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CRIME AND SOCIAL CONTROL IN UKRAINE 2013-2025: ANALYSIS OF TRANSFORMATION UNDER WAR CONDITIONSORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2822-2268>**Yagunov D., D.Sc. in Political Science, Ph.D. in Public Administration, MSSc in Criminal Justice, Associate Professor, Merited Lawyer of Ukraine, Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, Tubingen University**

This study examines crime trends in Ukraine from 2013 to 2025, with particular focus on the impact of Russia's full-scale invasion beginning February 2022. The analysis reveals that Ukraine represents the first testing ground for studying modern warfare's impact on a contemporary democratic state operating under European legal frameworks. Pre-war (2013-2021), Ukraine demonstrated consistent crime reduction, reaching a historic low of 321443 registered crimes in 2021, with approximately 50-54% suspect identification rates. The full-scale invasion immediately disrupted this trajectory. By 2025, registered crimes surged to 608191 – an 89% increase from 2021 – while suspect identification plummeted to 27,3%, creating an unprecedented justice gap with over 442000 criminal proceedings lacking identified suspects. The war fundamentally transformed crime patterns. Criminality became significantly more rural, with rural crime increasing from 20% (2013-2021) to 32,3% (2025) of total crimes. The urban-to-rural crime ratio declined from 4:1 to barely 2:1, reflecting occupation-related crimes, abandoned property theft, and frontline zone criminality. Crime categories showed varied impacts: property crimes initially decreased but fraud increased dramatically (from 23847 in 2021 to 82609 in 2023). Domestic violence crimes surged (from 4800 in 2021 to 8900 in 2024). War crimes exploded from 253 in 2021 to 62128 in 2022. Intentional homicides with firearms peaked at 909 in 2023 – 25 times the 2021 baseline. Paradoxically, despite weapon proliferation, some firearms crimes showed complex patterns rather than simple increases. Human trafficking statistics revealed troubling gaps: despite 6,5 million refugees creating unprecedented vulnerability, registered cases remained low (105 in 2024), suggesting severe underreporting and possible law enforcement complicity. The study demonstrates that while Ukraine maintained statistical transparency during existential crisis, institutional effectiveness collapsed under wartime pressures, creating dangerous impunity that threatens post-war reconstruction and rule of law.

Keywords: Europe, crime trends, Ukraine, Russian aggression, wartime criminality, criminal justice system, war crimes, law enforcement capacity, crime statistics, suspect identification rates, ruralisation of crime, property crimes, violent crimes, domestic violence, human trafficking, firearms crimes, corruption, displacement, organised crime, torture, drug crimes, fraud, military crimes, border security, criminal investigation, post-conflict reconstruction, impunity.

Ягунов Д. В. Злочинність та соціальний контроль в Україні у 2013-2025 роках: аналіз трансформації в умовах війни

У цьому дослідженні розглядаються тенденції злочинності в Україні з 2013 по 2025 рік, з особливим акцентом на впливі повномасштабного вторгнення Росії, що розпочалося в лютому 2022 року. Аналіз показує, що Україна фактично є першим «кримінологічним» полігоном для вивчення впливу сучасної війни на сучасну демократичну державу, що функціонує в рамках європейської правової системи. До війни (2013-2021) Україна демонструвала постійне зниження рівня злочинності, досягнувши історичного мінімуму в 321443 зареєстрованих злочинів у 2021 році, з приблизно 50–54 % випадків виявлення підозрюваних. Повномасштабне вторгнення негайно порушило цю тенденцію. До 2025 року кількість зареєстрованих злочинів зросла до 608191 – на 89% більше, ніж у 2021 році, – тоді як рівень виявлення підозрюваних впав до 27,3%, що створило безпрецедентну прогалину в правосудді, оскільки в понад 442 тис. кримінальних провадженнях підозрювані не були виявлені. Війна кардинально змінила структуру злочинності. Злочинність стала значно більш сільською, а частка «сільських» злочинів у загальній кількості злочинів зросла з 20% (2013-2021) до 32,3% (2025). Співвідношення злочинів у містах і селах зменшилося з 4:1 до ледь 2:1, що відображає злочини, пов'язані з окупацією, крадіжки покинутого майна та злочинність у прифронтових зонах. Категорії злочинів мали різний вплив: злочини проти власності спочатку зменшилися, але кількість шахрайств різко зросла (з 23847 у 2021 році до 82609 у 2023 році). Зросла кількість злочинів, пов'язаних із домашнім насильством (з 4800 у 2021 році до 8900 у 2024 році). Кількість військових злочинів зросла

з 253 у 2021 році до 62128 у 2022 році. Кількість умисних вбивств із застосуванням вогнепальної зброї досягла піку у 909 у 2023 році, що в 25 разів перевищує базовий показник 2021 року. Парадоксально, але попри поширення зброї, деякі злочини із застосуванням вогнепальної зброї мали складні закономірності, а не просто зростали. Статистика торгівлі людьми виявила тривожні прогалини: незважаючи на 6,5 мільйона біженців, що створили безпрецедентну вразливість, зареєстровані випадки залишалися низькими (105 у 2024 році), що свідчить про серйозне зниження показників і можливу співучасть правоохоронних органів. Дослідження показує, що, хоча Україна зберегла статистичну прозорість під час екзистенційної кризи, інституційна ефективність в умовах воєнного тиску зазнала краху, що створило небезпечну безкарність, яка загрожує післявоєнній відбудові та верховенству права.

Ключові слова: Європа, тенденції злочинності, Україна, російська агресія, злочинність у воєнний час, система кримінального правосуддя, військові злочини, спроможність правоохоронних органів, статистика злочинності, рівень виявлення підозрюваних, сільська злочинність, злочини проти власності, насильницькі злочини, домашнє насильство, торгівля людьми, злочини із застосуванням вогнепальної зброї, корупція, верховенство права, переміщення, організована злочинність, катування, злочини, пов'язані з наркотиками, шахрайство, військові злочини, безпека кордонів, кримінальне розслідування, післявоєнне відновлення, безкарність.

Introduction. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 transformed the country into an unprecedented laboratory for studying the intersection of modern warfare, democratic governance, and criminal justice. Unlike historical conflicts that unfolded under authoritarian regimes with restricted transparency, Ukraine represents the first case where a contemporary European democracy operating under rule of law frameworks has maintained systematic crime data collection while fighting an existential war. This unique combination of institutional transparency amid catastrophic disruption offers scholars, policymakers, and international organizations an unparalleled opportunity to understand how armed conflict reshapes criminality and tests the resilience of justice institutions.

This study examines crime trends in Ukraine from 2013 to 2025, with particular emphasis on the profound transformations triggered by the 2022 Russian military aggression. The analysis reveals a justice system under extreme pressure: registered crimes surged by 89% from pre-war levels, reaching 608191 cases in 2025, while the capacity to identify suspects collapsed to merely 27,3% of cases, creating an unprecedented justice gap with over 442000 criminal proceedings lacking identified perpetrators. Beyond these aggregate figures, the war fundamentally restructured Ukraine's criminal landscape: criminality became significantly more rural, property crime patterns inverted expectations, and entirely new categories of wartime offenses emerged alongside traditional crimes that adapted to conflict conditions.

Drawing on official police statistics, prosecutorial data, and comparative analysis across multiple crime categories, this paper demonstrates how warfare simultaneously generates new forms of criminality while systematically degrading institutional capacity to respond. The findings illuminate critical challenges facing any democratic state attempting to maintain rule of law under conditions of total war, offering lessons that extend far beyond Ukraine's borders to inform international support strategies, post-conflict reconstruction planning, and theoretical understanding of crime and justice under extreme duress.

This paper is based on the previous author's papers focused on crime trends in Ukraine in different periods of 2022 (Yagunov, D. (2022). *Crime prevention policy in Ukraine in the light of crime statistics for the period of eight months of 2022. Bulletin of the Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University. Series Political sciences. 4. Pp. 28-45*; Yagunov, D. (2022). *Criminal justice system of Ukraine in the wartime: impacts and challenges. European Political and Law Discourse. 9. 4. Pp. 33-51*; Yagunov, D. (2022). *Impact of the 2022 Russian military aggression on crime trends in Ukraine (analysis of crime prevention policy in the light of crime statistics for ten months of 2022). European Political and Law Discourse. 9. 6. Pp. 35-80*; Yagunov, D. (2025). *Moscovian military aggression: the impact of the war on crime in Ukraine in the light of statistics for 2013-2024. Political Life. 1. P.p. 12-53*).

Methodology. This study employs a longitudinal quantitative research design to examine crime trends in Ukraine over a 13-year period (2013-2025), with particular emphasis on the impact of Russia's full-scale invasion beginning February 24, 2022. The research adopts a comparative temporal framework, dividing the observation period into two distinct phases: *pre-war period* (2013-2021) and *wartime period* (2022-2025). This division enables systematic analysis of how armed conflict transforms crime patterns, institutional capacity, and criminal justice system effectiveness in a contemporary democratic state operating under European legal frameworks.

The research design is primarily descriptive and analytical, focused on identifying trends, patterns, and structural changes in crime rates and law enforcement response capacity. The study utilizes official crime statistics as the primary data source, supplemented by comparative analysis across multiple crime categories to provide a comprehensive understanding of wartime criminality dynamics.

The empirical foundation of this study rests on official crime statistics compiled and published by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and prosecutorial authorities.

All data utilised in this study are *publicly available* through the official website of the Office of the Prosecutor General. The author has previously utilised these data sources in earlier publications examining crime trends during various periods of 2022-2024, ensuring consistency and continuity in the analytical approach.

The study examines a 13-year period from January 1, 2013, through the most recent available data for December 31, 2025. This extended timeframe was selected to:

- establish robust pre-war baseline trends (2013-2021);
- capture the initial period of Russian armed aggression in Donbas (2014-2015);
- document the full-scale invasion period (2022-2025);
- enable comparison of crime patterns across different phases of the war.

The year 2021 serves as the immediate pre-war baseline, representing the last complete year before Russia's full-scale invasion. The COVID-19 pandemic period (2020-2021) is acknowledged as a confounding factor that influenced crime patterns independently of armed conflict.

Data collection encompasses the entire territory of Ukraine under government control. Occupied territories are excluded from official statistics, creating certain analytical limitations that are addressed in the limitations section.

The analysis centers on two primary quantitative indicators derived from Ukraine's criminal procedure framework:

1. Total Registered Criminal Proceedings: The aggregate number of criminal offenses registered by law enforcement agencies and entered into the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations. This indicator represents the total volume of detected and formally registered criminality.

2. Criminal Proceedings with Identified Suspects: The number of criminal proceedings in which concrete suspects have received formal notifications of suspicion as prescribed by Article 276 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of Ukraine.

The ratio between these two indicators (expressed as '*suspect identification rate*') serves as a proxy measure for law enforcement investigative effectiveness and institutional capacity.

Throughout this paper, the term '*notifications*' refers to the number of criminal proceedings with identified suspects who have received formal notifications of suspicion.

The analytical approach combines descriptive statistical analysis with comparative trend examination across multiple dimensions:

1. Temporal Analysis: Year-over-year comparison of crime rates, identification of inflection points, and assessment of trajectory changes associated with key events (2014 Donbas conflict, COVID-19 pandemic, 2022 full-scale invasion).

2. Crime Category Analysis: Disaggregated examination of specific offense types including crimes against life and health, property crimes, violent crimes, war crimes and military offenses, crimes against national security, economic and corruption offenses, drug-related crimes, human trafficking, firearms and explosives-related crimes, torture, and sex offenses.

3. Geographic Analysis: Examination of urban versus rural crime distribution patterns and their transformation during wartime.

4. Institutional Performance Analysis: Assessment of different law enforcement agencies' (National Police, Security Service of Ukraine, Office of Prosecutor General, Tax Police) investigative capacity and effectiveness measured through suspect identification rates.

5. Comparative Historical Contextualisation: Positioning Ukrainian wartime crime trends within broader scholarly literature on crime during armed conflict, with attention to distinctive features arising from Ukraine's democratic governance framework and commitment to transparency.

This research utilises exclusively *publicly available*, aggregated statistical data that does not contain personally identifiable information. No primary data collection involving human subjects was conducted. The analysis respects confidentiality of individual cases and avoids speculation regarding specific incidents or investigations that might compromise ongoing proceedings or endanger individuals.

Crime Rates

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked not only a military and humanitarian catastrophe but also a critical juncture for the country's criminal justice system. The past four years of war have had a pronounced negative impact on Ukrainian society and the criminal justice system, fundamentally altering crime patterns and revealing systemic vulnerabilities in law enforcement capacity. Ukraine represents the first testing ground for studying the impact of modern warfare on a contemporary democratic state operating under European legal frameworks. The state has been unable to maintain stable crime rates, which show a significant increase in the number of criminal offences committed over the last four years.

This analysis examines crime statistics from 2013 to 2025, with particular focus on the wartime period (2022-2025), to demonstrate how armed conflict has disrupted crime control mechanisms and overwhelmed institutional capacity. The central thesis is that while Ukraine has experienced a dramatic surge in registered criminal offences during the war, the state's ability to respond effectively has deteriorated significantly, as evidenced by the growing gap between registered crimes and criminal proceedings with identified suspects. This pattern reflects broader challenges facing states attempting to maintain rule of law under conditions of existential military threat.

To understand the wartime crime crisis, it is essential to examine pre-war trends. From 2013 to 2016, Ukraine registered between 529139 and 592604 crimes annually, with a corresponding 159480 to 223561 criminal proceedings involving identified suspects. Following the 2014 Russian armed aggression in Donbas and subsequent reforms, crime rates showed a declining trend, reaching a historic low of 321443 registered crimes in 2021. This decade-long reduction suggested improvements in both crime prevention and institutional effectiveness.

The year 2020 marked the beginning of significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 360622 registered crimes and 167098 proceedings with suspects. However, 2021 saw a further decrease to 321443 crimes with 172494 identified suspects, representing the lowest point in the observed period. The ratio between registered crimes and identified suspects remained relatively stable during these years, hovering around 50-54%, indicating that approximately half of all registered criminal offences resulted in specific individuals being notified of suspicion (Figure 1).

The full-scale invasion in February 2022 immediately disrupted this trajectory. In 2022, the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies (hereafter – LEA) registered 362636 crimes with corresponding criminal proceedings, where the above-mentioned numbers reflect both criminal proceedings with suspects and so-called ‘factual’ criminal proceedings (without suspects). Despite the war beginning only in late February, this figure exceeded the entire 2021 total. Notably, only 132418 criminal proceedings involved identified suspects, yielding a suspect identification rate of approximately 36,5%, the lowest in the entire observation period. It should be noted that the number of registered crimes even for the period of ten months of 2022 almost reached the level of 2021 (a whole year). This initial year of war revealed a critical pattern: even as institutional capacity was redirected toward military defence and territorial integrity, criminal activity did not decrease but rather began to increase, while the state’s capacity to investigate and prosecute crimes deteriorated significantly (Figure 1).

