

The 19th International Scientific EFNIL Conference “Language and Migration”

13 October 2022

Vilnius, Lithuania

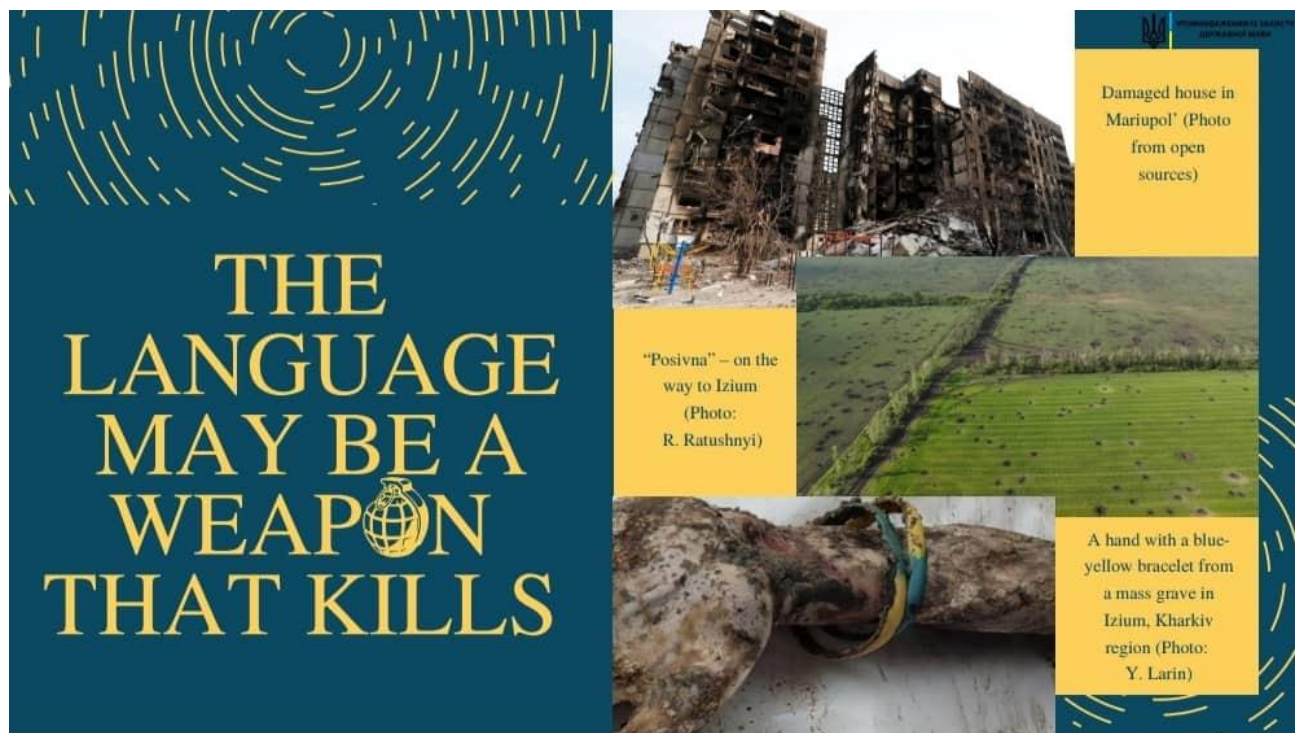


Dear colleagues,

First of all let me greet today the organizers – EFNIL, the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language and the Institute of the Lithuanian Language with a successful holding of such an interesting and efficient gathering and express hope that one of the nearest EFNIL’s international conferences will be held in Donetsk or in Yalta which are temporarily occupied by the Russian aggressor.

It’s my pleasure to be today with you, despite it happens virtually, and share with you our thoughts on the Russian policy of linguocide as an element of the genocide of the Ukrainian people.

"Language issue" as a pretext for war



As evidenced by the war of Russian criminals against the Ukrainian people, which has been going on for three centuries, the language of the occupier, which made its way to Ukraine through the revolution and occupation, the Holodomor and the shot writers, imprisoned dissidents and banned Ukrainian language, history, culture and church - this is the weapon that maimed and killed. This is well remembered in Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius, Tiraspol and Tskhinvali. It concerns the Russian aggressor ideology, the artificial concept of "Russian peace", the corresponding protection of the so-called Russian-speaking citizens in the world. Such a disaster occurred in Transnistria and Georgia, and since 2014 – in Ukraine. The real, undisguised goal of the Russian Federation after February 24, 2022 is the enslavement of the people, total russification, conquest of territory, destruction of national identity and the state, restoration of the USSR in its former borders.

