



POSITION STATEMENT
**ON THE MILITARY INVASION
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
ON THE TERRITORY
OF UKRAINE**



On 24 February 2022, the Russian army started a war in Ukraine, launching missile strikes against Ukrainian military bases and air bases and openly bringing military machinery to the territory of Ukraine.

THE EURASIAN COALITION FOR HEALTH, RIGHTS, GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY (ECOM) IS OUTRAGED BY THE MILITARY AGGRESSION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AGAINST THE SOVEREIGNTY AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF UKRAINE. ACCORDING TO THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, THE USE OF FORCE BY ONE STATE AGAINST ANOTHER STATE IS UNACCEPTABLE.¹

Escalation of hostilities by the Russian Federation in Ukraine is leading to numerous human rights violations, with the violation of the rights to freedom, security and life being of particular concern. The number of wounded and killed civilians is growing, which cannot be justified in any way.

The armed conflict exacerbates the inequalities experienced by the most vulnerable populations in accessing essential services, in particular health care.

In this context, LGBT people and people living with HIV are among the most vulnerable populations. Since 2014, following the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of some areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions by the Russian Federation, human rights organizations have repeatedly reported an aggravating situation for vulnerable populations, which used to experience challenges even before the conflict.²

The military conflict may also have a negative impact on the situation of LGBT people in the government-controlled territory of Ukraine. For instance, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky signed a decree on general mobilization, calling up conscripts and reservists. In this situation, trans* women who have not been able to change their legal documents as well as trans* men who are liable for military service can be called up against their will.

1 United Nations Charter: <https://www.un.org/ru/about-us/un-charter/full-text>
2 <https://adcmemorial.org/en/publications/violation-of-lgbti-rights-in-crimea-and-donbass-the-problem-of-homophobia-in-territories-beyond-ukraine-s-control/>

This can become an additional concern for trans* people due to a high level of transphobia in the Ukrainian society.

High burden on the health care system and mass displacement of people are new major barriers in accessing HIV services. HIV prevention and testing are likely to become less accessible. Due to the movement restrictions, people living with HIV may have difficulties in accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Besides, ECOM is concerned to see that the military conflict leads to even greater restrictions on the freedom of assembly, association and expression in the Russian Federation. The police detain, summon for interrogations and put various kinds of pressure on the activists taking part in anti-war campaigns to support the people of Ukraine.

Ukraine and the Russian Federation are parties to a number of international and regional human rights treaties, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In line with these international standards, fundamental rights such as the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture and ill-treatment, the prohibition of enforced disappearance, the right to judicial review of detention, and the right to a fair trial do not provide for derogation even during the state of emergency.

**ECOM AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME EXPRESSES ITS
SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE, MEMBERS OF OUR
COALITION AND OUR PARTNERS IN UKRAINE**

- ECOM condemns the military invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of sovereign and independent Ukraine, the use of military vehicles and weapons against the civilian population and the violation of the rights to life, freedom and security of the citizens of Ukraine;

- ECOM calls on the Russian Federation to stop hostilities in Ukraine;
- ECOM calls on the Russian Federation to release all the arrested activists who took part in anti-war campaigns in Russia;
- ECOM calls on international organizations to prioritize humanitarian interventions to save the lives of as many Ukrainians as possible and to cover the basic humanitarian needs of all those in need during the war;
- ECOM calls on the Ukrainian government to observe human rights, avoid discrimination and take into account the needs of vulnerable populations when offering social services and access to health care;
- ECOM calls on the competent Ukrainian authorities to review, in cooperation with trans* community and human rights organizations, the issue of simplifying the gender transition procedure, especially for trans* women, which is particularly important in the context of conscription and which remains insufficiently regulated in Ukrainian laws and regulations with regard to trans* people;
- ECOM sees the current situation as a special “window of opportunity” for Ukraine in terms of its accelerated accession to the European Union and in this context is ready to support the country’s efforts to speed up harmonization of the national legislation with the highest human rights standards taking into account the needs and requirements of the LGBT community as an integral part of the Ukrainian society.