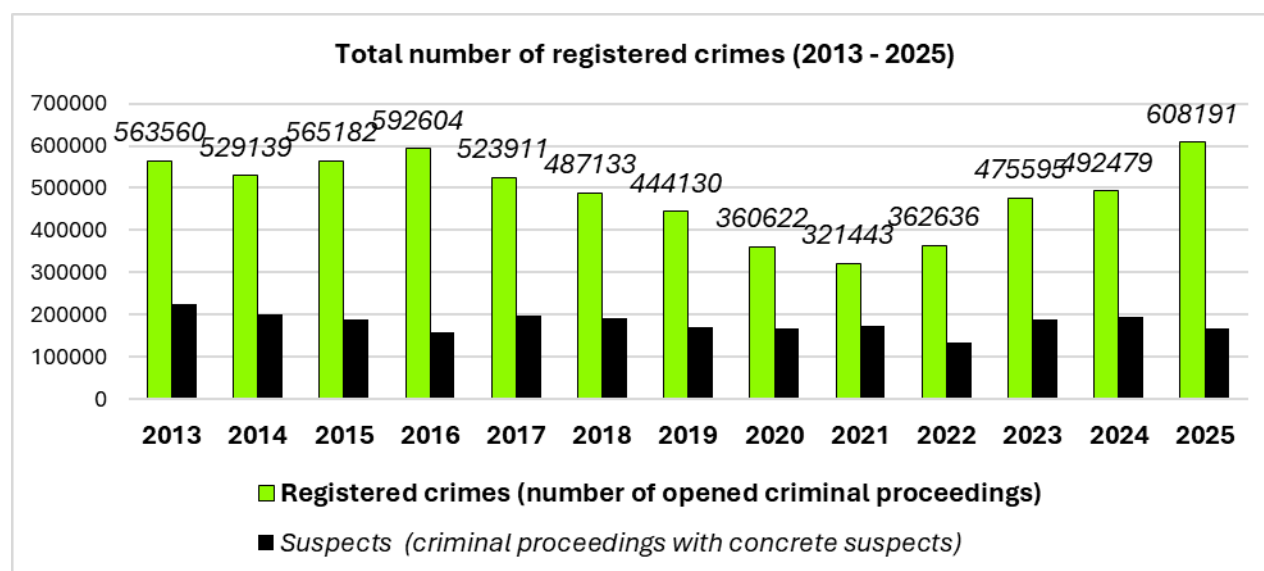


Figure 1. Total number of registered crimes (2013 – 2025)

The subsequent years demonstrated an alarming escalation in criminal activity. In 2023, the LEA registered 475595 crimes with corresponding criminal proceedings where notes of suspicion were given in 189292 proceedings – a 31% increase from 2022 and a 48% increase from 2021. While the number of proceedings with identified suspects recovered somewhat, this represented only 39,8% of registered crimes, still significantly below pre-war levels. This partial recovery in suspect identification suggests some adaptation by law enforcement institutions, but the gap between crimes and investigative capacity continued to widen in absolute terms.

The year 2024 saw continued deterioration, with the LEA registering 492479 crimes and giving notes of suspicion in 194688 proceedings (39,5% rate). Most dramatically, 2025 data reveal an unprecedented spike: the LEA registered 608191 crimes with notes of suspicion given in only 165904 proceedings – the highest crime figure in the entire 2013-2025 period, representing an 89% increase from the 2021 baseline and a 24% increase from 2024. Paradoxically, despite this surge in registered criminality, the number of proceedings with identified suspects decreased in absolute terms, yielding a suspect identification rate of merely 27,3% – the lowest in the observed period (Figure 1).

These statistics reveal several critical patterns. First, the war has not led to a simple linear increase in crime but rather an accelerating crisis, with 2025 representing a particularly acute deterioration. Second, the state's capacity to respond has not kept pace with the crime surge; in fact, it has declined in both relative and, in 2025, absolute terms. Third, the gap between registered crimes and effective investigation has reached crisis proportions, with over 442000 criminal proceedings in 2025 lacking identified suspects.

In line with patterns previously seen in other countries at various times, war has led to a significant increase in crime in Ukraine. However, the Ukrainian case is distinctive in several respects. Unlike historical conflicts that often occurred under authoritarian regimes with restricted civil liberties, Ukraine has attempted to maintain democratic governance and rule of law while fighting an existential war. This commitment to transparency is reflected in the continued registration and publication of crime statistics, even as these numbers reveal institutional weakness.

The dramatic increase in crimes without identified suspects reflects multiple systemic pressures. First, significant human resources have been redirected from law enforcement to military service, depleting investigative capacity. Second, territorial disruptions, population displacement, and infrastructure damage have complicated investigative processes and cross-jurisdictional cooperation. Third, war-related crimes – including collaboration with occupation forces, looting in conflict zones, and military-related offences – have added entirely new categories of criminality requiring specialised investigative approaches. Fourth, corruption and organised crime have adapted to wartime conditions, exploiting gaps in institutional oversight and the chaos of military logistics.

The state's response demonstrates a critical tension in wartime governance: Ukrainian authorities continue to register criminal offences to the maximum extent possible, fulfilling transparency and documentation obligations, but lack sufficient resources, human capital, and organisational capabilities to bring perpetrators to justice. This creates a dangerous dynamic where impunity increases, potentially encouraging further criminal activity. The 2025 figures are particularly concerning, suggesting that as the war extends into its fourth year, institutional exhaustion has reached a critical threshold.

Moreover, the low suspect identification rates have profound implications for public trust in institutions, deterrence effects, and post-war reconstruction. If significant portions of wartime criminality remain unaddressed, this could normalise impunity and complicate efforts to restore rule of law. The challenge is compounded by the fact that many crimes committed during wartime – particularly corruption in military procurement, abuse of martial law provisions, and collaboration with occupation forces – have direct implications for state security and post-war accountability.

The evidence presented demonstrates that Ukraine's criminal justice system is experiencing a severe crisis under the pressures of prolonged armed conflict. Registered crimes have increased by 89% from pre-war levels, while the capacity to identify and prosecute suspects has declined dramatically, creating a widening justice gap. The 2025 spike to over 608000 registered crimes with less than 166000 identified suspects represents an unprecedented challenge to rule of law. At the same time, it has revealed significant weaknesses in the state's response to crime, as evidenced by the ratio between the number of registered criminal offences and the number of criminal proceedings in which individuals have been notified of suspicion. Thus, the state registers criminal offences to the maximum extent possible, but does not have sufficient resources, human resources and organisational capabilities to bring the perpetrators to justice.

These findings have significant implications for understanding how modern democratic states function under existential military threats. Ukraine's experience suggests that transparency and institutional continuity can be maintained even under extreme pressure, but that effectiveness inevitably suffers when resources are diverted to survival. The growing gap between registered crimes and prosecuted cases represents not merely a statistical phenomenon but a fundamental challenge to social order, public safety, and democratic governance.

As the war continues, Ukrainian authorities face the dual challenge of maintaining immediate security while preventing the complete erosion of criminal justice capacity. International support for institutional strengthening, technical assistance in investigation techniques, and post-war reconstruction planning must account for this accumulated deficit in justice delivery. The Ukrainian case demonstrates that modern warfare affects not only military and economic capacity but fundamentally disrupts the legal order, with consequences that will extend well beyond the cessation of hostilities.

The data from 2013-2025 reveals that Ukraine is indeed serving as a critical case study for understanding crime and justice under conditions of total war in a democratic society. The lessons learned – both positive in terms of institutional resilience and concerning in terms of capacity limitations – will be essential for policy makers, international organisations, and scholars seeking to support states facing similar existential challenges. The path toward restoring effective criminal justice in Ukraine will require sustained effort, significant resources, and innovative approaches to addressing the massive backlog of uninvestigated crimes accumulated during the war years (*Figure 1*).

The operational capacity of Ukraine's criminal justice system has undergone substantial transformation following the full-scale Russian invasion of February 2022, with police statistics revealing a marked decline in the number of criminal proceedings involving identified suspects during the 2022-2024 period compared to pre-war benchmarks. This deterioration manifests most clearly in the ratio between registered criminal proceedings and notifications of suspicion – a critical metric that reflects the investigative effectiveness and overall functional integrity of the law enforcement apparatus.

Prior to the Russian invasion, Ukraine's criminal justice system demonstrated a consistent trajectory of improvement in investigative outcomes. As *Figure 2* illustrates, the ratio between criminal proceedings and notifications of suspicion exhibited a stable downward trend from 2016 to 2021, declining from its peak of 3,71 in 2016 to a historic low of 1,86 in 2021. This six-year pattern suggested progressive enhancement in investigative

capacity, indicating that law enforcement agencies were successfully identifying suspects in an increasing proportion of registered criminal cases. The 2021 ratio represented the most efficient performance within the analysed timeframe, signalling that for every registered criminal proceeding, investigators were able to issue notifications of suspicion to concrete individuals at nearly twice the rate observed five years earlier (*Figure 2*).

However, the onset of full-scale hostilities precipitated a reversal of this positive trend. While 2022 showed a modest increase to 2,74, and 2023-2024 maintained relatively stable figures of 2,51 and 2,53 respectively, the year 2025 witnessed a dramatic surge to 3,66 – approaching the 2016 peak and representing one of the highest ratios recorded in the past decade. This striking elevation indicates that the proportion of criminal proceedings concluding with identified suspects has diminished substantially, suggesting that nearly four registered crimes are now required to generate a single notification of suspicion. Such a ratio effectively doubles the investigative inefficiency observed during the system's optimal 2021 performance. Several interconnected factors may account for this deterioration in investigative effectiveness. The redeployment of experienced law enforcement personnel to military service has depleted institutional capacity, while ongoing hostilities have disrupted investigative procedures, evidence collection, and witness cooperation. Additionally, the occupation of territories, population displacement, and infrastructure destruction have created unprecedented obstacles to standard investigative practices. The wartime environment has simultaneously increased certain categories of crime while constraining the resources available for their investigation, creating a widening gap between reported criminality and prosecutorial outcomes.

The implications of this trend extend beyond mere statistical observation. A criminal justice system that registers criminal proceedings without corresponding suspect identification risks undermining public confidence in the rule of law, potentially encouraging impunity and eroding deterrence mechanisms. This is particularly concerning during wartime, when social cohesion and institutional legitimacy assume heightened importance. The 2025 spike further suggests that Ukraine faces mounting challenges in maintaining even the diminished investigative capacity observed in 2022-2024, potentially indicating accelerating institutional degradation absent targeted interventions to stabilise and restore criminal justice functionality under extraordinary operational conditions.

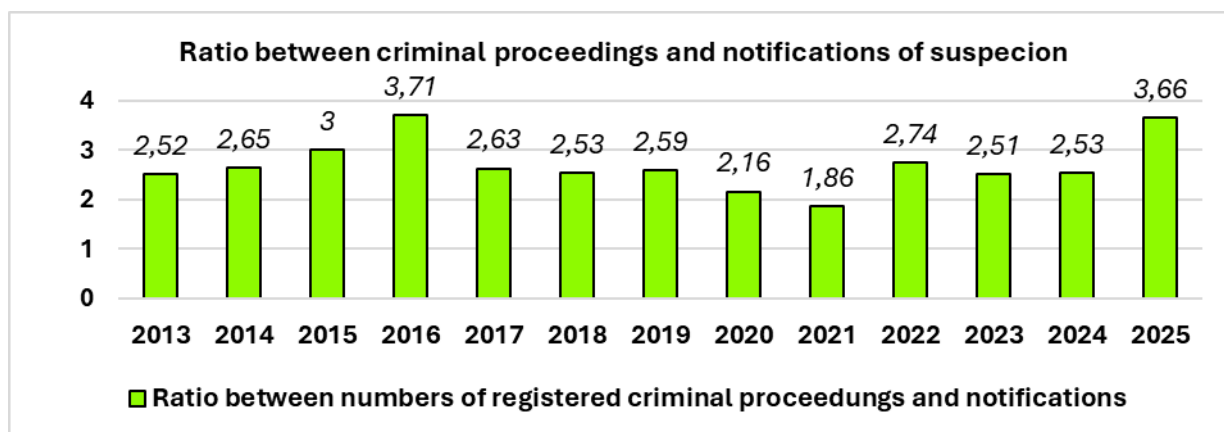


Figure 2. Ratio between registered crimes and notifications (2013 – 2025)

Geographical Distribution of Crime: The Ruralisation of Criminality in Wartime

An analysis of crime trends in Ukraine reveals a significant transformation in its spatial distribution: crime has become less urbanised, with rural forms of criminal activity on the rise. Although in absolute terms urban crime (in cities and urban-type settlements) still prevails over rural crime, the armed conflict has led to a noticeable shift in the geography of crime from urban centres to rural areas. This phenomenon may be due to several interrelated factors. First, crimes committed in the frontline zone against the backdrop of mass abandonment of property by owners. Second, crimes committed by servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (desertion and unauthorised abandonment of military units). Thirdly, criminal activities of Russian occupation forces in frontline and occupied territories.

At the same time, official statistics from the Office of the Prosecutor General contain significant contradictions that cast doubt on this hypothesis. In particular, there is a paradoxical situation: against the backdrop of an increase in the total number of crimes, especially those classified under Article 115 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (intentional murder) and traditionally associated with the activities of the occupiers and cases of missing persons, the number of registered crimes committed by foreigners on the territory of Ukraine shows a steady downward trend.

This discrepancy between expected and official statistics indicates systemic problems in the reliability and completeness of the official statistical picture of crime presented by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies. The underreporting or misclassification of crimes committed by foreign combatants – particularly Russian military personnel operating in occupied and frontline territories – suggests either systematic data collection failures or deliberate statistical manipulation. Such inconsistencies undermine the credibility of official crime statistics and

complicate evidence-based policy responses to wartime criminality.

One of the main conclusions from research into crime trends since 2022 is that the war made criminality in Ukraine significantly more rural. The statistical evidence demonstrates a clear and consistent trajectory toward the ruralisation of crime that accelerated dramatically following the full-scale Russian invasion. In 2013, the ratio between crimes committed in urban and rural areas stood at 4,04, indicating that urban crime was approximately four times more prevalent than rural crime. This ratio remained relatively stable throughout the pre-war period, fluctuating between 3,82 and 4,19 from 2013 to 2019, reflecting Ukraine's traditional pattern of urban-concentrated criminality typical of post-Soviet societies (*Figure 3*).

However, beginning in 2020 and accelerating sharply in 2022, this ratio underwent a dramatic transformation. By 2022, the urban-to-rural crime ratio decreased to 3,23, representing a reduction of nearly 20% compared to pre-war levels. This decline continued progressively, reaching 2,99 in 2023, 2,35 in 2024, and falling to just 1,99 in 2025. The 2025 figure represents an unprecedented historical low, indicating that urban crime is now barely twice as common as rural crime – a stark departure from the traditional four-to-one ratio that characterised Ukrainian criminality for decades. The percentage distribution of crimes across urban and rural areas provides even more compelling evidence of this spatial transformation. In the period of 2013-2021, urban crimes occupied 77-78% in the general structure of criminality in Ukraine, with rural crimes accounting for approximately 19-20%. This distribution remained remarkably stable, with only minor annual fluctuations, suggesting an entrenched pattern of urban crime dominance rooted in Ukraine's demographic and socioeconomic structure.

The beginning of the war in 2022 brought the minimum level of urban crime (74,14%) and maximum level of rural crime (22,97%) for the last decade of national crime prevention history. This represented the first significant breach of the established urban-rural crime distribution pattern. However, the trend did not stabilize at this new equilibrium but continued to evolve in subsequent years. By 2023, urban crime fell to 72,9% while rural crime rose to 24,3%.

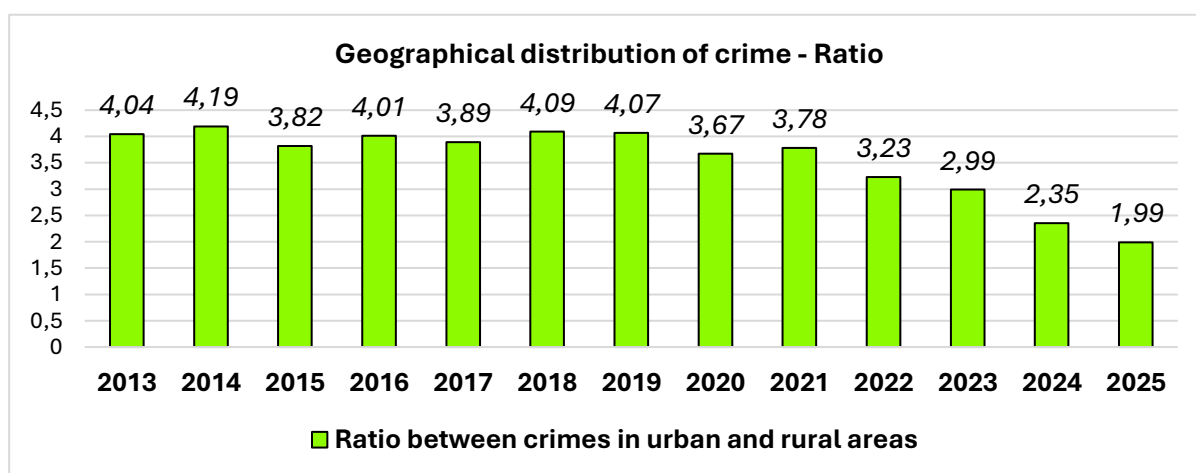


Figure 3. Geographical distribution of crime (1)

The transformation accelerated further in 2024, when the police statistics demonstrated the lowest level of crimes in urban areas (67,6%) and the highest level of crimes in rural areas (28,7%) ever recorded in modern Ukrainian criminal statistics (*Figure 4*).