THE LANGUAGE FACTOR

is the basis for Russian military aggression and mass murder of Ukrainians



Pro-Russian manifestation in Kharkiv, 2020 (Photo: Ukrainska Pravda)

<https://www.dw.com/ru/mid-rossii-zajavil-o-namerenii-zashchishhat-russkikh-v-ukraine/a-57180...>
Мид РФ Заявил О Намерении "Защищать Русскоязычных" В Укра...
МИД РФ заявил о намерении "защищать русскоязычных" в Украине Сергей Ромашенко
13.04.2021 Замглавы МИД Рябков заявил, что Москву не пугают заявления США о том, что Россия заплатит за агрессию в...

Russian MFA statement on protection of "Russian speaking" citizens, 2021

<https://www.1sn.ru/187398.html>

"Языковой геноцид": как на Украине ущемляют русский язык

ИА SakhaNews. Обсуждаемый на Украине законопроект по введению жесткого ограничения использования других языков кроме украинского — это **языковой геноцид**, заявила 30 марта официальный представитель МИД РФ Мария Захарова ...

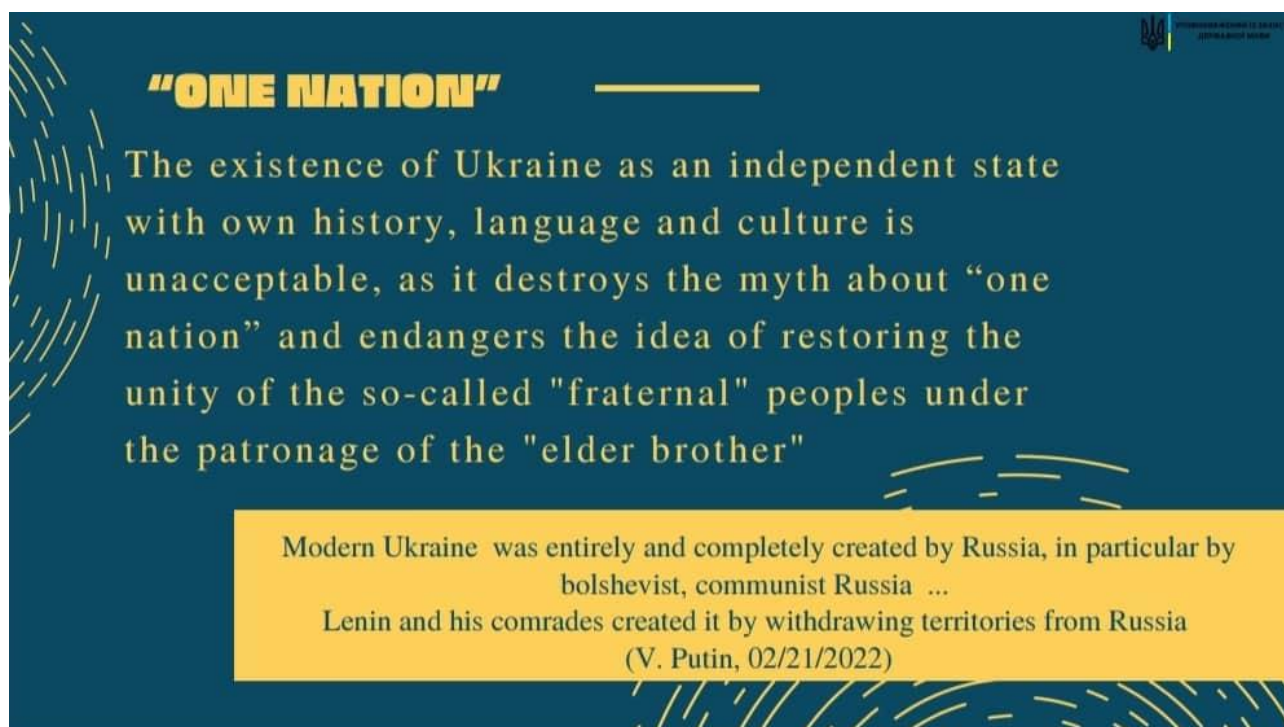
Russian MFA statement on oppressions of "Russian speaking" citizens, 2017

So, the so-called language factor became the basis for Russian military aggression and mass murders of Ukrainians. The artificial slogan "protection of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine" was used to justify the occupation of the part of the territories of Ukraine. The language issue was one of Russia's demands to Ukraine in negotiations held in March 2022 by the mediation of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

THE CONCEPT OF "RUSSIAN WORLD (PEACE)"

gives a particular place to the Russian language. Territories, where the Russian language is used, are defined as being part of the Russian world and the sphere of its interests

"You represent one huge Russian world, which has never been built exclusively and only on the basis of ethnic, national and religious characteristics. It gathered and united everyone who felt spiritually connected with Russia... who considers himself a native speaker of the Russian language, culture, Russian history"
(V. Putin, 2018)



The existence of an independent Ukraine is unacceptable for the occupier, as it destroys the myth of an eternal close connection with the aggressor country ("one nation, language, country") and endangers the idea of restoring the historical unity of the so-called "fraternal" peoples under the patronage of the "elder brother" and on the initiative of V. Lenin.

