



Front Féministe

58 associations from 7 countries

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Ukraine: women's bodies as a battlefield

War allows the most uninhibited expression of male violence. The virilist and destructive oppression of patriarchy is unrestrained. Women and children, who in times of so-called "peace" are subjected to individual macho violence, are then treated globally as objects, merchandise, waste.

For years, feminist opponents of dictatorships, such as the Ukrainian FEMEN, have been sounding the alarm. They were right...

Decided by a Vladimir Putin obsessive of virility, the invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 is being pursued by a war of conquest. As in Chechnya or Syria, the Russian army massacred civilians. It is shelling cities and bombing places sheltering vulnerable women and children, maternity wards and hospitals.

Millions of people have fled the bombed areas of Ukraine: 90% are women and children. Half of those who have left the country are under 18 years old.

**Gun violence, sexual violence.
As in all wars
women's bodies are a battlefield.**

1. Rape as a weapon of war

The systematic rape of women and children has always been inseparable from war. Since the 1990s, with the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the genocide of Tutsis by Hutus in Rwanda and the atrocities committed in Kivu, they have been considered by international justice as war crimes or crimes against humanity. In Ukraine, as in the Donbass since 2014, the deliberate cruelty of Russian or Chechen soldiers exercising sexual abuse is part of a strategy to terrorize the population, to traumatize it permanently, by inscribing in its flesh the rape of the nation: it is a war within the war, fueled by hatred of women, assimilating in the same aggression the body of the other and his land.

2. Renting out wombs and trafficking in children

Reports have shown grieving couples flocking to Ukraine to get their order: a child not yet out of the rented womb; people who break the law of their country are presented as victims, exploiting the financial distress of women forced to rent their wombs.

The situation of Ukrainian women who are pregnant for others has become inextricable: the agency that negotiated their connection with the foreign buyer couple forbids them to leave the country, as this would be a violation of their contract; if the sponsors finance their trip, these women will give birth in a country whose law forbids the renting of wombs.

3. Trafficking in fresh meat

At train stations and border crossings, pimps, belonging to mafia networks or acting on their own behalf, abuse the distress and exhaustion of refugees fleeing war. Mixing with volunteers who offer help and solidarity, they offer transport, accommodation and employment to young destitute women who are victims of racketeering, kidnapping, forced labor, sexual violence, human trafficking for prostitution or pornography.

These criminals are aligned with the demand: on dating and pornographic sites, searches with the keyword "Ukrainian woman" have multiplied.

4. Reception in neighboring countries

Millions of women and children have left their homes in a hurry and their survival is hampered by trauma. Volunteers help them materially and psychologically.

Other women, taken hostage by the war, cannot leave the country: they survive in cellars, have stayed in farms, take care of the elderly, the sick, and children.

Ukrainian women who are pregnant as a result of rape cannot have an abortion in Poland, where the law forbids it; even if they were allowed to, there is a lack of competent personnel.

Feminists have long been calling for the right to abortion for all women to be enshrined in European law; it is up to women, and women alone, to decide whether they want to continue a pregnancy.

International feminist solidarity

We, universalist feminists, affirm our solidarity with the Ukrainian people victim of the Russian aggression, and denounce the specific violence against women and children.

We salute the courage of the Ukrainian resistance and also of the Russians who oppose the dictatorship of Vladimir Putin and the war he is waging against Ukraine.

We demand that all diplomatic means be used to put an end to this war and these atrocities.

We ask the international justice to punish the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine.