidence base in the future criminal proceedings against the aggressor.

We should note the role of the information and digital environment in forming the evidence base for the war crimes of the Russian aggressors. So far, it has been possible to record the realities of the war virtually online. Streams of information on social networks (Facebook, Telegram, TikTok, and Twitter) provide a complete picture of what is happening in the arena of hostilities, occupied territories, and lands shelled by the Russian armed forces. Human rights groups and journalists actively publish (pre-tested and confirmed by facts or eyewitnesses) reports of crimes committed by civilians. According to international law, in order to qualify as a war crime, it is necessary to prove the intent of a military actor to harm civilians or to strike at prohibited targets (hospitals, schools, civilian storage facilities, etc.). Consequently, holding officials (military or politicians) who give orders to commit war crimes accountable usually requires intercepting communications within the aggressor's leadership (command) or seizing documentary evidence of such orders (Parker, 2022).

Crimes against civilians committed directly on the front lines are very difficult to prove since it is impossible to document them due to the intensity of combat operations. Tracking the crime in a post-facto format no longer makes it possible to collect the proper objective evidence base. Consequently, under such conditions, only the subjective dimension of procedural character remains relevant. The investigation of war crimes or the recognition of genocide usually requires objective and subjective features.

Contemporary international law is confronted with the problem of the ability of world institutions (primarily UN structures) to respond adequately to the challenges of the times (Lichterman, 2022). The realities of war that have recently confronted the world community (Georgia, Syria, Ukraine) bring not only combat and military destruction. Crimes against humanity and acts of genocide against peoples and nations have become an indispensable companion to military conflicts and the policies of aggressor countries.

At present, there is an intensified discussion about the priority of the existential and axiological dimensions of the concept of genocide. Note that if the existential understanding of genocide dominates, we face the danger of a de facto legitimization of this anti-human phenomenon, which has recently acquired the ability to recur in civilizational advancement. The axiological interpretation of genocide shapes the irreconcilability of the civilizational world with manifestations of violence against an ethnic, national, religious group, etc. The organizers and perpetrators of acts of genocide must be discovered and punished for their inhumane acts. The inevitable responsibility for genocide has been an axiom of the international legal system (Etkind, 2022). However, the end of the 20th-beginning of the 21st century has demonstrated a certain inability of the world community to bring the detected acts of genocide to their logical conclusion. Fixation, statement, moral condemnation, and conviction in absentia have not always resulted in judicial decisions or real punishment. This has led to dangerous precedents when those who committed genocide avoided responsibility. Consequently, this tendency may lead to a reorientation in the world-view paradigm of understanding genocide as an inhuman unacceptable act that must be punished unconditionally, to a phenomenon of criminal nature, which is one of the habitual forms of violation of international law.

Conclusion

The events in Ukraine may become a certain Rubicon in the international legal system on the interpretation of genocide. The magnitude of the Russian aggressor's atrocities against the civilian population of Ukraine does not leave the gray areas or places for scholarly debate on the issue. The obviousness of genocide, supported daily by facts and evidence of crimes and atrocities gathered from various sources, requires proper legal assessment in the global international dimension. The world community should activate all necessary mechanisms to organize a proper investigation of every single fact of a war crime as well as recognition of the genocide of Ukrainians by Russian aggressors.

International humanitarian law must become an effective platform where the key legal principle of the rule of law is implemented, regardless of the status and capabilities of the accused party. The Russian military and political leadership as the organizer and the Russian armed forces as the perpetrators must be justly punished for inhumane actions against humanity (food and nuclear terrorism) and for committing war crimes against Ukrainians. The genocide of Ukrainians is a terrible reality of the 21st century, which must be properly evaluated in the context of international humanitarian law.

The scientific and legal community must join in recognizing the illegal actions of the Russian Federation as genocide of Ukrainians. A practically oriented cluster will be carried out by investigative groups and lawyers of the Ukrainian and international judicial system. The theoretical and methodological component also requires mobilization of efforts of scientists and legal researchers to develop progressive mechanisms of procedural actions for accountability for acts of genocide against Ukrainians during the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022.

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