The russification of Ukrainians has been going on since the days of the Russian empire. Seizing and burning Ukrainian books, replacing them with the Russian-language ones, banning book publishing, pushing the Ukrainian language out of official communication and church life, closing Ukrainian schools, forcing the relocation of Ukrainians and settlement of the country's territories with representatives of other peoples is a set of measures aimed at assimilation and russification of the population.

A similar situation continued during the years of the USSR: the communist authorities pursued a course to destroy the identity and formation of Soviet citizens. Let us recall the October coup of 1917, collectivization, Holodomor, mass executions

of the intelligentsia, and persecution of dissidents. The language policy of the communist party defined the Russian language as the only means of international communication among the people of the USSR. The Ukrainian language was banned and suppressed. Such a disdainful attitude towards the Ukrainian language continued to spread even after Ukraine gained independence because this country was foreign one for the parliamentarians. That is why the traditional tool of pre-election struggle in Ukraine was the "language" issue, which was used by pro-Russian political forces. When going to the presidential or parliamentary elections, the society was artificially divided on the basis of language into Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking, into Western and Eastern Ukrainians, and this was the ground for the revenge of Moscow imperialism.

It is worth saying that the Ukrainian language was neglected until the adoption of the Law on the State Language in 2019, which finally introduced effective legal and institutional mechanisms to ensure the state status of the Ukrainian language, in particular, the institution of the State Language Protection Commissioner of Ukraine was created.

The spread of disinformation (information terrorism) as a tactic of the enemy on the language front

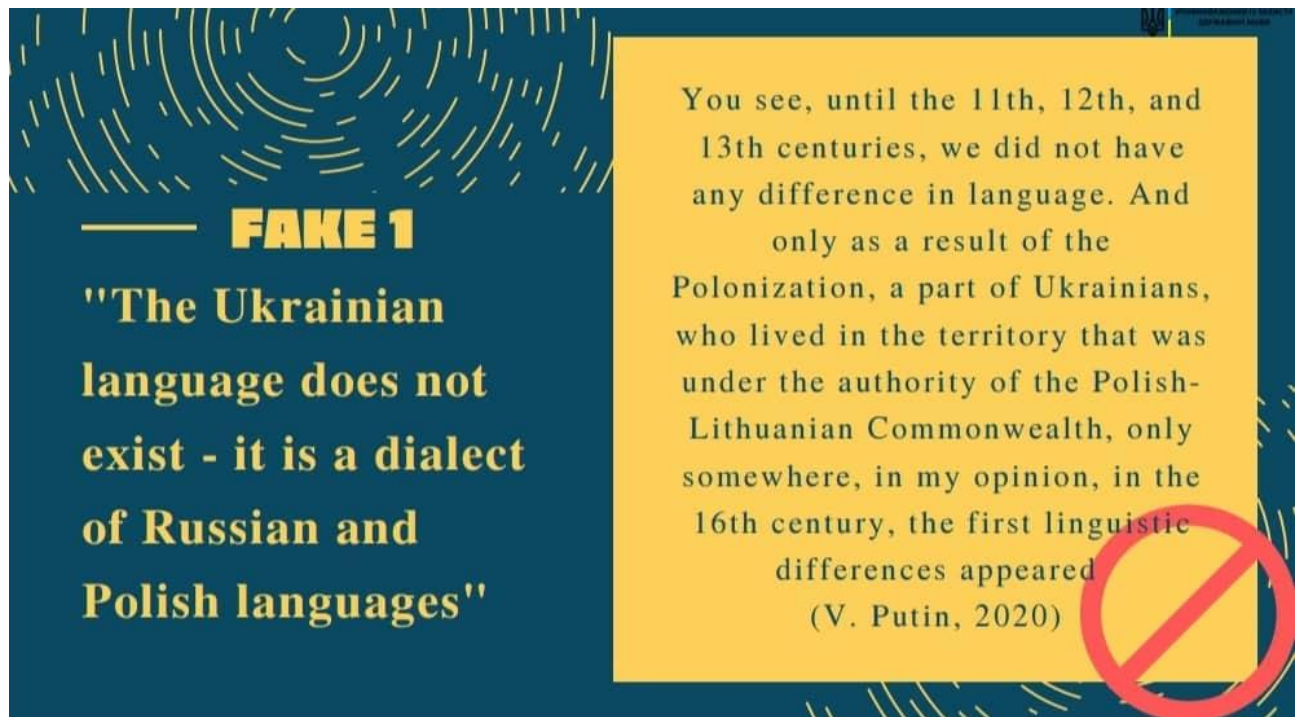
The use of language as a tool of war by the aggressor country has acquired large-scale aggressive forms. The ban and displacement of the Ukrainian language from various spheres of social life, forced relocation, persecution, and physical destruction of Ukrainian speakers in the temporarily occupied territories are accompanied, as in Soviet times, by the production of countless fakes denying the existence of Ukrainian identity and groundless accusations of persecution of russianized citizens.

