

Russia: filtration of Ukrainian civilians forced to flee war is 'shocking violation'



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UN has verified that filtration is occurring as part of forced population removal

There appear to be no systems to facilitate the return of older people or people with disabilities

'Deportation and forcible transfer of civilians in occupied territory are prohibited by international humanitarian law' - Marie Struthers

Responding to the UN's confirmation that Russian forces in Ukraine have subjected Ukrainian civilians to a human rights-abusing process known as "filtration", Marie Struthers, Amnesty International's Eastern Europe Director, said:

"The abusive and humiliating process known as 'filtration' is a shocking violation of international human rights and humanitarian law.

"Deportation and forcible transfer of civilians in occupied territory are prohibited by international humanitarian law, and can constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Putting these forcibly displaced civilians through the abuses of 'filtration' is both cynical and cruel.

"The Russian authorities must urgently allow the international community to access and monitor temporary placement shelters for Ukrainian civilians, and evacuation procedures for civilians trapped in the conflict.

“They must also immediately ensure that Ukrainian civilians are able to safely leave warzones and enter Ukrainian-controlled territories. Those in Russia must be able to access resources that enable them to leave the country for Ukraine or a third country.”

Amnesty has documented several cases of Russian soldiers abusing detained Ukrainian civilians going through the ‘filtration’ procedures while exiting the warzone or crossing the border into or out of Russia. Some unaccompanied, separated and orphaned children, as well as civilians from Mariupol-based institutions which care for older people and people with disabilities, were forcibly transferred to Donetsk. Some of the children and civilians were in the process of being evacuated to Ukrainian-controlled areas at the time.

Older people in particular are at a greater risk of becoming trapped in Russian-controlled areas or in Russia, due to a lack of information, funds and mobility issues. There appear to be no systems in place to facilitate the return of older people or people with disabilities from Russia or Russian-occupied territories to areas controlled by the Ukrainian authorities.

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