



## The Holodomor: Genocide of the Ukrainian people

*Ukraine remembers - the World acknowledges*

*On the 87th anniversary of the Holodomor*

**The Holodomor** claimed millions of lives in Ukraine and was one element of the genocidal assault by the communist regime to destroy the Ukrainian nation.

An independent Ukraine would have limited the Soviet Union's geo-strategic aims to be a Eurasian empire. To ensure that an insubordinate Ukraine remained in the Soviet fold, the Stalinist communist regime, in a decade of terror from 1928-1938, launched attacks on the Ukrainian Church; the Ukrainian national, cultural and political elites; and the socioeconomic fabric of the nation - the grain growers of the Ukrainian countryside – with famine.

Raphael Lemkin, who defined the term “Genocide,” and who championed the adoption of the UN Convention on Genocide, called the genocide of the Ukrainian people a four-pronged attack on the Ukrainian nation.

1. *Step one*: Strike at the intelligentsia, the national brain. Tens of thousands of Ukrainian teachers, writers, artists, thinkers, political leaders were liquidated, imprisoned or deported.
2. *Step two*: Attack the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church by liquidating its leadership and clergy.
3. *Step three*: Starve the farmers, the repository of the tradition, folklore and music, the national language and literature, the national spirit of Ukraine.
4. *Step four*: Dilute the ethnic Ukrainian population.

### **Consequences of the genocide**

**Demographics:** The estimates of human losses due to the Holodomor vary depending on methodologies, including land area considered (there were territories affected outside of Ukraine where ethnic Ukrainians were a majority) and time period (higher death rates continued into 1934). However, there is incontrovertible proof that the Holodomor resulted in the deliberate murder by starvation of millions of Ukrainians, a crippling blow to Ukraine's demographics for many decades.

A most chilling feature of the Holodomor was the high death rate among children. In many Ukrainian regions, some two-thirds of children did not arrive at school in September 1933.

**Psychological trauma:** The Soviet regime denied there had been a famine, and any mention of it was forbidden. Families did not discuss it at home for fear of endangering their children or being accused of anti-Soviet propaganda. It is only in recent years that Ukraine has been able to begin to come to terms with the moral and psychological consequences of the trauma, and the denial of the genocide.

## **Power of disinformation: 1933**

During the Holodomor, the Soviet Union imposed an information blockade, forbidding journalists and foreigners from traveling to affected areas. Soviet propaganda denied there was a famine and promoted the image of happy peasants on collective farms.

*"The situation in Ukraine is very bad. If we don't take steps now to improve the situation, we may lose Ukraine."*

Joseph Stalin, 1932

**Media:** The few journalists who were able to report about the Holodomor, including Malcolm Muggeridge, Gareth Jones and Rhea Clyman, could not break through the noise of the deniers, particularly the influential Walter Duranty of The New York Times.

**Governments:** Governments and the League of Nations, bowing to economic, diplomatic and political considerations, failed to take any measures to stop the genocide, despite worldwide demonstrations that began with an International Day of Mourning and Protest on October 29, 1933. In September 1933, the League of Nations discussed the Famine behind closed doors and directed petitioners to address organizations "of a purely non-political character."

**International aid organizations:** Responding to international appeals for help, the International Red Cross offered assistance to the Soviet Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which declined all offers of aid, declaring that there was no famine.

The information blockade continued for more than fifty years after the Holodomor. Soviet authorities denied the Famine. Historians and researchers were not allowed access to Soviet relevant archives until the fall of the Soviet Union.

**FACT:** The genocidal murder of millions of Ukrainians paralyzed a nation for decades. As part of the genocide against the Ukrainian people, the Soviet regime carried out a policy of Russification, suppressing the Ukrainian language and culture. Speaking about the Holodomor was prohibited. Villagers from other parts of the Soviet Union were brought in to replace those who died from starvation during the Holodomor. Today, Russian President Vladimir Putin claims he is defending Russian speakers as a pretext for his invasion of Ukraine.

## **Power of Disinformation: 2020**

*"The collapse of the Soviet Union is the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century."*

- Vladimir Putin,  
President of the Russian Federation, 2005

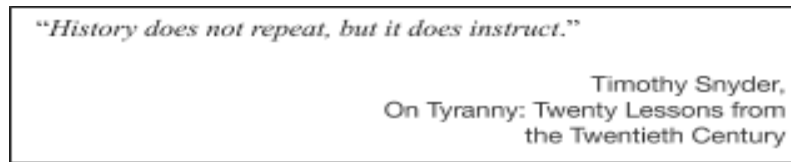
In 2020, the tools of disinformation, denial and obfuscation continue to be used as weapons by President Vladimir Putin in Russia's war against Ukraine which is forced, once again, to defend its independence and territorial integrity.

The disinformation campaign is part of Russia's larger scale hybrid aggression, which includes cyberattacks, interference in the democratic processes of independent countries, the backing of extremist parties abroad, and attempts to undermine trust in democratic institutions.

Kremlin propaganda and disinformation continue to pollute the pages of popular and influential western media. Kremlin lies and manipulations are sometimes presented as fact or given equal weight in coverage of Russia's undeclared and unlawful war on Ukraine.

**FACT:** The war in Ukraine has resulted in over 13,000 deaths, 30,000 wounded, and the displacement of 1.6 million men, women and children. Russia's war against Ukraine has caused the worst humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II.

### **Conclusion: Break the cycle - share the story**



In 2020, the international community must heed the lessons of history for the sake of freedom, peace and global security. To protect our common values of democracy, fundamental freedoms and basic human rights, we must act with determination, sharing the story of the past and its similarities to the present.

**FACT:** Different people. Different weapons. Same ideologies. Same war.



#### **Prepared by**

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#### **Sources:**

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**Learn more about the Holodomor**