"The phraseology that we hear in Ukrainian, the transcription and pronunciation, for us, and the world in principle, and for themselves, is a formulation of hatred of Russia" (from N. Mikhalkov's speech at the Forum of Teachers of the Moscow Region, 2022). He became an Oscar winner for the film "Burned by the Sun", in which he criticized the "Red Terror", but later he became an apologist for russian pan-imperialism.

False messages spread by Russian propaganda such as "the unreality of Ukraine", "genocide of Russian speakers", "oppression of the Russian-speaking population", "protection of rights and freedoms of Russian native speakers", "forced Ukrainization", etc., are intended not only for the russified population of Ukraine, among which the aggressor country is looking for supporters. Their goal is to justify the war of aggression against Ukraine in the eyes of the international community and its citizens.

The most common among fakes are messages that deny the existence of the Ukrainian language as an independent linguistic system and the persecution and oppression of the united population. Namely:

FAKE 1. The Ukrainian language does not exist - it is a dialect of Russian and Polish languages.



Denying the existence of the Ukrainian language, the kremlin authorities question the existence of the Ukrainian identity, the Ukrainian people, their right to self-determination, and their statehood.

FAKE 2. A split on linguistic basis has happened in Ukraine and it led to a civil conflict.

Recent events in Ukraine have increased the level of hostility towards certain ethnic groups of the population, in connection with this, a split along ethnic and linguistic lines may occur.

FAKE 2


“A split on linguistic basis has happened in Ukraine and it led to a civil conflict”

<https://vladnews.ru> • 2014-04-17 • 61574 • ukraine_mozhet

На Украине может произойти раскол по этническому и языковому...

Последние события на Украине увеличили уровень враждебности к некоторым этническим группам населения, в связи с этим может произойти раскол по этническому и языковому признакам.

Information from the Russian media as to a split on linguistic basis



REFUTATION

THIS IS NOT A CIVIL CONFLICT ON LINGUISTIC BASIS BUT A MILITARY INVASION OF RUSSIA IN RESPONSE TO THE EUROPEAN CHOICE OF UKRAINE

78% of Ukrainians consider Ukrainian to be their native language (research by the Ilko Kucheriv "Democratic Initiatives" Foundation in cooperation with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center, 2021)

83% of citizens are in favor of Ukrainian being the only state language in the country (research by the sociological group "Rating", 2022).



78% of Ukrainians consider Ukrainian to be their native language (research by the Ilko Kucheriv "Democratic Initiatives" Foundation in cooperation with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center, 2021). In addition, 83% of citizens are in favor of Ukrainian being the only state language in the country (research by the sociological group "Rating", 2022).

FAKE 3. The Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language" discriminates and restricts the rights of "Russian-speaking" (russified) citizens, particularly in such areas as education, service, and official communication (document circulation).

FAKE 3

“The Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as a State Language" discriminates and restricts the rights of "Russian-speaking" (russified) citizens, particularly in such areas as education, service, and official communication (document circulation)”

"Violations of the rights of the multi-million Russian-speaking population in Ukraine have reached terrible proportions. The authorities of Ukraine adopt discriminatory laws on language, education, and so-called indigenous peoples, displacing the Russian language from all spheres of life" (notification of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation)

The infographic features a dark blue background with a pattern of white concentric circles. The text is in white and yellow. A red prohibition sign is overlaid on the right side of the infographic.

REFUTATION

THE LAW ENSURES THE FUNCTIONING OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE AS THE STATE LANGUAGE, WITHOUT HINDERING THE DEVELOPMENT, USE, AND PROTECTION OF THE LANGUAGES OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF UKRAINE

85% of ethnic Russians and 90% of Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine believe that there is no oppression of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine (research by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2022)

The infographic features a dark blue background with a pattern of white concentric circles. The text is in white and yellow. A green checkmark is overlaid on the right side of the infographic.



