

Last Updated: Friday, 24 May 2013, 16:08 GMT



- 
- [UNHCR](#)
  - [Country Positions](#)
  - [Policies and Positions](#)
  - [Thematic Guidelines](#)
  - 
  - [News](#)
  - [Statistics and Operational Data](#)
  - [Research](#)
  - [Website](#)
- [Laws](#)
  - [1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#)
  - [1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees](#)
  - [1969 OAU Refugee Convention](#)
  - [Cartagena Declaration on Refugees](#)
  - [EU acquis](#)
  - [National Legislation](#)
  - [Statelessness / Nationality](#)
  - [1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons](#)
  - [1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness](#)
  - [Nationality law](#)
- [Jurisprudence](#)
  - [Case Law](#)
  - [Court Interventions](#)
- [Country Information](#)
  - [Country News](#)
  - [Country Profiles](#)
  - [Country Reports](#)
  - [Maps](#)
- [Browse by](#)
  - [A-Z Index](#)
  - [Document Type](#)
  - [Publisher](#)
  - [Topic](#)
  - 
  - [Categories](#)
  - [Country Information](#)
  - [Legal Information](#)
  - [Policy Documents](#)
  - [Reference Documents](#)
- [Resources](#)
  - [External Links](#)
  - [Information Alerts](#)

- [Protection Starter Kit](#)
- [Standards and Training](#)
- [Refworld Personalization](#)
- [UNOG Library](#)
  
- [My Profile](#)

  
 Remember Me[Forgot password?](#) [Register](#)

- [Email this document](#)
- [Printable version](#)

## Assessment for Russians in Ukraine

Publisher [Minorities at Risk Project](#)

Publication Date 31 December 2003

Cite as Minorities at Risk Project, *Assessment for Russians in Ukraine*, 31 December 2003, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/469f3ae01a.html> [accessed 24 May 2013]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

### Ukraine Facts

Area: 603,700 sq. km.  
Capital: Kiev  
Total Population: 52,000,000 (source: unknown, est.)

[Risk Assessment](#) | [Analytic Summary](#) | [References](#)

### Risk Assessment

Ethnic Russians exhibit a moderate risk for ethnic rebellion in the Ukraine, particularly in the eastern regions where they are geographically concentrated in relatively large numbers. However, the absence of any widespread revolt after the tense 2004 presidential election of pro-Western Yuschenko is an encouraging sign. Russians have a strong group identity (COHES9 = 4) and are politically mobilized, protesting consistently (at low to moderate levels) since Ukrainian independence (PROT90X = 3; PROT98X = 2; PROT01-03 = 2). However, most Russian political activity has been conventional in nature (GOJPA01-03 = 2). While ethnic Russians do face some governmental and considerable societal discrimination, they are not subject to outright repression. Also, while Russians in Russia have voiced concerns for the welfare of ethnic Russians in Ukraine, Moscow has shown no willingness to support rebellion.

Given its history, protest is likely to continue at moderate levels. However, as the 2004 presidential elections demonstrated, certain events can create Russian protests at very high levels. Until the Ukrainian government learns how to successfully accommodate ethnic Russian cultural and political demands while also building loyalty to the state and improving the lot of ethnic Ukrainians, protests are likely to continue. Occasional acts

of violence directed towards ethnic Russians are also expected to continue, especially in western Ukraine. Recently, such attacks included the 2002 ransacking of Russia Bloc's offices (a political party) and the 2001 burning of a Russian cultural center in Lviv.

## Analytic Summary

PLEASE NOTE: The Minorities at Risk Project treats Russians in the region of Crimea separately from other Russians in Ukraine. This is because Crimea holds constitutional autonomy within the Ukrainian state, which leads to differential treatment of Russians. Additionally, the political situation of ethnic Russians in Crimea, where they constitute approximately 64 percent of the population, is markedly different from the political situation of ethnic Russians in the remainder of the Ukraine, where they constitute approximately 19 percent of the population and are concentrated in eastern Ukraine forming Russian-speaking majorities in some areas, such as the oblasts of Kharkiv, Voroshilovhrad, Donetsk and Zaporozhia. For additional information on ethnic Russians in the Crimea, see the file "Crimean Russians in Ukraine."

Ukraine first came under Russian influence in the late 17th century, although Russian control over the region was heavily contested throughout the 18th century. Throughout the period 1800-1880, the region east of the Dneiper was heavily colonized, but only after 1830 did the region west of the Dneiper receive colonists. Once the industrial revolution came to Russia, colonization and immigration brought even larger numbers of Russians into Ukraine. Russification of Ukraine continued and intensified during Soviet rule, which ended in 1991.