The 2025 data reveal an even more dramatic shift, with urban crime comprising only 64,3% of total registered crimes and rural crime reaching 32,3%. This means that nearly one-third of all crimes in Ukraine now occur in rural areas – a proportion that would have been inconceivable in the pre-war period. The shift of approximately 13 percentage points from urban to rural crime between 2013 and 2025 represents a fundamental restructuring of Ukraine's criminal geography.

It appears that such changes have resulted primarily from the 2022 Russian armed aggression, where many crimes were committed by Russian soldiers and officers in rural areas. The occupation and temporary control of vast rural territories, particularly in eastern and southern Ukraine, created conditions for systematic criminal activity by occupation forces. Rural areas, characterised by lower population density, weaker law enforcement presence, and greater distance from administrative centres, became particularly vulnerable to occupation-related crimes including looting, property destruction, violence against civilians, and other war crimes.

The displacement of civilian populations from frontline and occupied rural territories created opportunities for property crimes in abandoned settlements. Villages and agricultural areas near active combat zones experienced mass evacuation, leaving homes, farms, and infrastructure unguarded and susceptible to theft and vandalism by both

occupation forces and opportunistic criminals. The absence of property owners and the collapse of local law enforcement structures in these areas created a criminogenic environment with minimal deterrence or oversight.

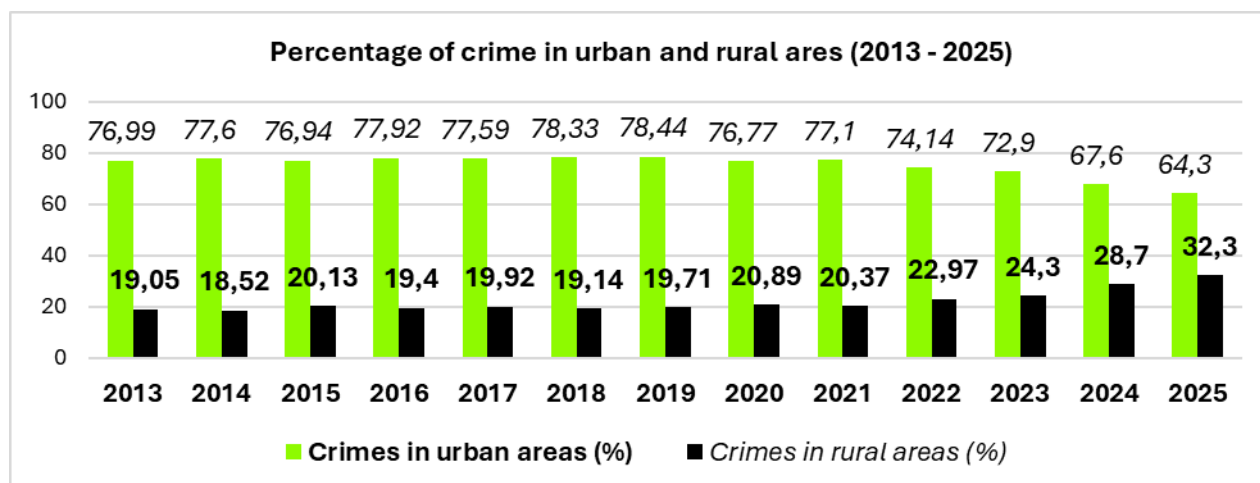


Figure 4. Geographical distribution of crime (2)

Military-related crimes by Ukrainian servicemen, particularly desertion and unauthorised abandonment of military units, also contributed to the ruralisation of crime statistics. As military operations concentrated in rural and semi-rural frontline areas, crimes committed by servicemen were more likely to be registered in rural jurisdictions rather than urban centres. The stress and trauma of prolonged combat operations, combined with inadequate military discipline mechanisms in some units, led to increased incidents of military crimes that statistically registered as rural offenses.

Nationality

As previously, crimes committed by foreign nationals in Ukraine occupy an *insignificant* segment in the general structure of criminality (Figure 5).

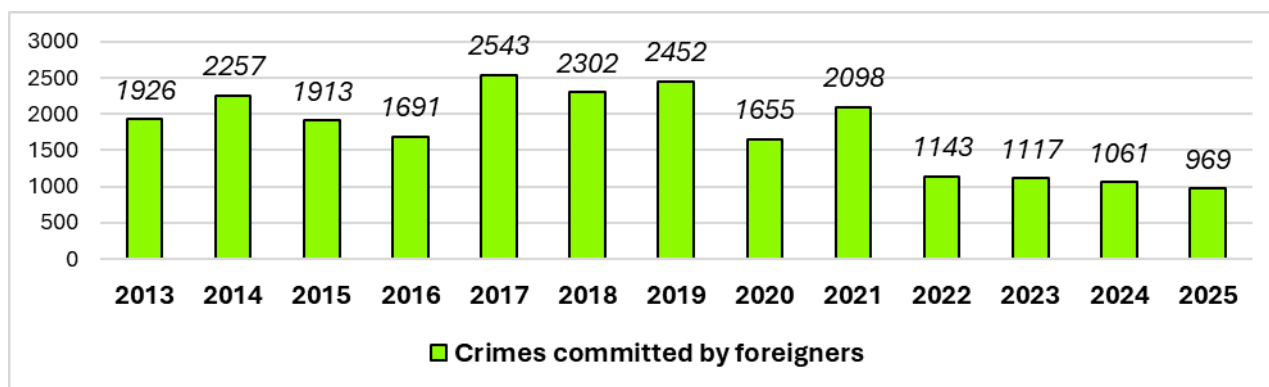


Figure 5. Crimes committed by foreigners

At the same time, the War has led to a reduction in crimes committed by foreign nationals (Figure 6). Probably, police statistics do *not* cover crimes committed by Russian military agents during the 2022 War. Nevertheless, there is *no* reference in the police statistics that the mentioned indicator does *not* cover crimes committed by Russian occupiers.

Crimes against Human Life and Health

The onset of full-scale war in February 2022 significantly disrupted crime detection patterns for offenses against human life and health. Following the initial invasion, recorded crime levels dropped precipitously in March 2022 due to the factors discussed above. However, by July 2022, detection rates had recovered to pre-invasion levels comparable to January 2022.

Analysis of annual data reveals a concerning trend of increasing recorded crimes alongside declining prosecution rates. In 2021, authorities recorded 33657 crimes against human life and health, with notices of suspicion issued in 22524 cases (67% prosecution rate). This gap widened substantially during the war years: 2022 saw 43199 recorded crimes but only 16559 notices of suspicion (38%); 2023 recorded 63766 crimes with 22920 notices (36%);

2024 showed 80054 crimes with 23365 notices (29%); and by 2025, recorded crimes reached 85422 while notices of suspicion fell to 21204 (25%) (Figure 7).

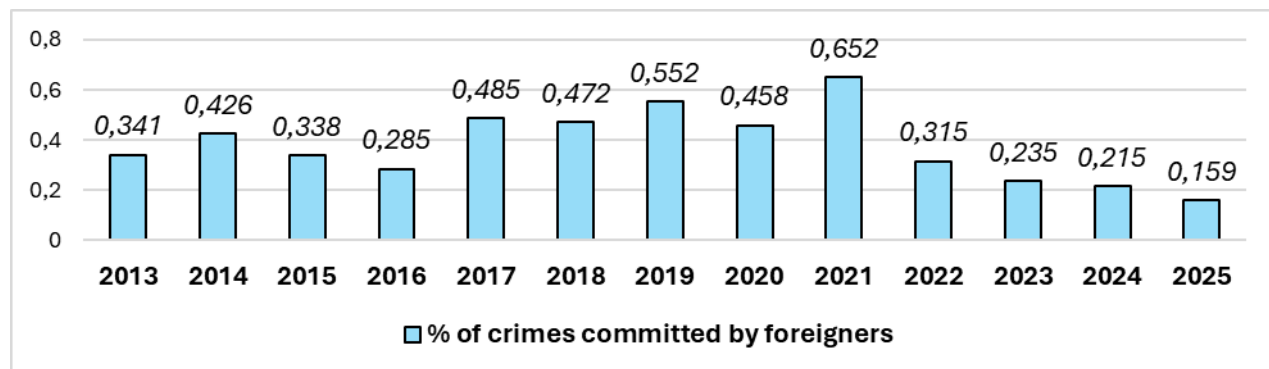


Figure 6. Percentage of crimes committed by foreigners

This divergence between recorded crimes and formal prosecutorial action suggests either declining investigative capacity during wartime conditions or systematic challenges in advancing cases through the criminal justice system.

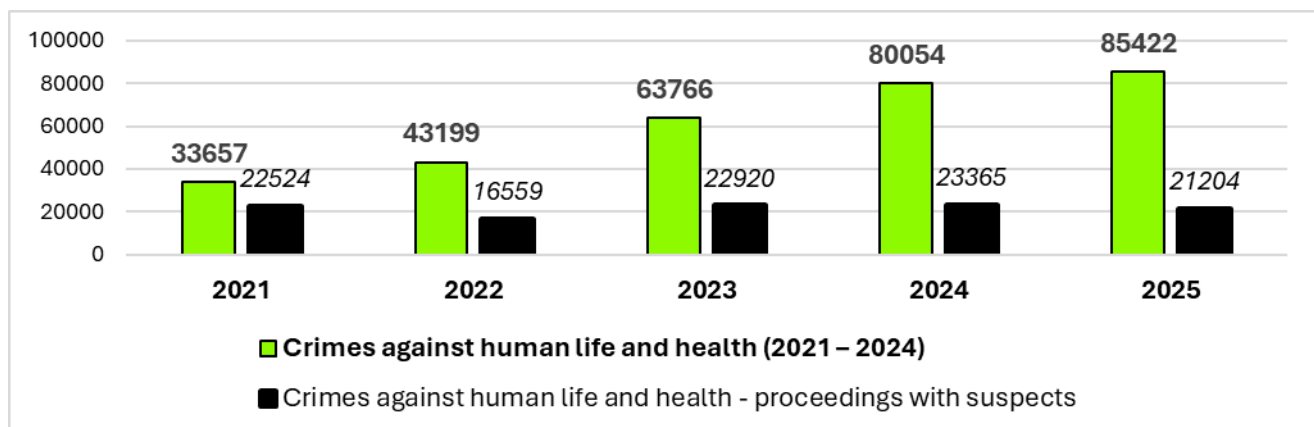


Figure 7. Crimes against life and health

Torture

The prosecution of torture in Ukraine presents a paradoxical case study in criminal justice effectiveness. Analysis of official statistics spanning thirteen years (2013-2025) reveals fundamental shifts in investigative capacity, prosecutorial commitment, and systemic dysfunction that challenge conventional assumptions about the relationship between state resources and criminal justice outcomes. Here, we examine torture police statistics across three distinct periods: the post-Euromaidan transition (2013-2017), the pre-war stabilisation (2018-2021), and the full-scale invasion period (2022-2025).

Police statistics on torture (Article 127 of the Criminal Code) occupy a controversial place in the analysis of the general structure of crime in Ukraine. On one hand, systematic torture by the police, prison and military officers has shaped corresponding views on torture practices in the Ukrainian society and media. The Ukrainian society has a strong view that ill-treatment by the police and prison officers is a *wide-spread phenomenon*. On the other one, the number of officially registered crimes of torture determines many questions concerning the *latent nature* of this type of crime as well as the *effectiveness of investigation* of torture by state agents in Ukraine which become known to the society (Tab. 1).

Official torture crime statistics demonstrate considerable volatility across the observation period. The initial post-Euromaidan years (2013-2017) showed relatively modest fluctuations, with registered cases ranging from 51 to 82 annually. A dramatic inflection occurred in 2018, when registered crimes spiked to 163 cases – a 98,8% increase from the previous year. This peak was followed by a gradual decline through 2019-2021, with cases settling in the 79-140 range.

The onset of full-scale war in February 2022 produced an immediate statistical shock: registered torture crimes plummeted to 68 cases, the lowest level in the entire observation period. However, this proved to be a temporary nadir. The subsequent years (2023-2025) demonstrated a recovery pattern, with case volumes stabilizing at 94-124 cases annually – levels comparable to the pre-2018 baseline but substantially below the 2018 peak.

Table 1

Torture: general numbers of criminal proceedings

Torture	Crimes	Proceedings with suspects	Indictments sent to courts	Dropped proceedings
2013	51	38	38	63
2014	54	24	19	24
2015	73	32	25	21
2016	62	20	13	26
2017	82	37	26	26
2018	163	59	51	43
2019	140	34	22	25
2020	129	59	32	52
2021	79	33	25	33
2022	68	20	16	21
2023	94	53	37	24
2024	124	78	58	24
2025	115	65	46	26

Additionally, the proportion of *dropped* criminal proceedings stimulates additional questions about the *effectiveness* of pre-trial investigation of tortures. The specific feature of crimes of torture is that the victim can identify a perpetrator or at least to provide the information that he or she was subjected to torture in a concrete police department or in a concrete prison (Tab. 2).

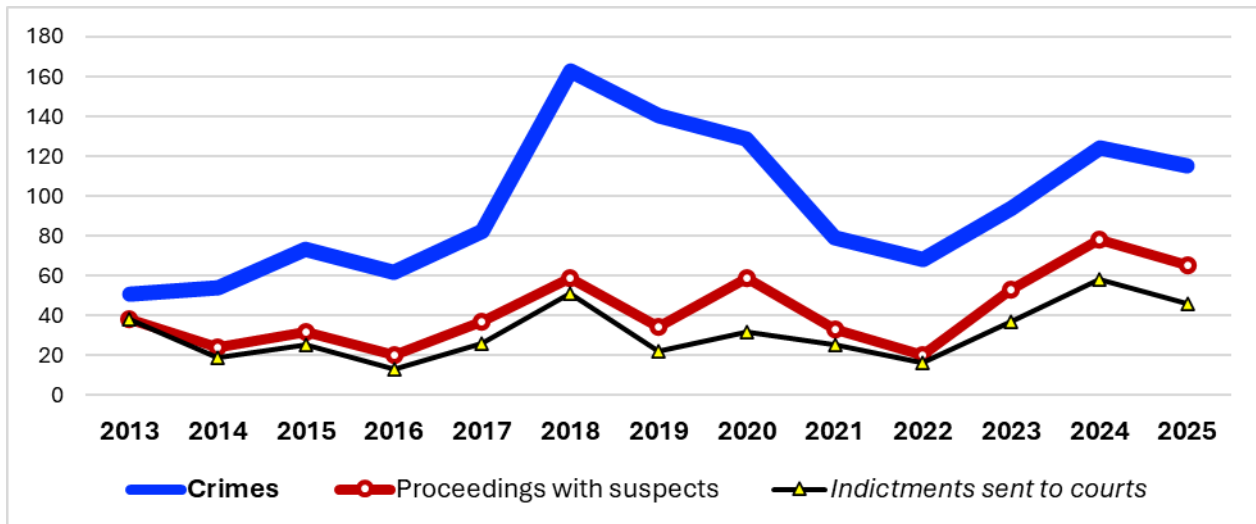


Figure 8. Torture

Table 2

Torture: indictments sent to courts and dropped criminal proceedings

	Torture: Percentage of criminal proceedings with suspects	Torture: Indictments sent to courts	Torture: Percentage of dropped criminal proceedings
2016	32,3	20,9	41,9
2017	45,1	31,7	31,7
2018	36,2	31,3	26,4
2019	24,3	15,7	17,8
2020	45,7	24,8	40,3
2021	41,8	31,6	41,8
2022	29,4	23,5	30,9
2023	56,4	39,4	25,5
2024	62,9	46,8	19,3
2025	56,5	40	22,6

The critical deficiency in Ukraine's pre-war torture prosecution system becomes evident when examining conversion rates between crime registration and judicial outcomes. *Table 1* reveals a systematic pattern of investigative attrition that suggests profound institutional dysfunction rather than mere resource constraints (*Figure 9*).

