



# COORDINATION HEADQUARTERS FOR THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR



APRIL 2026  
MONTHLY REPORT

## Monthly Report on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, War Crimes and Predatory Recruitment Practices in the Russia– Ukraine War





# APRIL 2026

## 375 UKRAINIANS FREED THIS MONTH



### Two prisoner exchanges held in April 2026

Ukraine secured the release of 175 soldiers and 7 civilians in a pre-Easter prisoner exchange on April 11, 2026. Most had been held since 2022, including defenders of Mariupol and National Guard troops captured early in the invasion, including at Chernobyl. A subsequent exchange on April 24 resulted in the release of 193 servicemen, many of whom were held in Chechnya, with some facing fabricated charges. All those released are receiving medical care, rehabilitation, and reintegration support.



APRIL 2026

# FOREIGN RECRUITMENT FUELS RUSSIA'S MANPOWER STRATEGY AMID RISING BATTLEFIELD LOSSES



## Russia to recruit 18,500 foreigners in 2026 as 5,149 killed, Usov warns at Truth Hounds event

At a policy discussion titled "Foreign Fighters in the Russian Army: How to Stop the Global Recruitment Scheme", organized by [Truth Hounds](#), Brigadier General Dmytro Usov, Secretary of Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War, presented updated intelligence on Russia's reliance on foreign fighters.

He stated that Russia plans to recruit **18,500 foreigners** in 2026 to compensate for mounting losses and domestic recruitment challenges, treating foreign nationals as low-cost, expendable manpower.

According to his data, Russian forces include over **13,000 Central Asians**, **1,800 South Asians**, nearly **3,000 Africans**, more than **1,500 Latin Americans**, and around **14,000 troops** from North Korea.

Usov also reported that at least **5,149 foreign fighters** have been killed in high-casualty "meat assault" operations. Ukraine currently holds prisoners of war from **48 countries**, with the largest groups originating from **Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus**.

He warned that recruitment practices are increasingly tied to transnational coercion and trafficking networks, raising broader international security concerns.

[READ SOURCE](#)