On the other hand, the results of sociological research completely refute the mentioned fake. Namely: 85% of ethnic Russians and 90% of Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine believe that there is no oppression of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine (research by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2022). 61.7% of Ukrainians support the current norm of service in Ukrainian (research by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2021). 82% of Ukrainians agree that state leaders and civil servants should communicate in the state language at work (research by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center, 2020). In the field of education, 77% of respondents approve teaching of most school subjects in the state language (research by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation and the Razumkov Center, 2020).

FAKE 4. The Institution of the State Language Protection Commissioner is a punitive body that deals with the total persecution and fines of "Russian-speaking" citizens.

FAKE 4

"The Institution of the State Language Protection Commissioner is a punitive body that deals with the total persecution and fines the "Russian-speaking" citizens"

Pro-russian manifestation in Kharkiv, 2020

Russian media reports

"Language Ombudsman of Ukraine Taras Kremin called to get rid of Russian-language names of settlements in Ukraine, noting that "Ukraine is for Ukrainians" (RIA Novosti, 2022)"

REFUTATION

"There is no reliable data that any ethnic Russians and russified citizens of Ukraine are under a threat from the side of the Ukrainian government

At the same time, in the temporarily occupied territories Ukrainians come across the suffocation of their culture and national identity; they also live under the conditions of cruel repressions and fear" (U.S. Department of State)

There is no reliable data that any ethnic Russians and russified citizens of Ukraine are under a threat from the side of the Ukrainian government. At the same time, in the temporarily occupied territories by Russia, Ukrainians come across the suffocation of their culture and national identity; they also live under the conditions of repressions and fear (U.S. Department of State).

Linguocide in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

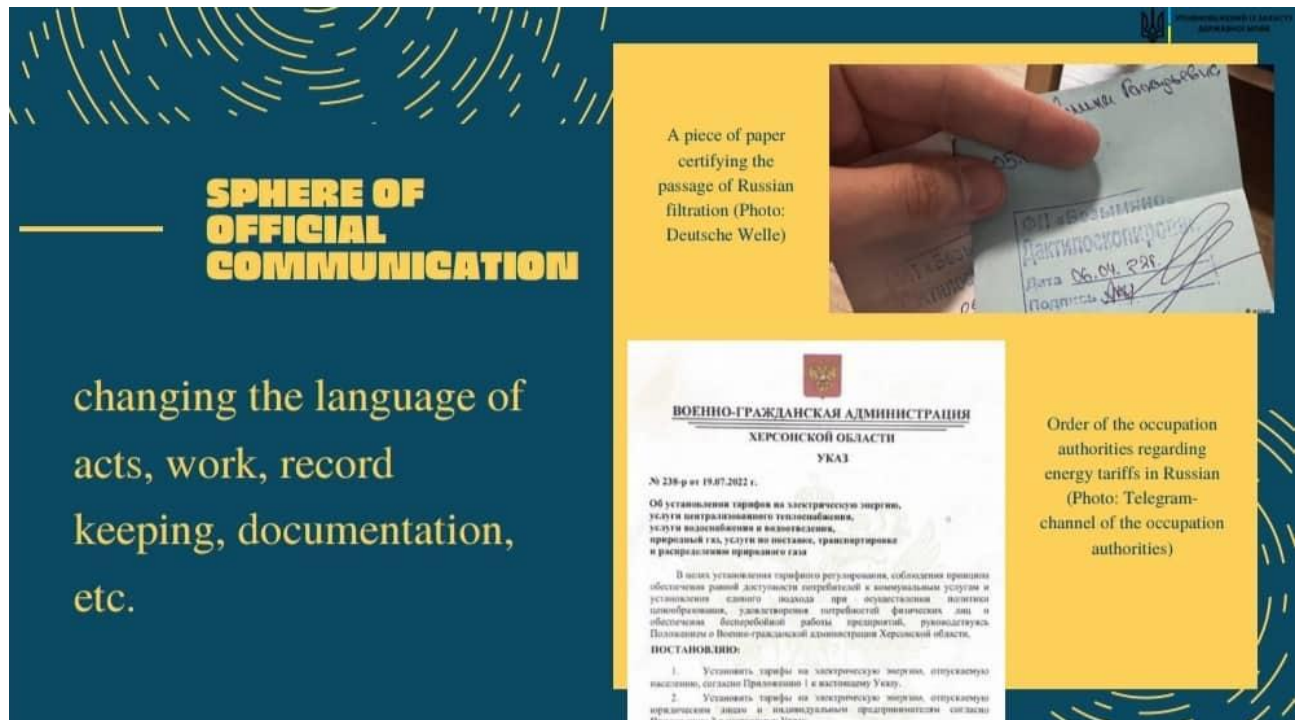


As the State Language Protection Commissioner of Ukraine, I initiated the collection and documentation of facts regarding the actions of the aggressor country in the temporarily occupied territories, which are aimed at the destruction of the Ukrainian language and its speakers. We receive information about the actions of the occupiers and collaborators from citizens of Ukraine, from open sources, reports from law enforcement agencies, mass media, authorities, and local governments, as well as from Russian and pro-Russian propaganda internet resources, etc.