Ukrainian independence left ethnic Russians, formerly a privileged minority, stranded (AUTLOST = 2). Ukrainian political elites began a program of state-building, which included expanding the use of Ukrainian in education, the media and government. Various policies sought to counteract centuries of russification. As a result, Russian-language schools have been closed, and Russian language usage in the media and for governmental purposes has been discouraged (CULPO299, CULPO200 = 2; CULPO399, CULPO300 = 2). Electoral laws also disadvantage primarily Russian political parties (POLIC499, POLIC400 = 1).

Ethnic Russians have advocated for improved economic conditions (ECOGR200-03 = 2), stronger ties to Russia and the CIS, and the protection of Russian-language rights (CULGR301-03 = 3; CULGR401-03 = 2). Russians also argue that electoral laws requiring support throughout Ukraine disadvantages primarily ethnic Russian parties (POLGR501-03 = 2) and limits Russians' ability to participate in the central government. In eastern Ukraine, there is also some sentiment for union with Russia (AUTOGR201-03 = 3). Demands for autonomy in eastern Ukraine had been declining (AUTOGR596 = 3, AUTGR501-03 = 0), although this coding does not reflect the ethnic Russian response to the 2004 presidential election, where autonomy demands were widespread (this will be reflected in the next MAR update, scheduled to begin in 2006).

Ethnic Russians have a strong sense of group identity (COHESX9 = 4) and have organized several political parties and cultural associations (ORG03NUM = 4). Several political parties, including the Unified Rus, the Russian-Ukrainian Union, the Union and the Russian Movement in Ukraine, have collaborated politically to form the Russian Bloc, which elected candidates to parliament in 2002. Russians have also mobilized for mass protests since Ukrainian independence (PROT90X = 3; PROT98X = 2; PROT00 = 3; PROT01-03 = 2), but no violent rebellion has occurred.

The situation for ethnic Russians is more precarious in the western portions of the country, where they are less numerous and Ukrainian national sentiment is perceived to be stronger. There have been several instances of violence directed toward Russian cultural centers and party offices, including several in Lviv. In the past few years, inter-group communal conflict has included frequent clashes between supporters of the newly-formed Russian Bloc and Ukrainian nationalist groups (INTERCON01-03 = 1), with the Bloc's offices twice being ransacked between 2001 and 2003. Other incidents of inter-communal conflict include an increase of

anti-Russian rhetoric in some Ukrainian media and the burning of the Lviv Russian Cultural Center in 2001 by the Galitskiye Wolves, a group of ultra-nationalist Ukrainians. Ethnic Russians in eastern Ukraine have fewer concerns over personal safety and have also been the most mobilized in advancing their rights.

## References

Allworth, Edward, ed., *Tatars of the Crimea* (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1988).

BBC Summary of World Broadcasts.

C. I. A., *The CIA World Factbook*, 1993.

Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press.

Fisher, Alan, *The Crimean Tatars* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Press, 1978).

Lexis-Nexis: All News Files 1997 - 2003.

RFE/RL Daily Reports 1993-2003.

Reuter's Textline.

Seymore II, Bruce, ed., *ACCESS Guide to Ethnic Conflicts in Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: ACCESS, 1994).

Stewart, Susan, "The Tatar Dimension." *RFE/RL Research Reports* 3(19): 22-26 (13 May 1994).

Subtelny, Orest, *Ukraine: A History* (Buffalo, NY: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1988).

Svetova, Svetlana and Roman Solchanyk, "Chronology of Events in Crimea." *RFE/RL Research Reports* 3(19): 27-33 (13 May 1994).

"Crimea: Tatar Kinder." *The Economist* 331(7863): 53-54 (14 May 1994).

U. S. Department of State, "Human Rights Report on Ukraine" 1993, 2001-2003.

Viets, Susan, "The Crimean Tatars: Exiles' Return." *Index on Censorship* 22(3): 21 (March 1993).

Young, Stephen W., Ronald J. Bee, and Bruce Seymore II, *One Nation Becomes Many: The ACCESS Guide to the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: ACCESS, 1992).

### Search Refworld

by keyword

and / or country

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

## Countries

- [Ukraine](#)

## Topics

- [Russians](#)



- © UNHCR 2013
  - [Partners](#)
  - [Help](#)
  - [Contact](#)
  - [Site Map](#)
  - [About](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Disclaimer](#)
- [Privacy](#)