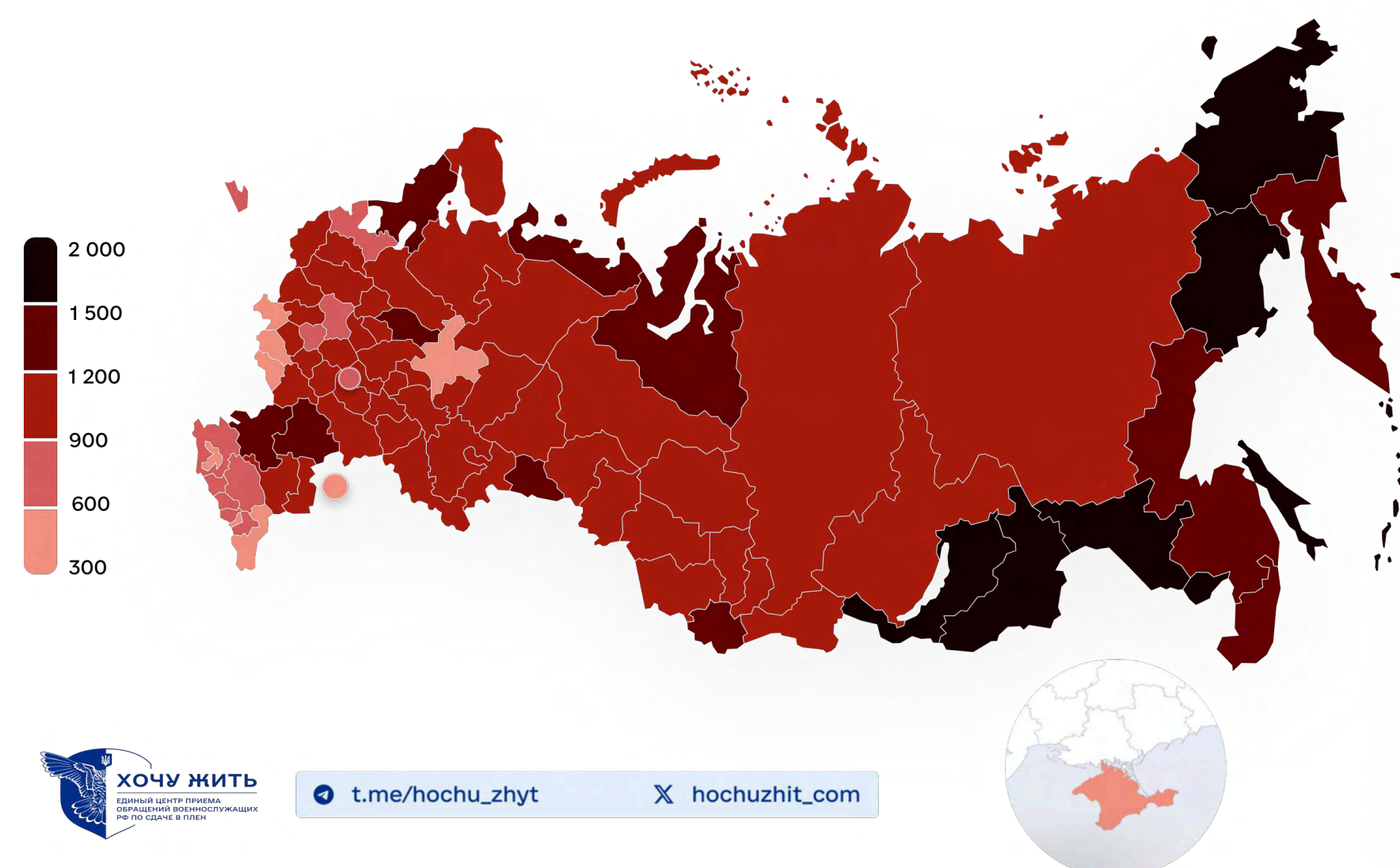


# APRIL 2026

## INSIGHTS INTO RUSSIAN RECRUITMENT BY THE UKRAINIAN STATE PROJECT "I WANT TO LIVE"



### Russia Falls Short on 2026 Contract Troop Recruitment Targets



Russia's 2026 plan to recruit 409,000 contract soldiers is faltering, with daily enlistment rates well below targets. If trends continue, the shortfall could exceed 65,000 troops. Recruitment relies heavily on poorer regions, migrants, and vulnerable groups, including prisoners and debtors. Authorities are also pressuring institutions and expanding coercive tactics, while losses and declining willingness to fight undermine the campaign.

### Kenyan Nationals Killed After Minimal Training and Rapid Deployment to Ukraine Frontline, Despite Russia's Pledges to Withdraw Kenyan Fighters

A group of Kenyan citizens — including Brian Mwangi, Daniel Kiprotich, and Kevin Otieno — were killed in action while serving in the Russian Armed Forces in the Kharkiv region. The individuals reportedly signed contracts in late 2025 and, after only brief training, were deployed to high-risk assault operations where they were killed during frontline engagements. The incident highlights Russia's continued use of foreign recruits as expendable manpower, despite reported agreements with several governments to scale back or withdraw foreign nationals from combat roles.

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### Cameroonian Nationals Killed in Action in Ukraine After Service in Russian Army, as "I Want to Live" Publishes List of 93

Cameroonian authorities confirmed the deaths of 16 of their citizens who were fighting against Ukraine as part of the Russian Armed Forces, though the real number of casualties is believed to be significantly higher. The project "I Want to Live" has published a list of Cameroonian nationals who served in the Russian Armed Forces and were killed in action, identifying at least 93 individuals — many of them young and deployed shortly after minimal training. The case underscores Russia's continued reliance on foreign recruits, particularly from economically vulnerable countries, despite mounting scrutiny and concerns over coercion, deception, and the systematic use of such fighters in high-risk frontline operations.

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# APRIL 2026

## INSIGHTS INTO RUSSIAN RECRUITMENT BY THE UKRAINIAN STATE PROJECT "I WANT TO LIVE"



### Russia Sets Quotas for Recruiting Foreign Nationals Residing Within Its Territory for Military Service

According to sources within the Russian Armed Forces, the General Staff's mobilization directorate together with migration authorities is assessing foreign men aged 18–60 across federal districts. Checks have reportedly been completed nationwide.

Enlistment offices have been assigned targets to recruit between 0.5% and 3.5% of foreign nationals in each region through 97 contract recruitment points. The largest numbers are in the Central Military District (30), followed by Moscow and Southern districts (21 each), Eastern (14), and Leningrad (11). The Ministry of Defense reportedly plans to recruit at least 18,500 foreign citizens in 2026.

Priority is given to citizens of Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Recruitment efforts also extend to Bangladesh, Chad, Sudan, Burundi, and other economically vulnerable states in Africa and Asia.

Alongside official structures, several formations under General Staff control – including "Redut," "Konvoy," "Wagner-2," "Potok," "Russian Combat Brotherhood," "Fakel," "Patriot," "Plamya," "Sokol," and "Veterans" – are also involved.

Reports suggest recruitment relies not only on incentives and citizenship promises, but also on exploitation of legal vulnerability, including visa issues, inability to legalize stay, and administrative detention. In such cases, individuals are allegedly offered a choice between prison sentences or signing military contracts.