Since February 24, 2022 - the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Secretariat of the State Language Protection Commissioner recorded more than 200 facts of linguocide of the Ukrainian language - the purposeful displacement of the Ukrainian language from the public space, social use, as well as discrimination, prosecution, and persecution of citizens of Ukraine based on language, which is one of the components of the policy of destruction of the Ukrainian people, their identity and statehood (genocide of the Ukrainian people).

Currently, cases pointing to the displacement of the state language and the planned assimilation policy of the occupiers have been recorded in the following spheres of public life:

1. ***Sphere of official communication*** (changing the language of acts, work, record keeping, documentation, etc.);



2. ***Public space*** (replacement of Ukrainian-language with Russian-language signs, pointers, notices, inscriptions and other publicly placed text, visual and audio information; renaming of settlements and streets; other cases pointing to the displacement of the Ukrainian language from the public space (including in the field of information for general familiarization) and the change of toponymic names);

PUBLIC SPACE

replacement of Ukrainian-language with Russian-language signs, pointers, notices, inscriptions and other publicly placed text, visual and audio information that is used or could be used for citizens' informing

Replacement of signs with the Russian ones, Donetsk region (Photo from open sources)





Traffic police sign in Mariupol' (Photo: P. Andriushchenko)

3. **Cultural space** (destruction and dismantling of memorials, monuments, plaques, etc.; installation of symbols of the Soviet era, modern culture of the aggressor country; removal or destruction of Ukrainian literature, filling libraries with russian-language propaganda books; persecution or oppression of cultural workers for the pro-Ukrainian position; destruction of cultural infrastructure);

CULTURAL SPACE

destruction and dismantling of memorials, monuments, installation of symbols of the Soviet era, destruction of Ukrainian literature, conducting pro-russian cultural events, etc.

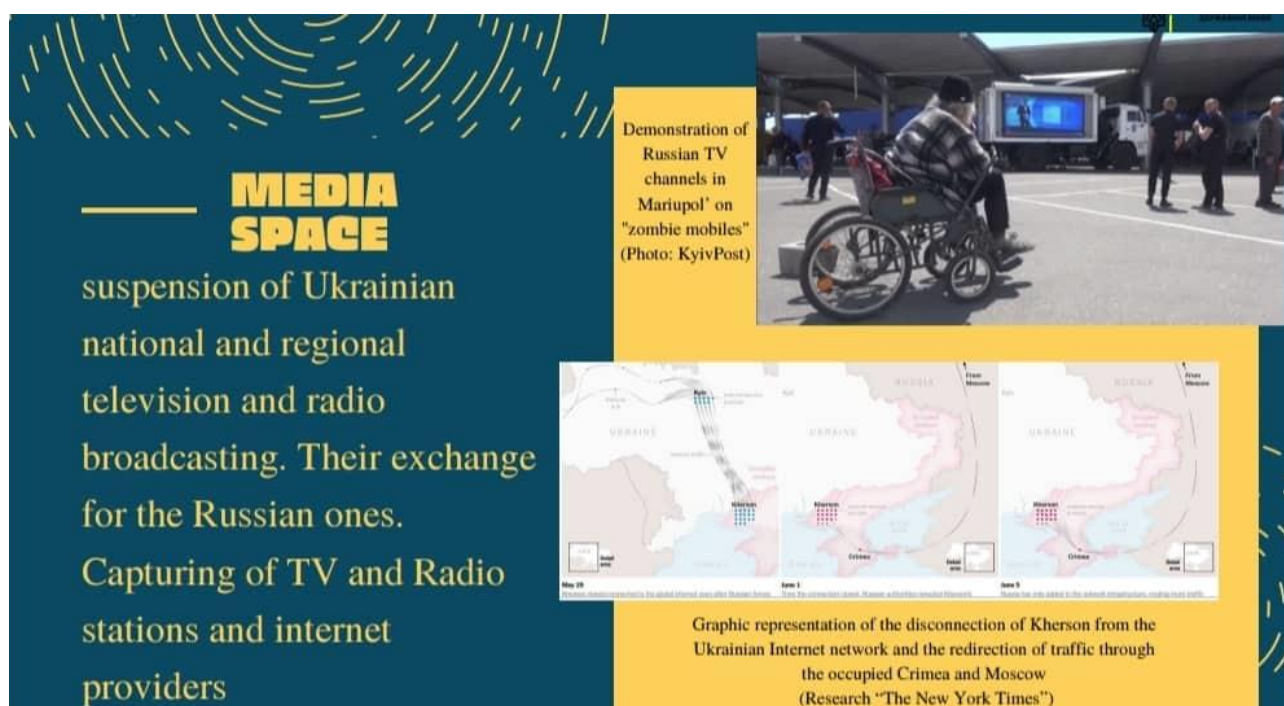
Burning Ukrainian history textbooks (Photo: Melinda Simmons, Twitter)



