

17 October 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Samantha Power
Administrator
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20523

Dear Secretary Blinken and Administrator Power,

As concerned non-governmental organizations and individuals working with victims and survivors of gross human rights violations and serious violations of humanitarian law in Ukraine, we write to urge the United States to repurpose a percentage of immobilized Russian sovereign assets towards urgent interim reparation which would address the devastating harms suffered by the most vulnerable victims and survivors of Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

The REPO for Ukrainians Act, included in the Ukraine supplemental signed into law on April 24, 2024, states that resources in the Ukraine Support Fund shall be available to the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to provide assistance to Ukraine for damage resulting from the Russian invasion. It also requires that the Secretary of State, in consultation with the USAID Administrator, submit to Congress "an assessment of the most pressing needs of Ukraine for reconstruction, rebuilding, and humanitarian aid" within 180 days of the bill's enactment. The assessment requires exploring the extent to which certain needs are being met or funded already, and identification of priority needs, including those determined by the Ukrainian government.

As the State Department and USAID prepares this assessment, we seek to draw attention to the fact that significant funding has already been, and will continue to be provided by the United States, together with allies, to support military efforts, humanitarian assistance, and longer-term reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. The [Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment \(RDNA3\)](#) already provides an assessment of the damage and assistance needs. However, a gap remains to adopt a human-centered approach to the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and recovery must be considered hand in hand with provision of reparation.

A first step towards prompt reparation is the provision of urgent interim reparation for the most vulnerable survivors, including children. While the Act envisages engagement on an international compensation mechanism which could deliver compensation to a limited proportion of victims in the future, the most vulnerable survivors cannot wait until formal justice and accountability processes are pursued and/or a peace agreement is reached. Individuals have endured grievous human rights violations and serious violations of humanitarian law, including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), torture, forced transfer and disappearance, resulting in trauma, chronic injuries, and economic hardship, compounded by the destruction of homes and difficulty in accessing health and social care services. These harms are not currently adequately and effectively addressed.

The Administration should consider specific forms of urgent interim reparation to acknowledge the harm suffered by these survivors, such as interim compensation, housing, medical or legal assistance or rehabilitation, as pressing needs in its assessment. The Ukrainian government has demonstrated support for urgent interim reparation and, through a multi-stakeholder approach, has established the first urgent interim reparation pilot project in the world for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, which can be expanded to other categories of victims if resources are made available.

Funding of urgent interim reparation would bridge the gap between short-term lifesaving humanitarian assistance goals and paving the way for sustainable reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine. It is critical to address the most urgent harms suffered by victims, preventing these harms from worsening and becoming irreparable. It is also essential to prevent further cycles of violence and exclusion. In supporting survivors to reclaim their dignity and agency, urgent interim reparation will contribute to social cohesion, economic growth and long-term peacebuilding efforts, and will encourage survivor engagement in formal justice and accountability processes.

We call on the U.S. Department of State and USAID to ensure that urgent interim reparation is prioritized within the needs assessment. Specifically, we urge you to:

- Utilize a significant percentage of immobilized Russian sovereign assets to fund urgent interim reparation for Ukrainian victims and survivors.
- Prioritize the most vulnerable survivors, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, torture, forced transfer and disappearance. These individuals face unique challenges, including severe physical and psychological trauma, social exclusion, and heightened economic vulnerability.
- Prioritize funding to programs and mechanisms that utilize a survivor-centered approach in their design and implementation.

We stand ready to provide technical support to the U.S. government regarding practical avenues to implement urgent interim reparation, reflecting the needs and aspirations of victims and survivors of Russia's aggression in alignment with Ukrainian government priorities.

Sincerely,

Global Survivors Fund

REDRESS Trust

International Center for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of MultiGenerational Legacies of Trauma

Institute of Legislative Ideas

Montreal Institute for Global Security, Concordia University

Razom for Ukraine

Ukraine 5AM Coalition, which includes:

Advocacy Advisory Panel

'Almenda' Civic Education Center

Association for Development of Judicial Self-Government of Ukraine

Association of Relatives of Kremlin Political Prisoners

Blue Bird

Crimea-SOS

Crimean Human Rights Group

Crimea Process

DEJURE Foundation

East SOS

Educational Human Rights House Chernihiv

Expert Center for Human Rights

Fight for Right

FREE ZONE

Freerights Association

Fundamental Research Support Fund

Green Leaf

Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights

Human Rights Center "Action"

Human Rights Center ZMINA

Human Rights Platform

Institute for Peace and Common Ground

Institute of Mass Information

International Partnership for Human Rights

Kharkiv Anti-Corruption Center

Kharkiv Institute for Social Research

Media Initiative for Human Rights

Postypovyi Hurt Frankivtsiv

Public Interest Journalism Lab

Regional Center for Human Rights

Social Action Centre

The Reckoning Project

Truth Hounds

Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group

Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union

Ukrainian Healthcare Center (UHC)

Ukraine without Torture

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

Ms. Iryna Dovhan, Head, SEMA Ukraine

Ivan Horodyskyy, The Dnistrianskyi Center for Law and Politics

Professor Luke Moffett, School of Law, The Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, Queens University Belfast