Governments are urged to warn their citizens about these risks

**We also strongly advise foreign nationals to exercise caution and discretion, and to avoid traveling to Russia or accepting job offers there, as this is where the risk of exposure to military recruitment and possible involvement on the Russian side of the war against Ukraine exists.**

**Foreign nationals who reside in or travel to Russia face the risk of being drawn into the conflict on the Russian side, with a high likelihood of not returning home alive.**





APRIL 2026

## TRUTH HOUNDS INVESTIGATION: FOREIGNERS FIGHTING FOR RUSSIA



### Combatants, Mercenaries, or Victims of Human Trafficking: Foreigners in Russia's War Against Ukraine



Truth Hounds examines the legal and human status of foreign nationals who end up fighting for Russia in Ukraine, highlighting that many cases do not fit a single clear category. While some individuals are formally recruited and sign contracts, others appear to be drawn in through deception, coercion, or exploitation of vulnerable migration status, raising questions about human trafficking indicators alongside mercenary recruitment.

The analysis emphasizes that under international humanitarian law, such fighters may fall into different classifications depending on circumstances – including combatant status, mercenary criteria, or victims of trafficking – with significant legal consequences for detention, prosecution, and prisoner-of-war protections. It also notes that Russian-linked recruitment structures and intermediaries often operate in legal grey zones, where financial promises, citizenship offers, and migration irregularities overlap with pressure and abuse.

Overall, the report highlights a blurred boundary between voluntary enlistment and coercion, arguing that each case requires individual assessment to determine whether foreign fighters are combatants or victims exploited within the broader system of Russia's war effort.

[READ THE REPORT](#)



# APRIL 2026

## UKRAINE & THE UK PRESENT REPORT ON RUSSIA'S SYSTEM OF CIVILIAN PERSECUTION



### Coordination HQ and partners expose a “pipeline of repression” targeting civilians in occupied territories

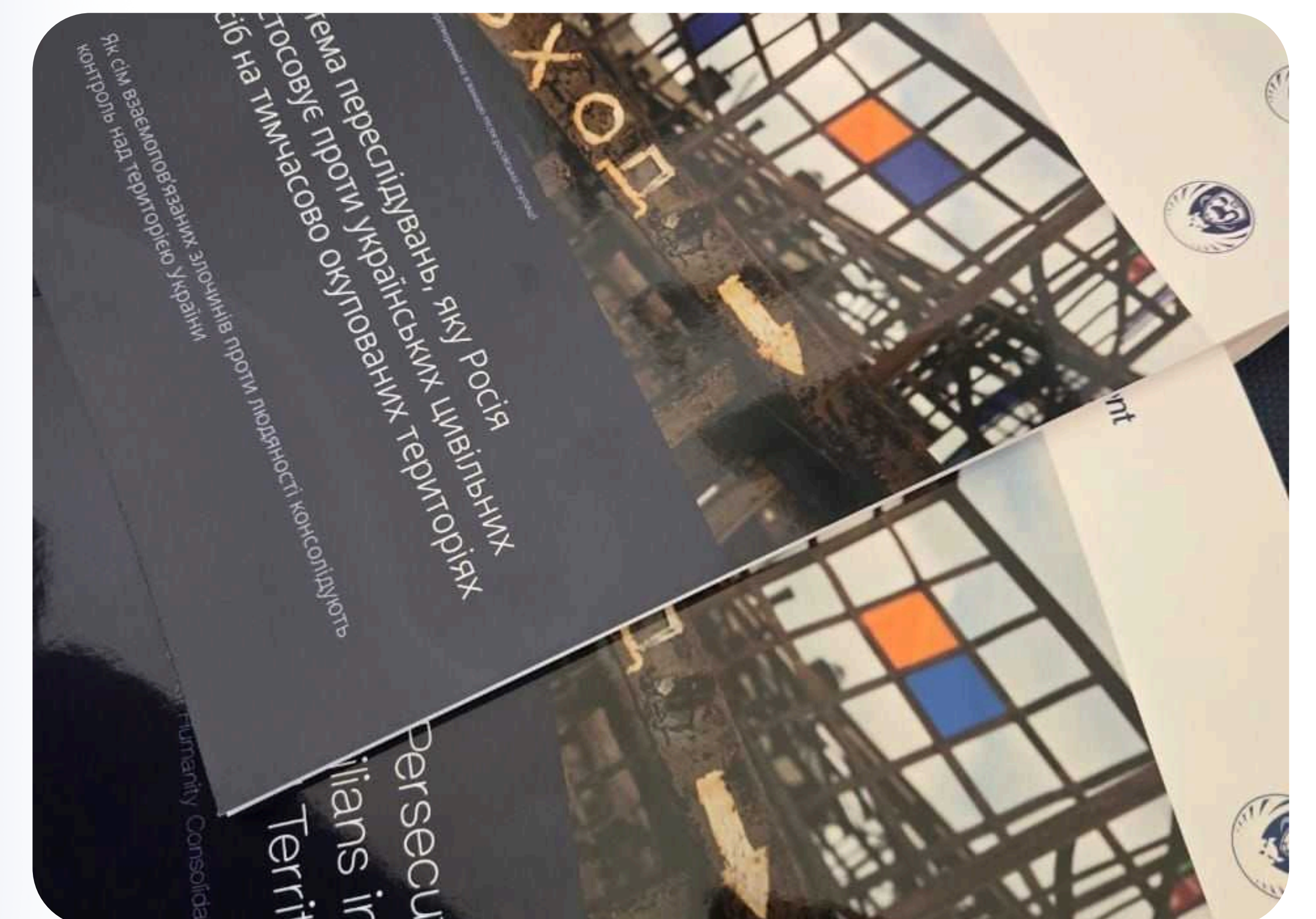
Ukraine's Coordination HQ and the UK Embassy presented a comprehensive White Paper detailing Russia's systematic detention, torture, and abuse of civilians in temporarily occupied territories. The report underscores that these violations are not sporadic or incidental, but part of a deliberate, coordinated state policy aimed at suppressing Ukrainian identity, dismantling local communities, and instilling fear to maintain control over occupied populations.