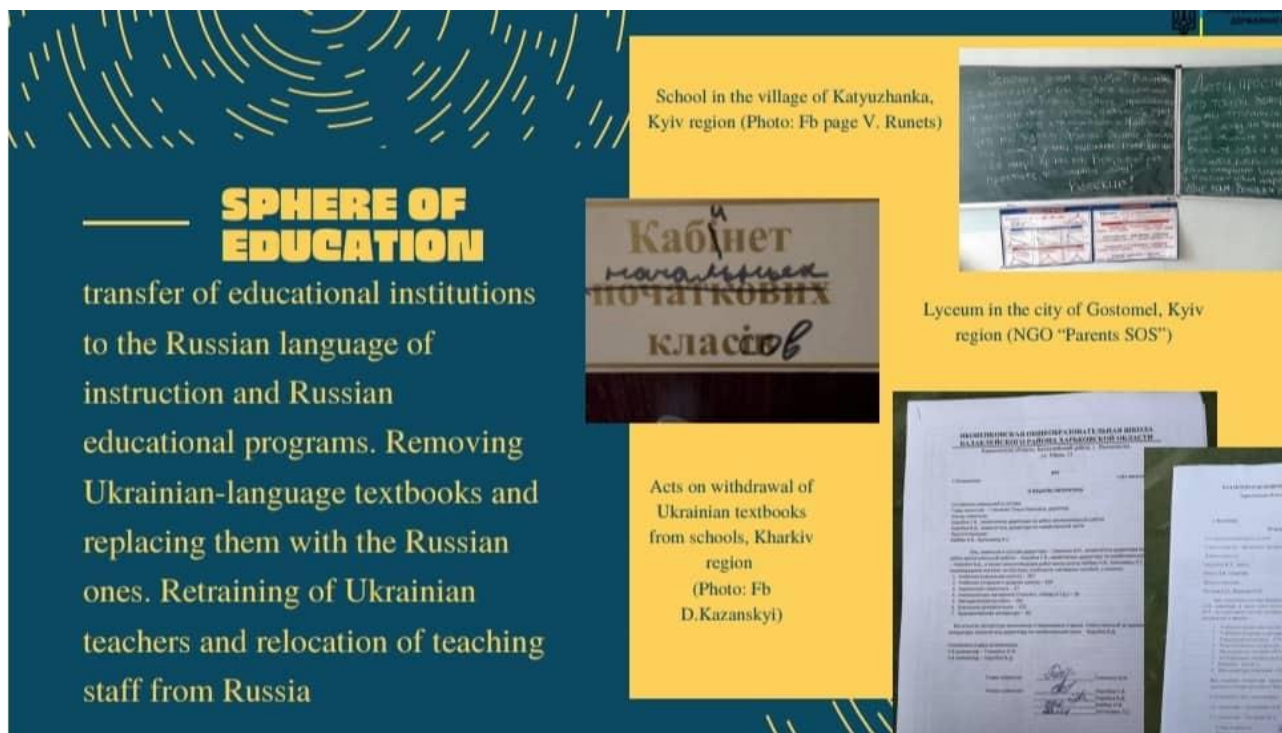


Concert near the ruins of the Mariupol' Drama Theater, Donetsk region (Photo: webpage of Channel 24)

4. Media space (suspension of Ukrainian national and regional television and radio broadcasting, which occurred as a result of targeted damage by the occupiers to relevant equipment, as well as a ban on the activities of domestic broadcasters; change of the program concept by television and radio organizations, which occurred under pressure from the Russian occupiers; persecution or oppression of representatives of the domestic media sphere, mass media in general; broadcasting of Russian TV channels and radio stations in the temporarily occupied territory, in particular, the spread of pro-Russian propaganda using mobile technical means).



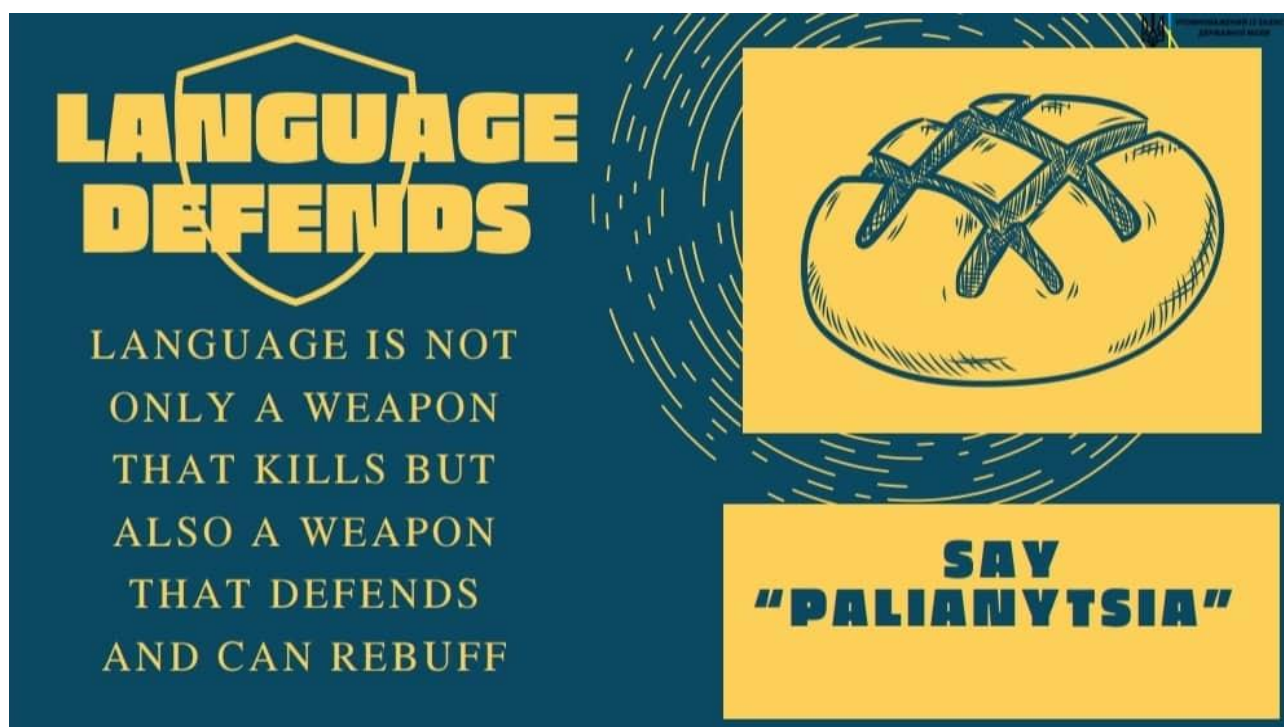
5. Sphere of education at all levels (changing the language of the educational process, software, and methodological support; removing or destroying Ukrainian textbooks and literature, as well as replacing them with Russian textbooks and books; conducting pedagogical and educational activities that involve planting pro-Russian narratives; destroying educational infrastructure; professional retraining of teachers and lecturers; persecution or oppression of education workers for their pro-Ukrainian position).



Language that defends

Fortunately, language is not only a weapon that kills but also a weapon that defends and can fight back. When on February 24, 2022, the Russian invaders violated the state borders of Ukraine, it was the language border that clearly pointed to the enemy and reminded that the Ukrainian language is a fundamental element of Ukrainian identity, national unity, and national security.

Thank you for your kind attention!



Say “Palianytsia”

The pronunciation of the word "palianytsia" became a way of identifying the enemy, who cannot correctly reproduce it due to the soft sound "І" unique to the Ukrainian language and the special sound "Й", which differs from the Russian one. This is also the source of a large number of memes).

We continue our struggle and hold the language front. With the beginning of the full-scale invasion, our society resolutely rejects artificial, externally imposed, pro-Russian narratives from all spheres of public life, instead reviving its national identity. We reject the language of the occupier, dismantle Soviet monuments, revise school programs, get rid of Soviet twists in the names of cities and streets, and refuse from Russian cultural products, ranging from literature to music.

The demand for professional help in mastering and improving the Ukrainian language among intermingled Ukrainians is growing rapidly. As the Commissioner, I initiated an all-Ukrainian campaign to promote the mastery of the state language. We are working on creating free Ukrainian language courses, conversation clubs, training courses for displaced persons. About 300 such initiatives are already functioning.

Overcoming the consequences of years of russification is only the part of the challenge that Ukraine faces. In Europe, millions of Ukrainian women and their children found refuge from the bombings. And in this matter, we count on your help as much as we count on help in arms. Please support us and do everything possible so that Ukrainians abroad, especially children, would not lose touch with Ukraine, its language and culture.

I am convinced that by joint efforts we will create conditions and ensure the functioning of educational projects for Ukrainians, where they will be able to study the Ukrainian language, history and literature. Join Ukraine's struggle for its language, country and democracy.

Thank you for your kind attention!