

# ICMP Ukraine factsheet

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. This was an escalation of an armed conflict that had begun in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and took control of the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. In early April 2022, mass graves were discovered in Bucha, Irpin, and Makariv. Throughout 2022 and into 2023, new sites were discovered in Izium and Lyman. These graves indicate a pattern of activity. They point to the probable existence of many more grave sites containing unidentified human remains in territory occupied by Russian forces.

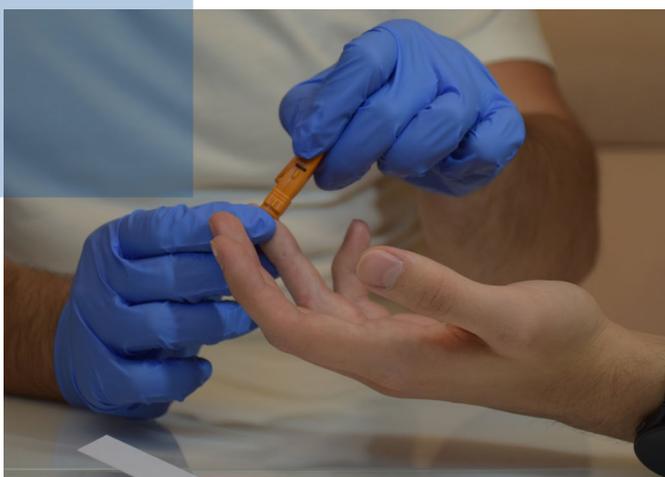
There are many circumstances in which people go missing in Ukraine. Forcible deportations, summary executions, incommunicado detention, kidnapping, abduction and family separation, including unlawful adoptions and trafficking in human beings are some examples. The missing includes Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians, combatants and civilians. Under international law, States are under the obligation to investigate persons going missing and disappearing, and for holding those responsible to account. Prosecuting perpetrators is part of broader efforts to secure justice, safeguard the rights of families of the missing, and uphold the rule of law.



Photo credit: Krysjá

**ICMP works to reinforce the credibility and effectiveness of the ongoing effort by national authorities to investigate disappearances. At the invitation of the Government of Ukraine, ICMP has launched a program to:**

- Support Ukraine in developing a *sustainable missing persons process* that is in line with the rule of law;
- Help Ukrainian institutions develop and access continuous, high-volume, *DNA-led identification capabilities*;
- Help the Ukrainian authorities to ensure that evidence collected during the missing persons process, including evidence from mass and clandestine graves, is *admissible in criminal trials*, by supporting laboratory operations, data collection, and mass grave investigations;
- Provide Ukrainian institutions (including the police) and the Ukrainian public with access to secure and large-scale *missing persons data processing*;
- Ensure the *effective participation of civil society and the families* of the missing in the missing persons process.



Collection of blood reference samples for DNA testing.



ICMP's human identification system relies on its integrated DNA laboratory located in The Hague.

## About ICMP

ICMP is a treaty-based intergovernmental organization with Headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands. Its mandate is to secure the cooperation of governments and others in locating missing persons from conflict, human rights abuses, disasters, organized crime, irregular migration and other causes and to assist them in doing so. It is the only international organization tasked exclusively to work on the issue of missing persons.