According to the findings, civilians are frequently detained arbitrarily without formal charges or legal grounds, often targeted for their pro-Ukrainian views, civic activity, or simply for refusing to cooperate with occupying forces. Detainees are subjected to interrogations involving physical violence, torture, and severe psychological pressure. Many are transferred across a network of informal basements, filtration points, and formal detention facilities, creating a system designed to isolate and break individuals.

Victims are commonly held incommunicado for extended periods, denied access to legal representation, international humanitarian organizations, or any contact with their families. The report also documents widespread practices of enforced disappearances, sexual violence, coercion, and inhumane detention conditions, including lack of medical care, overcrowding, and deprivation of basic needs.

The study describes this as a structured “pipeline of persecution,” where civilians move through stages of capture, interrogation, transfer, and prolonged detention. It emphasizes that such practices may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under international law.

The authors call for stronger international engagement, including increased political and legal pressure on Russia, expanded support for victims and their families, and coordinated global efforts to secure the release of unlawfully detained civilians. The report is intended to serve as a tool for advocacy, evidence-building, and accountability in international courts and institutions.

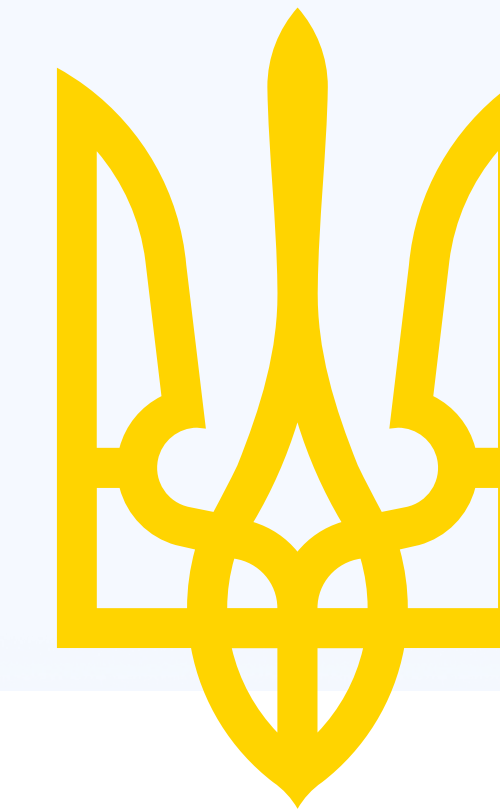


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# APRIL 2026

## COORDINATION HQ INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY



### Coordination HQ, US Embassy deepen cooperation on POWs

Ukraine's Coordination HQ held talks with the US Embassy to strengthen cooperation in humanitarian efforts. The sides discussed Russia's violations of international law and agreed to develop joint pressure mechanisms. Particular focus was placed on freeing prisoners of war and locating missing persons, both military and civilian. Ukraine also outlined plans to expand the Coordination HQ's capacity to manage releases and search operations.

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### Coordination HQ meets Canadian senator on POW support

Ukraine's Coordination HQ held a meeting with Canadian Senator Stan Kutcher, alongside international representatives and a former POW. Discussions focused on rehabilitation programs for released servicemen, including physical and psychological recovery, as well as state support mechanisms.

Participants also addressed assistance for families of captured soldiers and explored potential humanitarian initiatives involving Canada and international partners to support former detainees and improve reintegration efforts.

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### Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Meets Coordination HQ on 4th Anniversary

Andrii Sybiha visited the Coordination Headquarters marking four years of its work returning Ukrainians from captivity. Officials discussed cooperation, family support, and international efforts. The HQ has conducted 71 exchanges, freeing 8,669 people, while diplomats work daily to press Russia to end its abusive practices in the treatment of POWs.

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