During the 2016-2021 period, only 24,3% to 45,7% of registered torture crimes resulted in criminal

proceedings with identified suspects. The year 2019 represents the nadir of investigative effectiveness, with merely 24,3% of cases advancing to this preliminary stage. Even in the relatively stronger year of 2017, less than half (45,1%) of registered crimes produced suspects – a conversion rate that would be considered unacceptable in functioning criminal justice systems addressing serious human rights violations (*Figure 9*).

The attrition intensifies at the indictment stage. Between 2016 and 2021, only 15,7% to 31,7% of registered torture crimes resulted in indictments forwarded to courts. The 2019 data is particularly striking: of 140 registered torture crimes, only 22 (15,7%) reached indictment. This represents an 84,3% failure rate at converting registered crimes into prosecutorial action – a statistic indicative of near-complete systemic breakdown.

Compounding this investigative ineffectiveness, the pre-war period witnessed high rates of case abandonment. Between 2016 and 2021, 17,8% to 41,9% of proceedings were dropped. The years 2016, 2020, and 2021 were particularly problematic, with drop rates exceeding 40%. This suggests not merely investigative difficulty but a systemic pattern of initiating proceedings that prosecutors lacked the capacity, evidence, or political will to pursue to completion.

The Russian full-scale invasion produced an unexpected reversal in investigative effectiveness metrics. Despite conditions that would logically impede torture investigations – displaced populations, overwhelmed institutions, diverted resources, occupied territories – the prosecution system demonstrated marked improvement in converting registered crimes into judicial outcomes.

The year 2024 represents the highest investigative effectiveness in the entire observation period: **1)** 62,9% of registered crimes resulted in proceedings with suspects (compared to 24,3 – 45,7% pre-war); **2)** 46,8% reached indictment stage (compared to 15,7% – 31,7% pre-war); **3)** only 19,3% of proceedings were dropped (compared to 17,8% – 41,9% pre-war).

This effectiveness improvement proved sustainable across the war period:

- average suspect identification rate: ~ 58%;
- average indictment rate: ~ 42%;
- average drop rate: ~ 23%.

These metrics represent an approximate doubling of pre-war indictment rates and a near-halving of case abandonment rates.

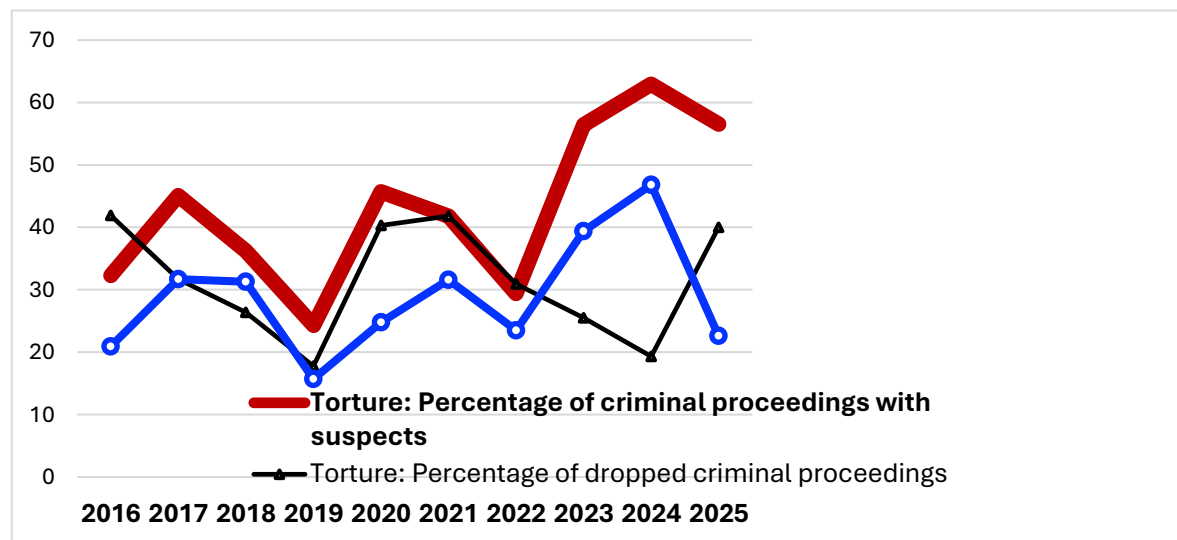


Figure 9. Torture

The wartime improvement in investigative effectiveness fundamentally challenges resource-centric explanations of criminal justice dysfunction. If investigative failure resulted primarily from insufficient resources, the wartime period – characterised by severe resource constraints – should have witnessed deteriorating rather than improving metrics. The data instead suggests that pre-war dysfunction stemmed from systemic factors largely independent of resource availability: lack of political will, inadequate prosecutorial prioritisation, tolerance for impunity, or institutional capture.

The wartime period coincided with unprecedented international attention to human rights violations in Ukraine. The establishment of numerous documentation initiatives created external accountability pressures absent in the pre-war period. This international scrutiny likely increased both the visibility costs of investigative failure and the institutional support for pursuing cases.

The improved conversion rates may partially reflect a shift from quantity to quality in case selection. Faced with overwhelming caseloads and limited capacity, prosecutors may have adopted more rigorous screening criteria,

pursuing only cases with strong evidentiary foundations. This would improve conversion rates while potentially allowing weaker but nonetheless meritorious cases to go unprosecuted.

The 2022 Russian invasion fundamentally altered Ukraine's political economy of law enforcement. Pre-war patterns of institutional tolerance for torture – rooted in authoritarian legacies, law enforcement impunity, and political interference – became politically untenable in a wartime context demanding international support and domestic legitimacy. Torture prosecution transformed from a low-priority administrative matter to a politically salient indicator of democratic commitment and rule of law.

The most significant limitation of this statistical analysis is its necessary exclusion of torture occurring in temporarily occupied territories. Russian occupation created zones of absolute impunity where torture has been extensively documented by international monitors but remains entirely absent from Ukrainian crime statistics. The registered crime figures for 2022 - 2025 therefore represent a severe undercount of actual torture incidence, capturing only cases occurring in government-controlled territory where investigative access exists.

This visibility gap has profound implications for assessing the true scale of the torture problem in Ukraine and for understanding the relationship between wartime conditions and human rights violations. The improved investigative effectiveness documented in official statistics may coexist with massively increased absolute torture incidence in territories where the Ukrainian criminal justice system cannot operate.

The statistical analysis of torture prosecution in Ukraine from 2013-2025 reveals three critical findings:

First, Ukraine's pre-war torture prosecution system exhibited systematic dysfunction characterised by extraordinarily high attrition rates between crime registration and judicial outcomes. With indictment rates as low as 15,7% and case drop rates exceeding 40%, the system demonstrated fundamental institutional failure rather than normal investigative difficulty.

Second, the full-scale invasion paradoxically coincided with dramatic improvements in prosecutorial effectiveness, with indictment rates nearly doubling and case abandonment rates halving despite severe wartime constraints. This improvement suggests that pre-war dysfunction stemmed primarily from factors relating to political will, institutional priorities, and systemic corruption rather than technical capacity or resources.

Third, the 2022 collapse in registered cases and the ongoing inability to investigate torture in occupied territories means that official statistics severely undercount the true scale of torture during the war period. Improved investigative effectiveness in government-controlled territory coexists with zones of absolute impunity in occupied areas.

These findings have significant implications for understanding institutional reform dynamics, the political economy of criminal justice, and the complex relationship between war, state capacity, and human rights protection. They suggest that conventional assumptions about the enabling conditions for effective torture prosecution may require fundamental revision, and that crisis can, under specific circumstances, catalyse institutional improvements that prove impossible during peacetime stability.

Domestic Violence

In recent years, *domestic violence* has become an object of special attention by the Parliament, the Government and the society in general. Therefore, domestic violence could be an attractive object for a criminological research in the context of the impact of the War on the society.

In 2017, the Criminal Code was supplemented by Article 126-1 according to the Law № 2227-VIII of 06.12.2017 and amended by the Law № 3342-IX of 23.08.2023, where the domestic violence was defined as a crime.

According to the Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code, domestic violence is defined as intentional systematic commission of physical, psychological or economic violence against a spouse or former spouse or another person with whom the perpetrator is (was) in a family or close relationship, which results in physical or psychological suffering, health disorders, disability, emotional dependence or deterioration of the quality of life of the victim.

As the police statistics show, 4800 crimes resulting from domestic violence were registered in Ukraine in 2021. The next year, after the full-scaled War started, 3360 crimes resulting from domestic violence were registered. Such a reduction could be explained by different factors like the mass migration of *potential* victims to other European countries and the participation of many *potential* perpetrators in military actions. In any case, the *traditional social basis* for domestic violence was minimised largely with the War (*Figure 10*).

However, in 2023, 6805 crimes resulting from domestic violence were registered in Ukraine. Moreover, in 2024, 8900 crimes resulting from domestic violence were registered in Ukraine.

Two interesting facts are drawn from the analysis of official police statistics: 1) an *average* number of crimes resulting from domestic violence in 2022 decreased 1,42 times as compared with 2021; 2) an *average* number of crimes resulting from domestic violence in 2022-2024 is 2,9 times higher as compared with an *average* number of the same crimes in the period of 2012 – 2021 (2189 and 6355 correspondingly) (*Figure 10*).

It should be noted that police statistics distinguishes two indicators: 1) crimes *resulting* from domestic violence; 2) domestic violence as a *separate crime*.

Here, we can see the statistical data for both indicators:

- 2019: 2554 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 1068 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code);

- 2020: 3972 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 2213 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1

of the Criminal Code);

- 2021: 4800 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 2432 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code);

- 2022: 3360 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 1498 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code);

- 2023: 6805 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 1824 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code);

- 2024: 8900 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 2810 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code);

- 2025: 8121 crimes resulting from domestic violence (total), 2030 crimes of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code);

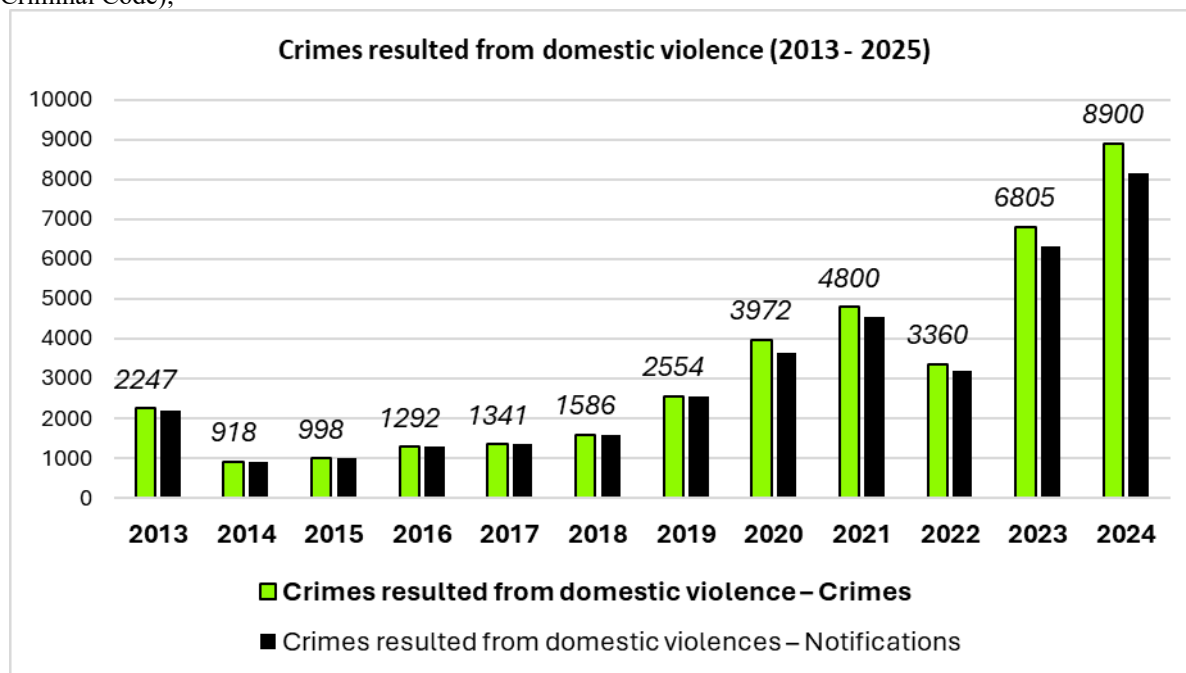


Figure 10. Crimes resulting from domestic violence (2013 – 2025)

Several conclusions could be drawn from police statistics.

Before the War started, there was a permanent trend that crimes of domestic violence constituted a half of all crimes resulting from domestic violence (42% in 2019, 55% in 2020, 51% in 2021). However, after the War started, the percentage of crime of domestic violence (Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code) reduced to the level of 35% (45% in 2022, 27% in 2023, 32% in 2024) in favour of *other crimes* resulting from domestic violence. We can presume that *other crimes* resulting from domestic violence could hide different forms of ill-treatment by private individuals, which is not reflected in the official statistics. At the same time, it is obviously problematic to separate domestic violence from other crimes resulting from domestic violence.

Crimes against Will, Honour and Dignity of a Person

At the same time, the numbers of *crimes against will, honour and dignity of a person* have increased significantly – from 782 crimes in 2021 to 1535 crimes in 2022.

At the same time, the number of criminal proceedings where offenders were informed on suspicion dropped significantly – from 412 criminal proceedings (2021) to 207 criminal proceedings (2022) (Figure 12).

The highest indicator of crimes against will, honour and dignity of a person was registered in 2014 which could be explained with the political and social consequences of the 2014 Revolution of Dignity when people were regularly arbitrary deprived of their freedom (Figure 13).

What is more important is the fact that after the 2022 Russian invasion, the average level of such crimes has doubled as compared with any year for the period of 2016-2021 (1535 crimes in 2022, 782 crimes in 2021, 712 crimes in 2020, 981 crimes in 2019, 939 crimes in 2018, 918 crimes in 2017, 734 crimes in 2016) (Figure 13).

Drug-Related Crimes

The situation with *drug-related crimes* partly refutes the thesis that the War 'cut' all indicators of the police statistics. The number of many crimes stated in numerous Chapters of the Criminal Code, which was registered in March 2022, decreased sharply for completely understandable reasons. Many types of crimes that *might have been* expected to increase after the start of the 2022 Russian invasion saw a sharp drop.

Nevertheless, it appeared that drugs, drug offenders (especially petty offenders) and drug-related crimes (especially minor crimes) were *absolutely another matter*.

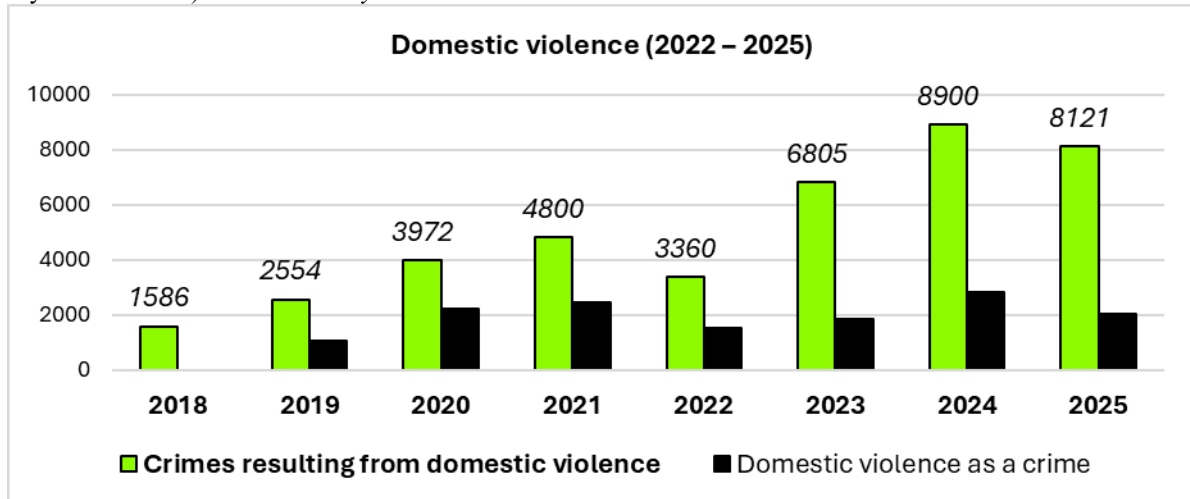


Figure 11. Domestic violence (2022 – 2025)

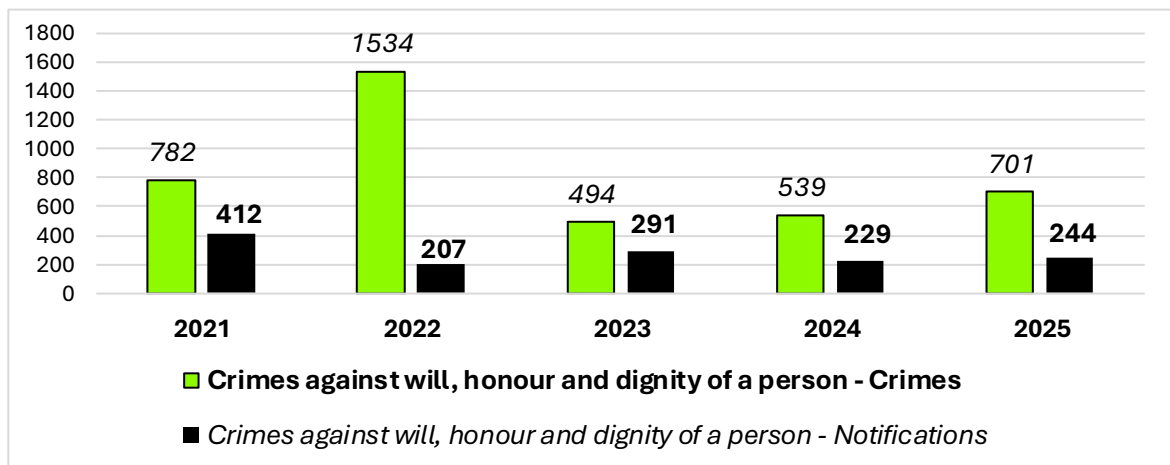


Figure 12. Crimes against will, honour and dignity of a person (2021 – 2025)

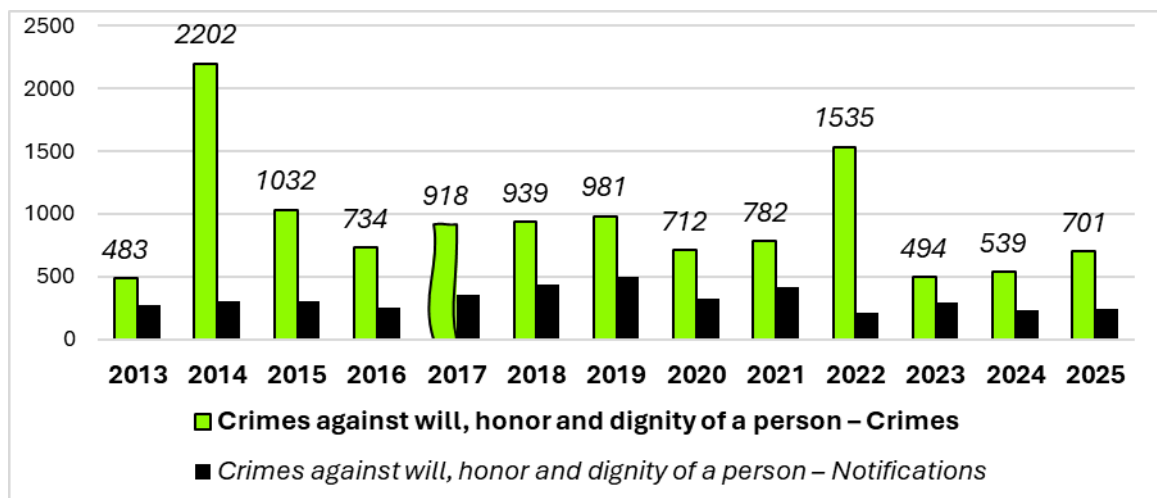


Figure 13. Crimes against will, honour and dignity of a person (2013 – 2025)

In 2022, more than 34 thousand drug-related crimes were registered in wartime Ukraine (34398 criminal proceedings, with 22678 criminal proceedings suspects) (Figure 14).

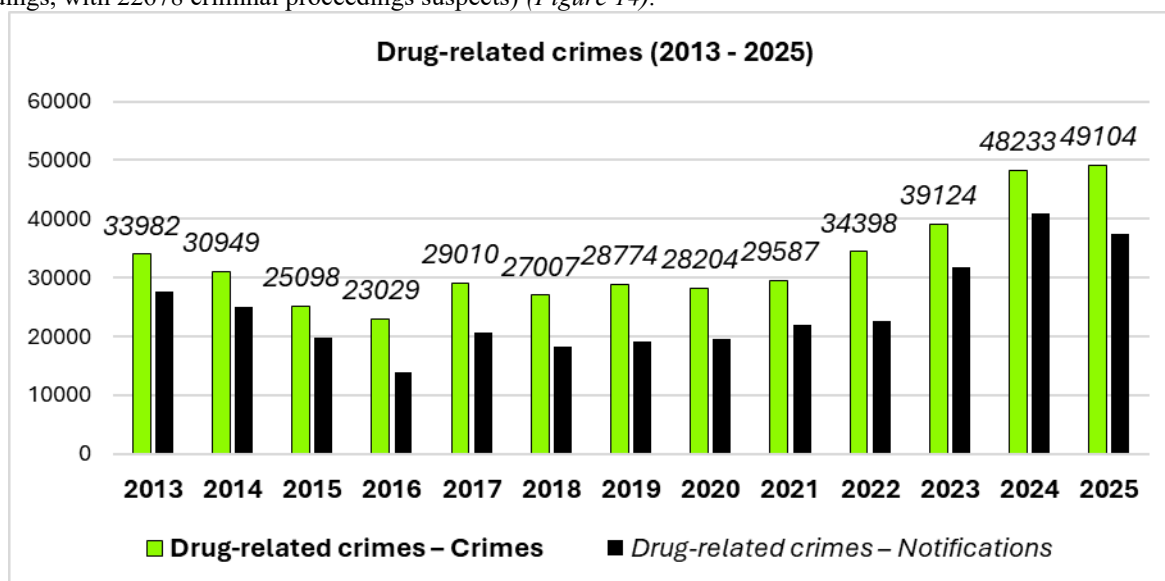


Figure 14. Drug-related crimes

No less interesting is the fact that the ratio between the general number of registered criminal proceedings and criminal proceedings with given notifications of suspicion in 2022 appeared one of the highest for the last ten years (the exclusion is 2016 with ratio 1,66) (Figure 15).

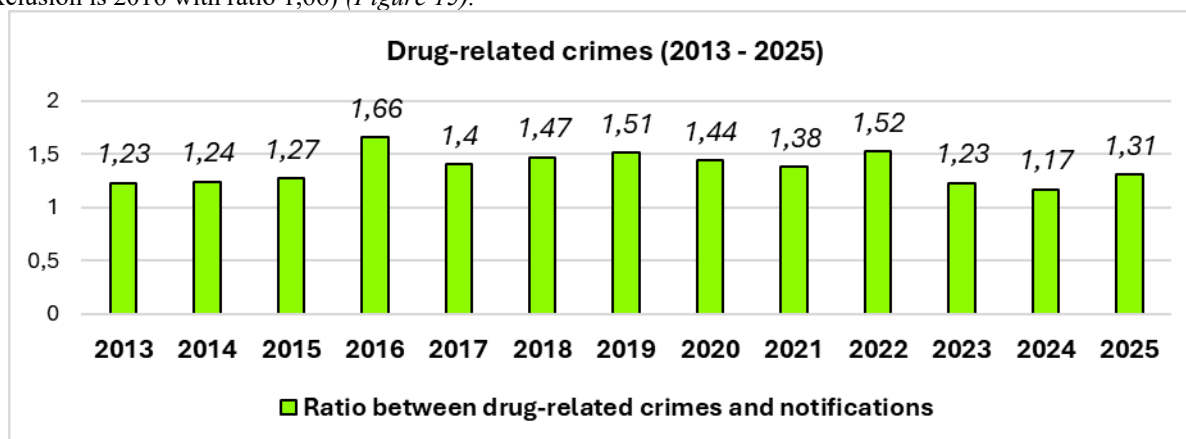


Figure 15. Ratio between drug-related crimes and notifications

Here, we would like to draw some conclusions.

The 2022 police statistics demonstrate that 34398 drug-related crimes have already been committed in 2022. In 2023, the police registered 39124 drug-related crimes. In 2024, the police registered 48233 drug-related crimes.

The importance of the fight against drug crime *cannot* be underestimated. However, the main question here is: *does the National Police of Ukraine effectively manage its personnel's potential under wartime conditions?*

The question is on the surface: drug-related crimes are mostly the crimes of *peacetime*. Considering closed borders, border checks, curfews and roadblocks, the number of *registered* drug-related crimes should theoretically have decreased, not the other way around.

It seems that the mechanism of an artificial '*market*' for drug-related crimes, where criminals are very often victims at the same time, and where police officers know *who*, *where* and *under what conditions* will commit the next 'crime', '*should not stand idle*' even during the War.

Property Crimes

While considering *property crimes* in wartime Ukraine, the first hypothesis is that the absence of well and properly organised policing *would* lead to a serious increase of the numbers of property crimes.

Nevertheless, the number of recorded property crimes has in fact significantly *decreased* (Figure 16, Figure 17). The impact of the War on property crimes is more than obvious: 158729 property crimes in 2021, 113137

property crimes in 2022, 178902 property crimes in 2023, 132910 property crimes in 2024, and 89150 property crimes in 2025.

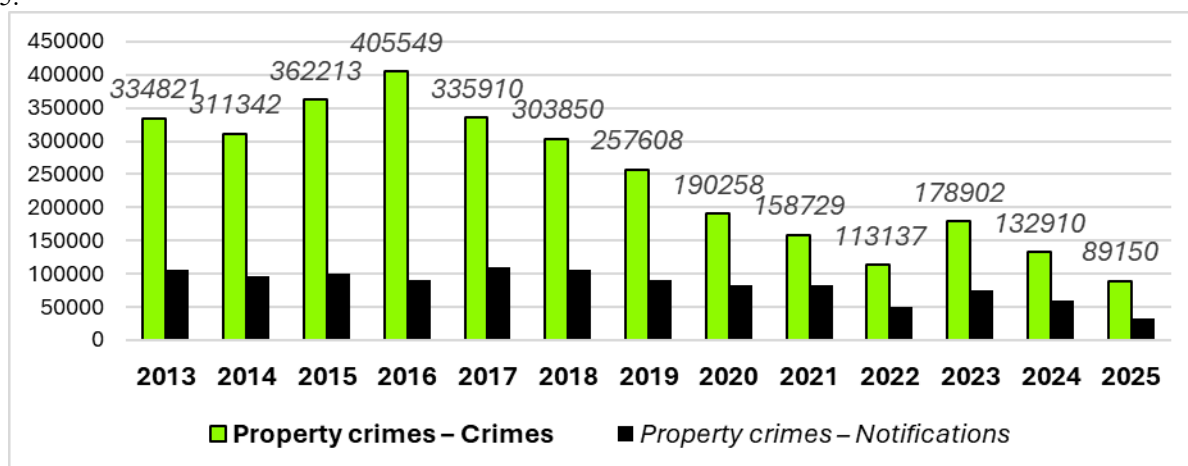


Figure 16. Property crimes

The same way the War impacted the practices of crimes of *theft*: 113517 thefts in 2021, 69496 thefts in 2022, 82123 thefts in 2023, 55576 thefts in 2024, and 28416 thefts in 2025 (Figure 17).

The full-scale war dramatically reduced theft crimes in Ukraine, with cases declining from 113517 in 2021 to just 28416 in 2025 – a 75% decrease. This sharp drop reflects multiple wartime factors: mass displacement and emigration reduced both potential offenders and victims, law enforcement resources shifted toward war-related crimes and public order maintenance, and criminal justice capacity became overwhelmed with more serious offenses including collaboration and treason cases. The sustained decline across each war year suggests structural changes in criminal patterns rather than temporary disruption, as traditional property crime becomes less prevalent amid wartime economic disruption and population displacement.

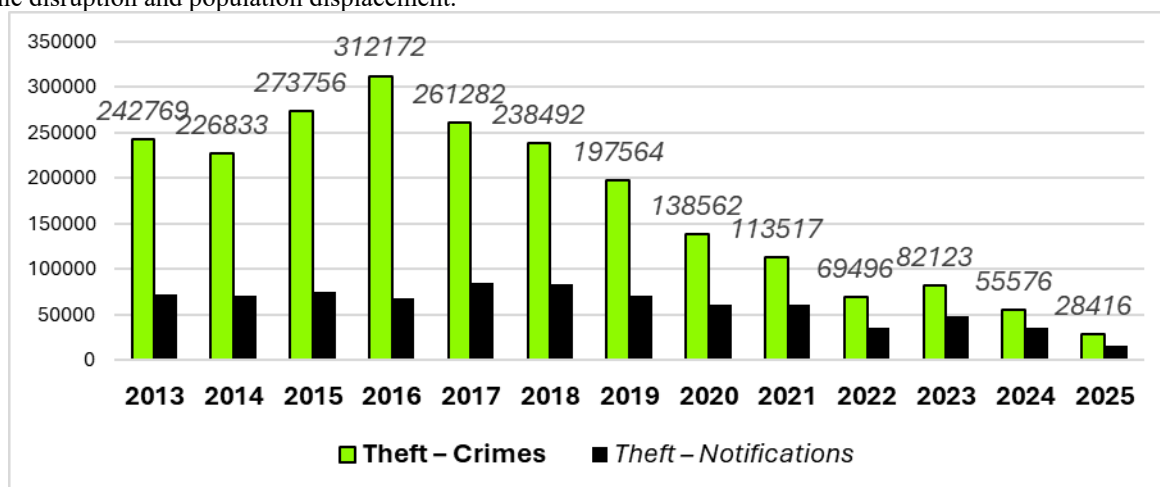


Figure 17. Theft

The same way the War impacted the practices of *car thefts*: 5571 car thefts in 2021, 2001 car thefts in 2022, 2266 car thefts in 2023, 1138 car thefts in 2024, and 633 car thefts in 2025.

The same way the War impacted the practices of *robberies*: 4846 robberies in 2021, 2205 robberies in 2022, 1732 robberies in 2023, 1453 robberies in 2024, and 1322 robberies in 2025 (Figure 18).

The same way the War impacted the practices of *aggravated robberies*: 952 aggravated robberies in 2021, 492 aggravated robberies in 2022, 386 aggravated robberies in 2023, 313 aggravated robberies in 2024, and 310 aggravated robberies in 2025 (Figure 19).

The same way the War impacted the criminal practices of *racketeering*: 606 crimes of racketeering in 2021, 366 crimes of racketeering in 2022, 499 crimes of racketeering in 2023, 279 crimes of racketeering in 2024, and 336 crimes of racketeering in 2025 (Figure 20).

Surprisingly, crimes of *fraud* in 2022 demonstrated a completely different trend: the number of crimes of fraud in 2022 (32086) was much bigger than in 2021 (23847). The police registered 82609 crimes of fraud in 2023, 64978

crimes of fraud in 2024, and 48871 crimes of fraud in 2025 (Figure 21).

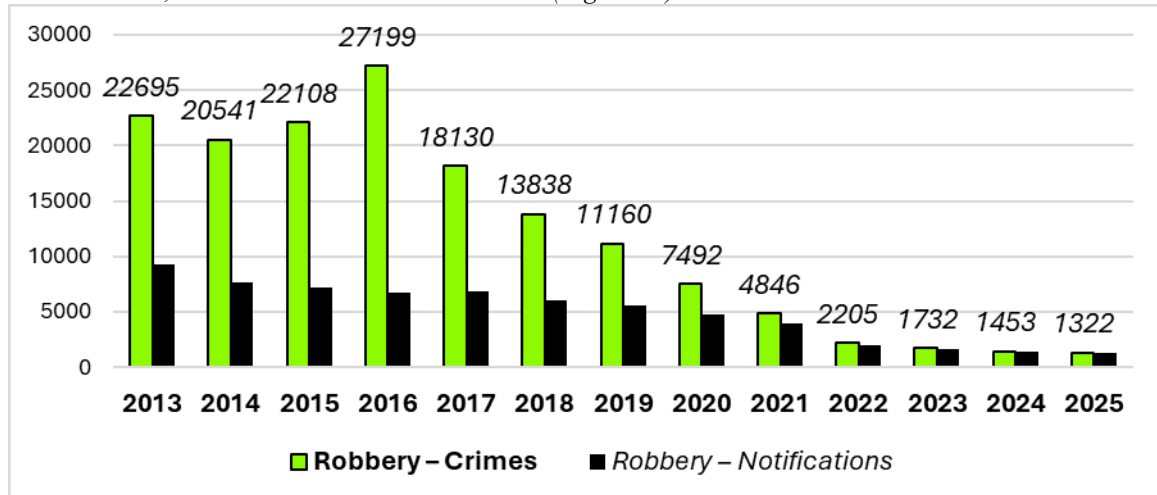


Figure 18. Robbery

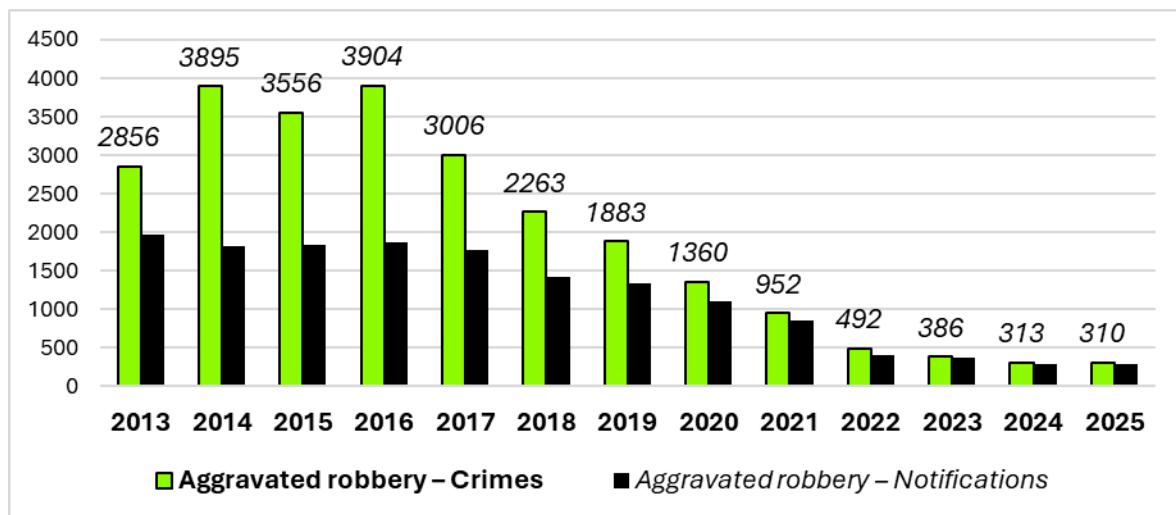


Figure 19. Aggravated robbery

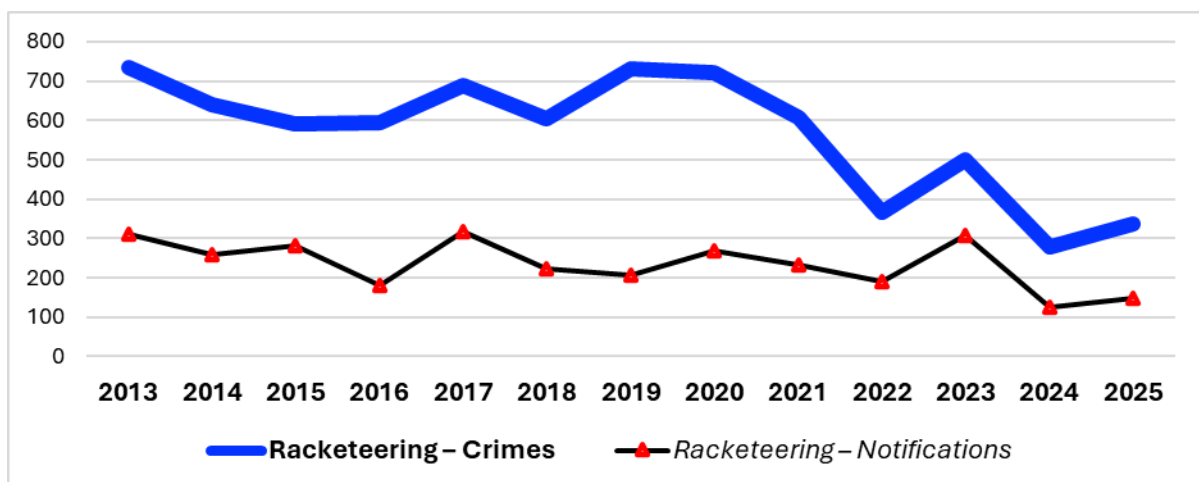


Figure 20. Racketeering

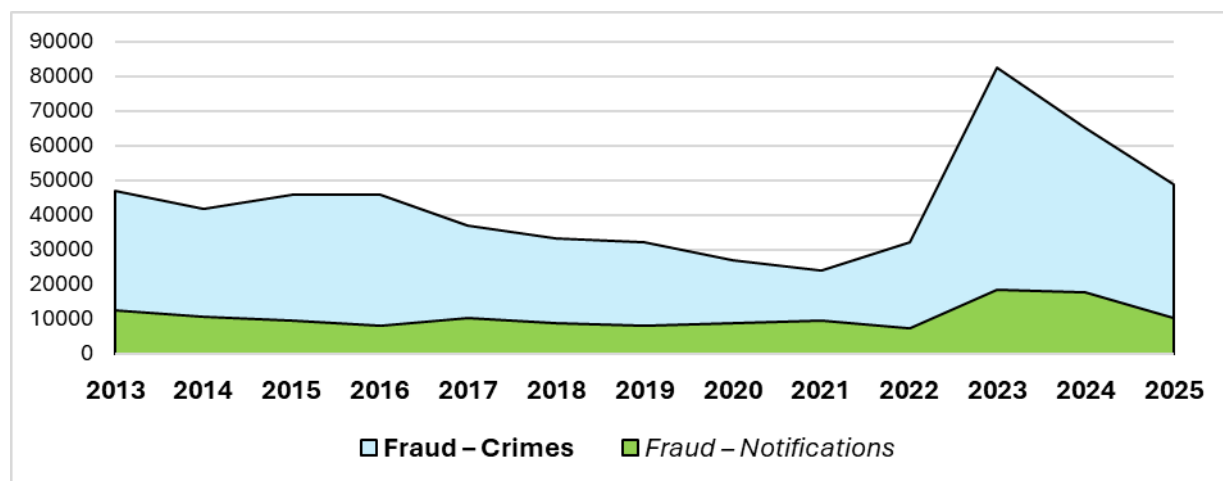


Figure 21. Fraud

Here we can mention that in February 2022, many Ukrainians tried to restore order by themselves in conditions of the War chaos through demonstrative corporal punishment of marauders. Namely, *'there is a War here, and they are making money here'*. Many Ukrainians supported such inhumane methods, and what is important, among these *'many'* there were lawyers.

Almost one year has passed, and the police statistics have proven that, it turns out, the problem of Ukrainian society during the War was completely *different*, and official statistics convincingly proved the existence of the problem of *moral and ethical foundations of Ukrainian society* during the War: 1) during the 2022 War, criminal behaviour was considered as *less permissible* by individuals who belonged to the *'criminally addicted'* strata of the society; 2) criminal behaviour was considered as *more permissible* by individuals who were considered less inclined to commit crimes due to the presence of higher education, higher *'social status'* and greater social adaptability.

Since the real estate market during the War stopped in fact, it is not surprising that the number of crimes of *real estate fraud* decreased rapidly (1312 crimes in 2020, 1356 crimes in 2021, 798 crimes in 2022, 1176 crimes in 2023, 1091 crimes in 2024, and 1047 crimes in 2025) (Figure 22).

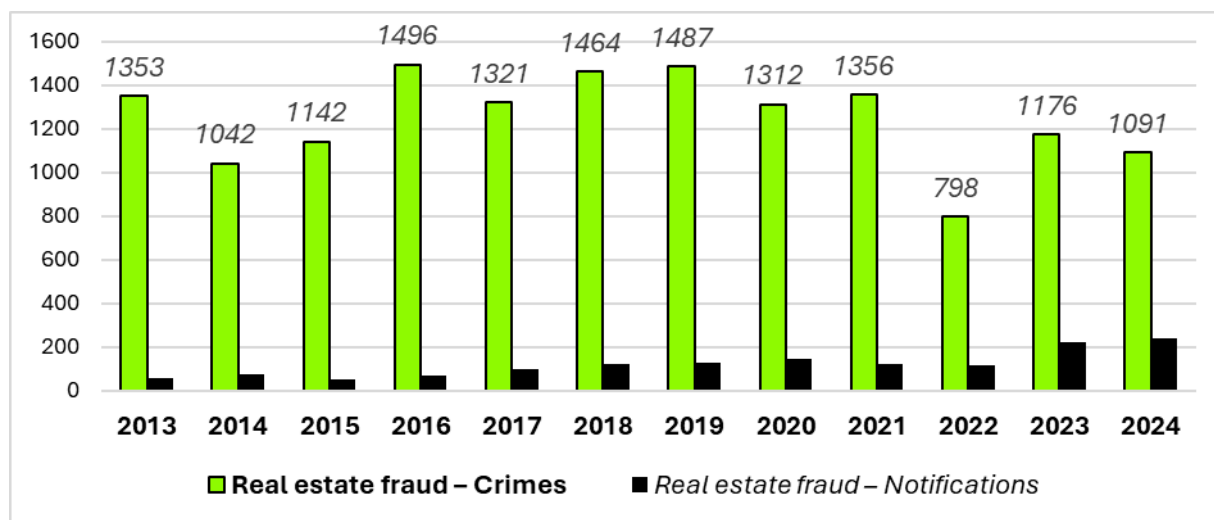


Figure 22. Real estate fraud

Economic Criminal Offences

It was predictable that the number of economic criminal offences would be also decreased: 5469 crimes in 2021, 3414 crimes in 2022, 4840 crimes in 2023, 5139 crimes in 2024, and 5180 crimes in 2025 (Figure 23).

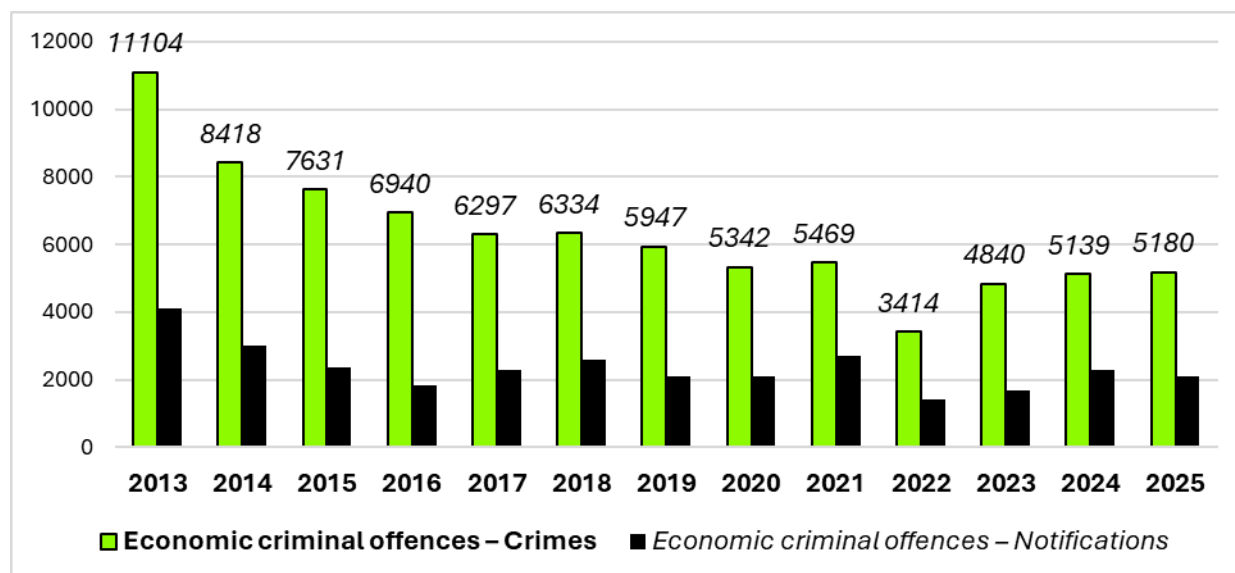


Figure 23. Economic criminal offences

A much more interesting conclusion concerning economic criminal offences is that the ratio between the general number of criminal proceedings in economic crimes and criminal proceedings in economic crimes with notifications of suspicion remained mostly the same as in previous years. In 2022, this ratio increased insignificantly to the point of 2,4 from the level of 2 in 2021 (the same ratio of 2,4 can be found in 2018) (Figure 24).

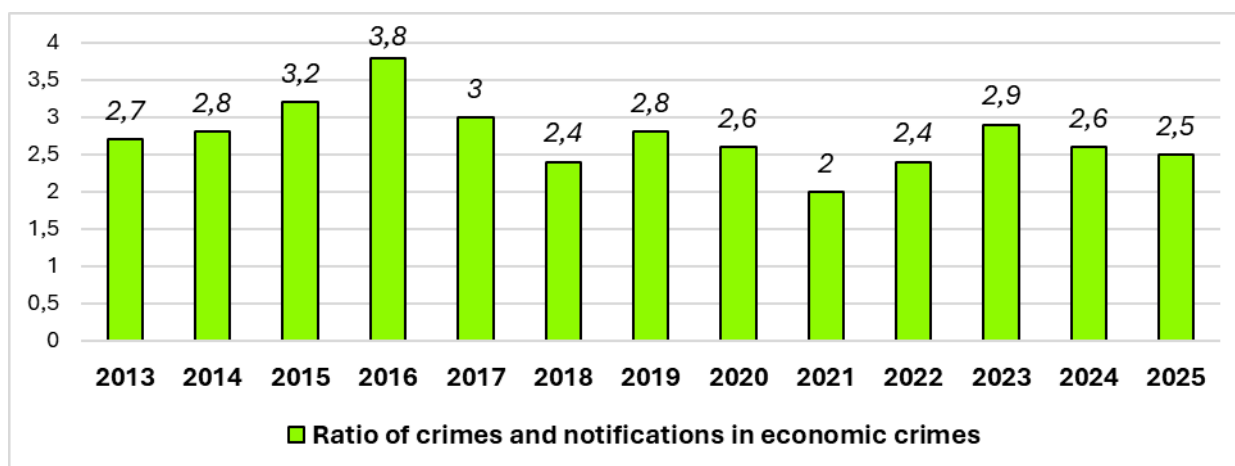


Figure 24. Economic criminal offences: ratio between crimes and notifications

Criminal activities concerning with the use of counterfeit money, government securities, state lottery tickets, excise tax stamps or holographic security features (Article 199 of the Criminal Code) were also impacted by the War and reduced (859 crimes in 2019, 686 crimes in 2020, 494 crimes in 2021, 215 crimes in 2022, 328 crimes in 2023, 288 crimes in 2024, and 285 crimes in 2025) (Figure 25).

The same could be said about illegal actions in respect of remittance documents, payment cards and other means providing access to bank accounts, electronic money and equipment for their production (Article 200 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine): 1577 crimes in 2021, 933 crimes in 2022, 468 crimes in 2023, 745 crimes in 2024, and 745 crimes in 2025.

On the other hand, it is surprising that the number of registered crimes of such a category did not decrease more, as could be expected.

There were 724 crimes in 2022, 711 crimes in 2019, and 609 crimes in 2018.

If we exclude the 2021 indicator, the number of crimes committed in 2022 was the biggest one for the period of 2013-2024 (Figure 26).

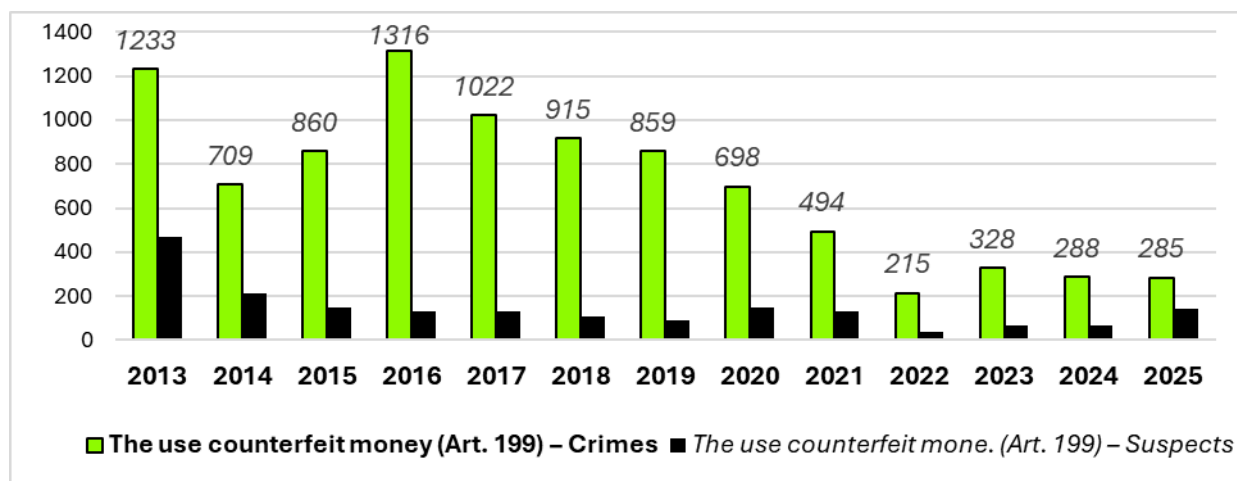


Figure 25. Use of counterfeit money, government securities, state lottery tickets, excise tax stamps or holographic security features

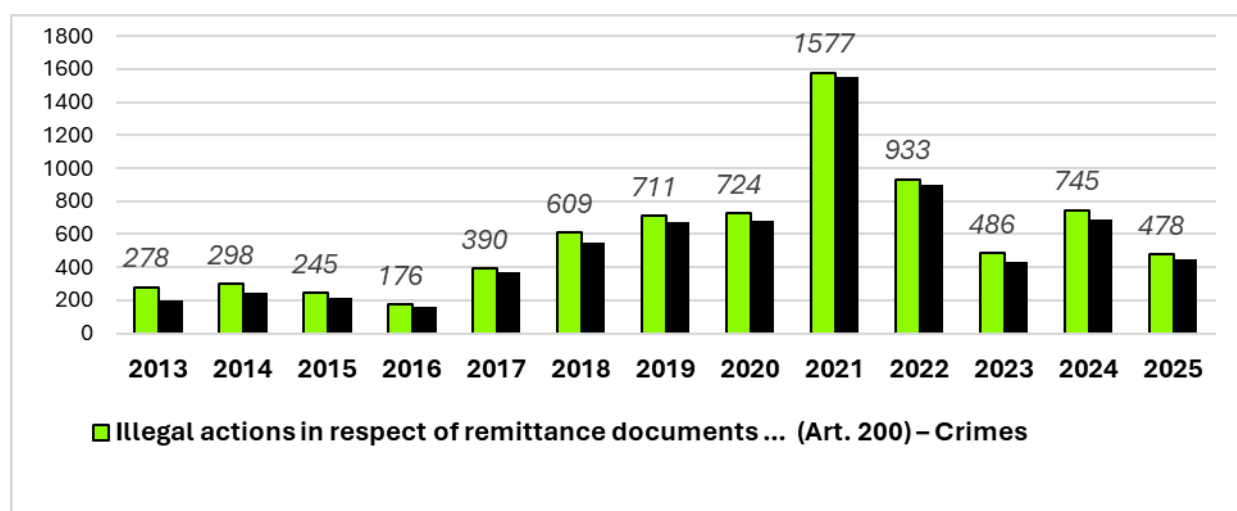


Figure 26. Illegal actions in respect of remittance documents, payment cards and other means providing access to bank accounts, electronic money and equipment for their production

In 2022, in contrast, the number of crimes of *legalisation (laundering) of property proceeding from crime* (Article 209 of the Criminal Code) increased: 348 crimes in 2020, 395 crimes in 2021, 437 crimes in 2022, 969 crimes in 2023, 1132 crimes in 2024, and 1344 crimes in 2025 (Figure 27).

It could also be said that the number of these crimes has been stable in its increase since 2018. The 2022 Russian military invasion, as it could be found, did not impact such a trend (Figure 27).

In 2022, crime of *financial fraud* (Article 222 of the Criminal Code) demonstrated a rapid reduction. In fact, the War led to zero indicators of such crimes in Ukraine. However, in 2023-2024, the police registered 107 such crimes (Figure 28).

Crimes Committed with Firearms

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created conditions that might reasonably be expected to produce a dramatic surge in *firearm-related crime*. The massive influx of weapons, breakdown of administrative controls in certain territories, displacement of millions of civilians, and general wartime disruption would logically correlate with increased illegal firearms usage. However, Ukrainian police statistics present a more nuanced picture that warrants careful scholarly examination and challenges simplistic assumptions about the relationship between the war and firearms-related criminality.

The data reveal several significant patterns across the 2013-2025 period. While crimes committed with firearms indeed increased substantially in 2022, reaching 1929 incidents – a more than six-fold increase from the 2021 figure of 300 cases – this surge must be contextualised within Ukraine's broader contemporary history. Most notably, the 2014 figure of 2523 firearm-related crimes remains the highest recorded level in the dataset, exceeding the 2022 figure by

approximately 31%. This 2014 peak coincided with the Maidan Revolution, the illegal annexation of Crimea, and the initial phase of Russian military aggression in Eastern Ukraine, suggesting that periods of intense political upheaval and initial conflict onset may generate more pronounced spikes in firearm criminality than subsequent phases of sustained warfare (*Figure 29*).

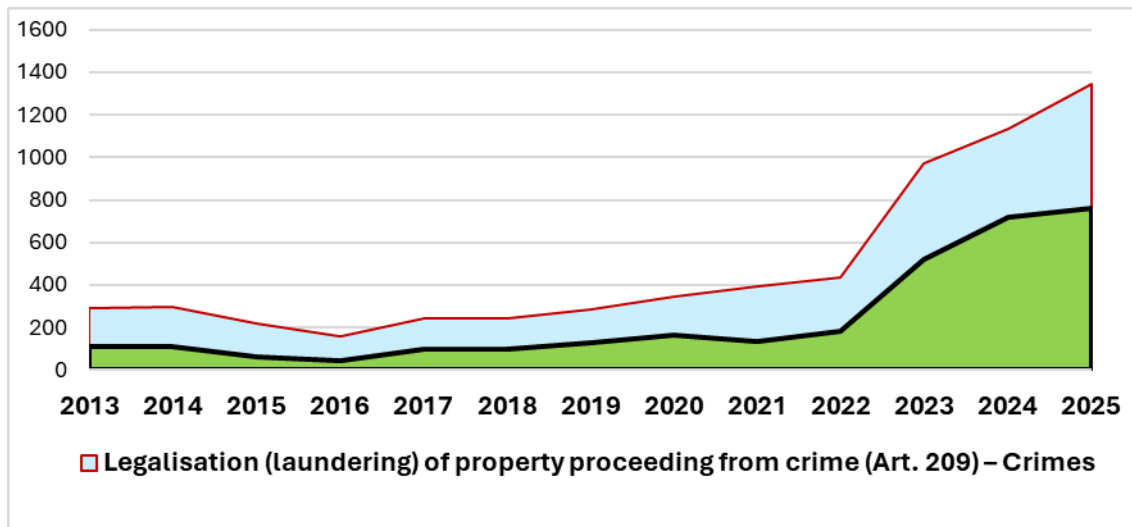


Figure 27. Legalisation of property proceeding from crime

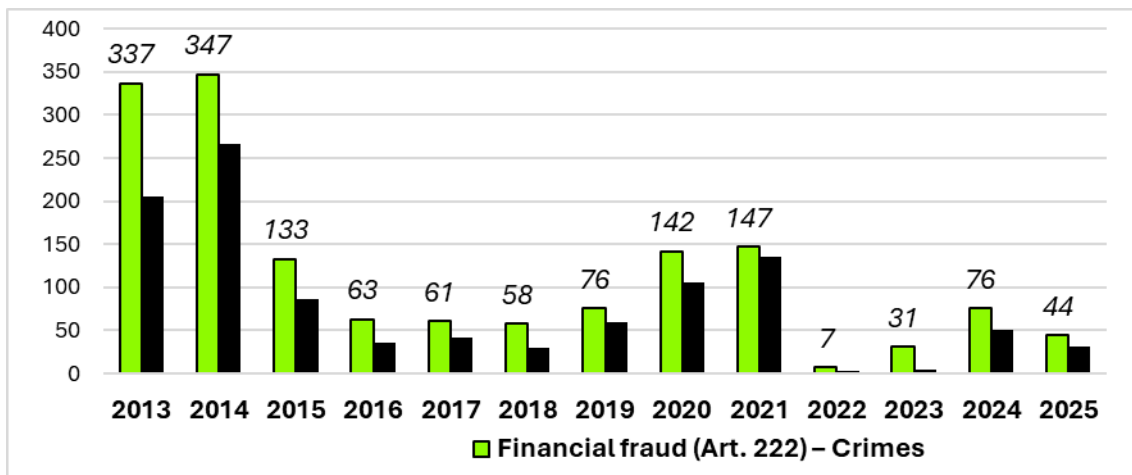


Figure 28. Financial fraud (Art. 222)

The period from 2015 to 2021 demonstrates a consistent *downward trajectory*, with firearm-related crimes declining from 1526 in 2015 to the aforementioned historical minimum of 300 in 2021. This trend persisted despite the ongoing armed conflict in Donbas throughout this period, indicating that sustained conflict itself does not necessarily correlate with elevated firearm crime rates in government-controlled territories. The 2015 figure of 1526 crimes is particularly noteworthy as it occurred during active hostilities yet remained substantially lower than both the 2014 peak and the 2022-2023 figures, suggesting that the initial shock of conflict disruption may be more criminogenic than its continuation (*Figure 29*).

The 2022-2023 period shows elevated but plateauing figures (1929 and 1867 respectively), followed by a sharp decline in 2024 (832) and relative stabilisation in 2025 (821) (*Figure 29*).

A particularly troubling dimension concerns the relationship between criminal proceedings (total numbers) and criminal proceedings with suspects. Throughout the entire period, notifications consistently lag behind reported crimes, but this gap becomes especially pronounced during peak crime years. In 2014, while 2523 crimes were recorded, only 833 notifications were filed – a clearance rate of approximately 33%. Similarly, in 2022, the 1929 reported crimes resulted in only 517 notifications, yielding an even lower rate of roughly 27%.

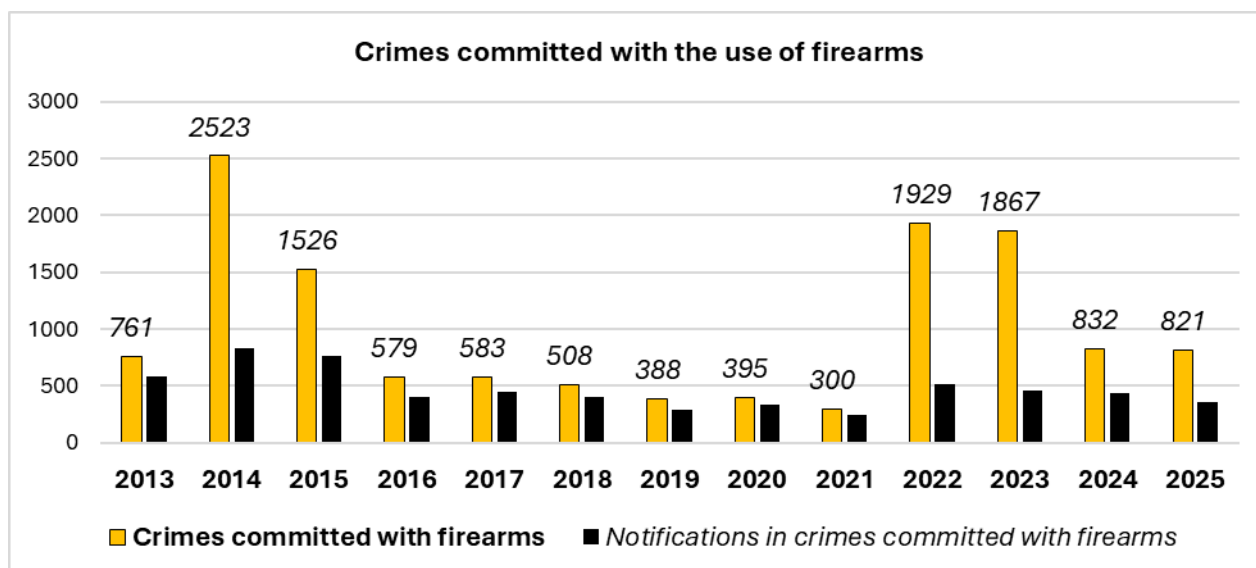


Figure 29. Crimes committed with the use of firearms

This declining ratio between crimes and suspects raises serious questions about law enforcement agency (LEA) effectiveness during periods of crisis. Several hypotheses merit consideration: First, the wartime redeployment of police resources to military and security functions may diminish investigative capacity for ordinary criminal matters. Second, territorial displacement and population movement may complicate witness cooperation and evidence collection. Third, the saturation of the criminal justice system with conflict-related cases may create processing bottlenecks. Fourth, and most concerning from a rule-of-law perspective, the data may reflect decreased accountability during periods when institutional controls are weakened.

The 2021 data present an interesting counterpoint: 300 crimes with 251 notifications represents an 84% notification rate – the highest in the dataset. This suggests that in stable conditions with lower caseloads, Ukrainian law enforcement demonstrates significantly greater effectiveness in investigating firearm-related crimes. The dramatic erosion of this capacity in 2022–2023, when it was arguably most needed, represents a critical challenge for maintaining the rule of law during armed conflict.

The escalation of *firearm-related intentional homicides* in the context of armed conflict presents a stark illustration of how warfare fundamentally disrupts criminal justice systems and public safety. Police statistics reveal a dramatic transformation in the incidence of intentional homicides committed with firearms, particularly during periods of military confrontation. After reaching a historic low of 36 registered criminal proceedings in 2021, the number surged to 247 cases in 2022, coinciding with the onset of full-scale hostilities. This seven-fold increase marked only the beginning of a more severe crisis, as 2023 witnessed an unprecedented spike to 909 registered proceedings – representing a twenty-five-fold increase compared to the pre-war baseline and the highest level recorded throughout the entire observation period (Figure 30).

The 2023 peak demands particular scholarly attention, as it exceeds even the initial shock of 2014, when 320 cases were registered following the outbreak of armed conflict in eastern regions. While the 2014 spike reflected localised warfare's immediate impact on violent crime patterns, the 2023 figures suggest a more comprehensive destabilisation of social order and law enforcement capacity across broader territories. The subsequent decline to 295 proceedings in 2024 and 187 in 2025, while substantial, nevertheless maintains firearm homicide rates at levels five times higher than the 2021 baseline, indicating that wartime conditions have fundamentally restructured the criminal violence landscape rather than producing merely temporary disturbances (Figure 30).

Equally significant is the widening gap between registered criminal proceedings and criminal proceedings with suspects. In 2023, only 173 of the 909 proceedings resulted in suspect identification – a clearance rate of merely 19%, compared to 94% in 2021. This deterioration in investigative effectiveness reflects the profound challenges confronting law enforcement agencies operating under wartime conditions, including resource diversion to military objectives, territorial displacement of both victims and perpetrators, destruction of forensic infrastructure, and the general chaos that impedes witness cooperation and evidence collection. The persistence of low clearance rates in subsequent years (52% in 2024 and 64% in 2025) suggests that investigative capacity remains compromised even as overall crime numbers decline, raising concerns about long-term impunity for violent offenses and the erosion of rule of law foundations.

The dynamics of *intentional grievous bodily harm committed with firearms* reveal two distinct peaks over the observed period. While the 2022 surge (18 criminal proceedings, all with suspects) can be directly attributed to the

full-scale Russian invasion, the 2014 spike presents a more complex pattern. Despite the absence of full-scale aggression, that year recorded 25 registered crimes – the highest figure in the entire dataset – though notifications remained relatively low at 8. This discrepancy between 2014's elevated crime registration and lower notification rates, compared to 2022's parity between both indicators, suggests fundamentally different underlying dynamics. The 2014 spike likely reflects the initial phase of the war in Donbas and the annexation of Crimea, while the 2018-2021 period shows sustained low levels (1-5 cases annually). The post-2022 stabilisation at 14-16 cases indicates a new baseline shaped by ongoing military conflict, with notification rates now closely tracking registered crimes – a pattern absent in the 2014 crisis (*Figure 31*).

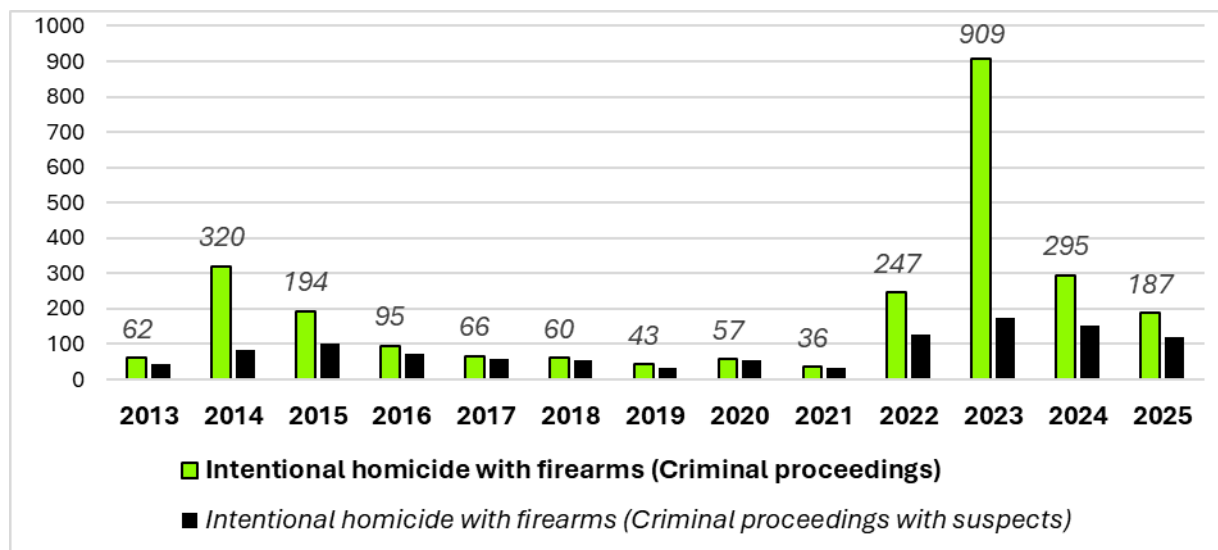


Figure 30. Intentional homicide with the use of firearms

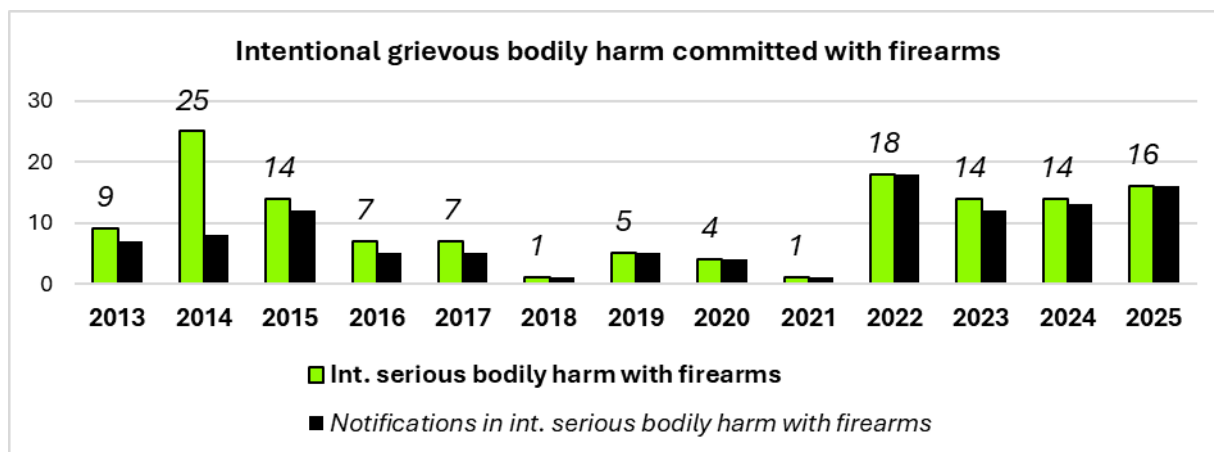


Figure 31. Intentional grievous bodily harm committed with the use of firearms

Figure 32 demonstrates the number of aggravated robberies committed with the use of firearms and the number of suspects in corresponding criminal proceedings from 2013 to 2025.

On the one hand, we can observe a significant increase in aggravated robberies committed with firearms compared to 2021, when the indicator reached its lowest point at 17 registered cases. On the other hand, police statistics for 2013-2017 demonstrate substantially higher numbers of aggravated robberies – even when Ukrainian society was not as deeply saturated with firearms as in 2022 (*Figure 32*).

The 2014 peak of 411 cases coincides with the outbreak of military actions in Eastern Ukraine and the initial destabilisation of state institutions following the Maidan Revolution. The subsequent decline through 2021 suggests gradual improvement in both law enforcement capacity and social order despite ongoing hostilities in Donbas. Paradoxically, the full-scale invasion in February 2022, which dramatically increased firearm availability through military mobilisation and territorial defence forces, did not produce a return to pre-2018 crime levels. The relatively

modest increase to 32 cases in 2022, followed by further decline to 11 cases in 2024, contradicts expectations that widespread weapon proliferation would necessarily correlate with violent property crime (*Figure 32*).

This inverse relationship between firearm saturation and armed aggravated robbery rates warrants further investigation into whether wartime social cohesion, enhanced informal social control mechanisms, or changes in criminal opportunity structures may be mediating factors in crime suppression during the full-scale invasion period.

Figure 33 presents data on crimes committed with explosives and notifications in corresponding criminal proceedings from 2013 to 2025. The data reveal two concerning trends. First, after a decline from 2014 (112 crimes) to 2021 (20 crimes), explosive-related crimes have increased substantially: 63 in 2023, 86 in 2024, and 98 in 2025. Second, despite this rising crime rate, the proportion of cases with suspects has decreased dramatically. While notifications roughly corresponded to crime numbers in earlier years (e.g., 55 of 65 in 2013), recent years show a widening gap: only 14 notifications for 63 crimes in 2023, 18 for 86 in 2024, and 32 for 98 in 2025. This divergence suggests significant challenges in investigative capacity, indicating that the clearance rate for explosive-related crimes has fallen to approximately one-third of cases, raising serious concerns about law enforcement effectiveness in addressing this category of criminal activity (*Figure 33*).

The statistical trajectory of firearms-related crime in Ukraine between 2013 and 2025 reveals a pattern fundamentally shaped by two periods of acute conflict: the initial phase following the Maidan Revolution and Russian annexation of Crimea (2014-2015), and the full-scale invasion beginning in 2022. However, the official figures – showing 2523 registered firearms crimes in 2014, declining to 300 by 2021, then resurging to 1929 in 2022 and 1867 in 2023 – represent only the visible surface of a far more complex and troubling reality.

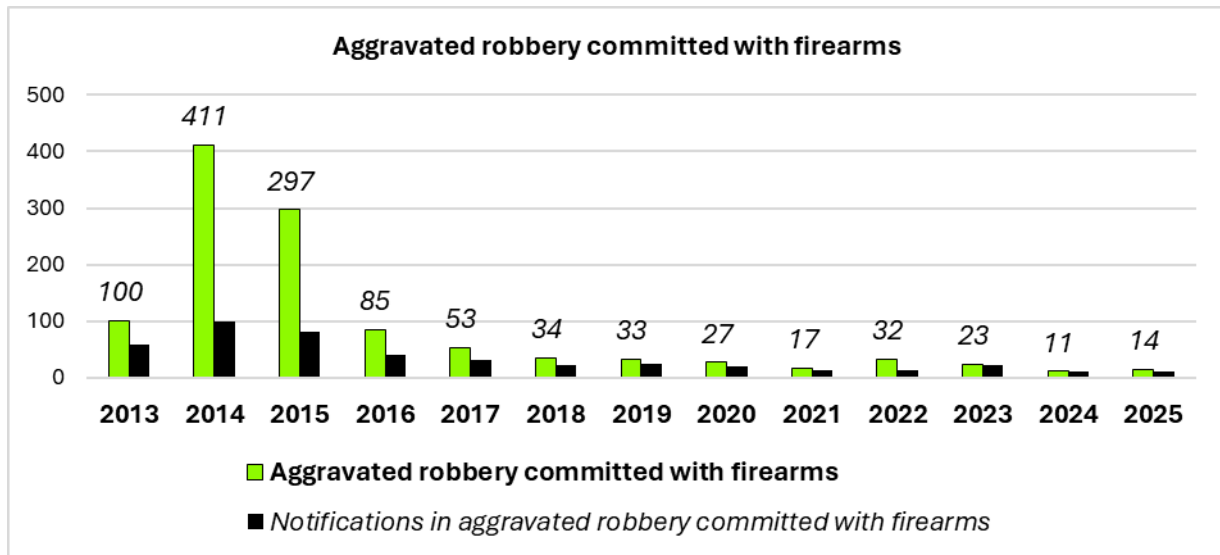


Figure 32. Aggravated robbery with the use of firearms

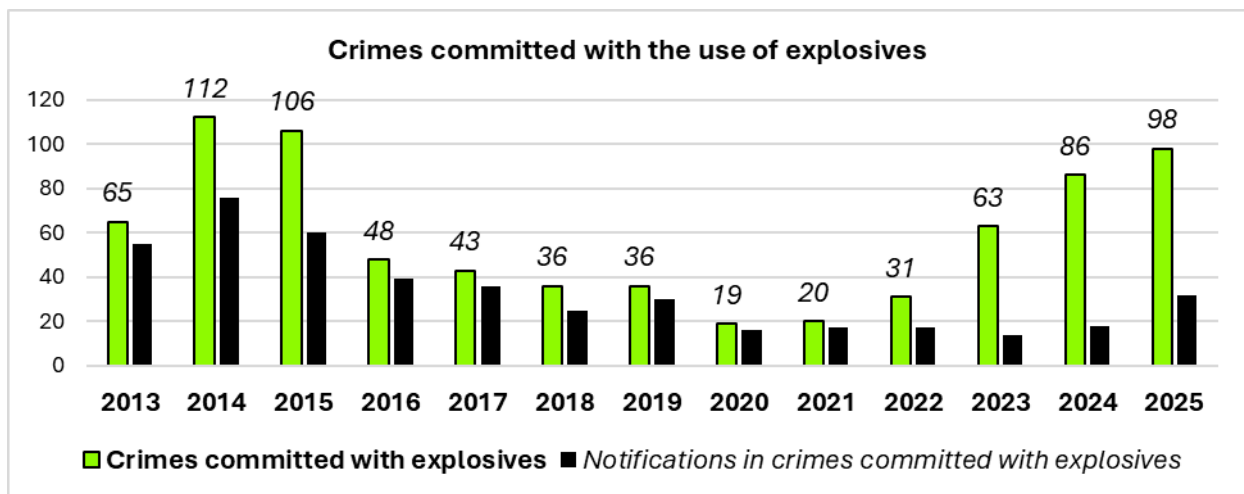


Figure 33. Crimes with the use of explosives

The inherent limitations of police statistics during wartime and post-conflict periods cannot be overstated. When state institutions are under existential threat, when territories remain contested or temporarily occupied, and when law enforcement resources are redirected toward immediate survival imperatives, criminal registration systems inevitably suffer degradation. The stark spike in intentional homicides with firearms in 2023 (909 cases – the highest figure in the entire observation period) suggests that even as overall firearms crime statistics began to stabilise, the lethality and severity of incidents continued to escalate. Yet these recorded cases likely represent merely a fraction of actual incidents, particularly in conflict zones where bodies may remain unrecovered, crimes unreported, and perpetrators unidentified.

The proliferation of military-grade weaponry throughout Ukrainian society constitutes an unprecedented security challenge. Unlike the civilian firearms that characterised crime patterns in peacetime, contemporary Ukrainian society is saturated with automatic weapons, explosives, and military equipment distributed to territorial defence units, police, and irregular formations. The tragic incident in Cherkasy region on January 27, 2026, where a murder suspect killed four police officers and wounded another during an arrest attempt, exemplifies the lethal potential of this arsenal when weaponry remains in circulation after demobilisation or falls into criminal hands. This case also demonstrates how former or active combatants, when pursued by law enforcement, may employ military tactics and superior firepower against police forces trained primarily for civilian policing rather than armed confrontation with military-trained adversaries.

Organised crime groups have proven remarkably adaptive in exploiting the chaos of wartime conditions. The availability of military and police uniforms, combined with genuine uncertainty about the legitimacy of various armed formations operating in Ukraine's complex security landscape, creates opportunities for criminal enterprises to commit offenses under the guise of state authority. The blurring of lines between legitimate security actors and criminals wearing appropriated insignia represents a fundamental challenge to the monopoly on legitimate violence that defines functional statehood. When criminals can plausibly impersonate soldiers or police officers, public trust in security institutions erodes, victimisation becomes more difficult to report, and the psychological distance between military service and organised crime narrows dangerously.

Yet perhaps the most concerning dimension of Ukraine's firearms saturation extends beyond immediate criminal justice challenges into the realm of long-term social pathology. The reintegration of hundreds of thousands of demobilised combatants – many bearing psychological trauma, habituated to violence, and possessing both weapons training and often access to weaponry itself – represents a generational challenge. As an example, the mentioned above murder of four police officers was committed by an ex-military man. Post-traumatic stress disorder, moral injury, and the difficulty of transitioning from the intense purpose and camaraderie of combat to the often-hollow meaningfulness of post-war civilian existence create fertile conditions for violence, substance abuse, domestic abuse, and suicide. While the majority of veterans will successfully reintegrate, research from comparable conflicts suggests that a significant minority will engage in criminal activity, domestic violence, or self-destructive behaviour.

The convergence of these factors – statistical underreporting masking true crime levels, widespread availability of military weaponry, organised crime exploitation of institutional weakness, and a large population of potentially vulnerable veterans – suggests that Ukraine faces not merely a temporary spike in firearms violence but a structural transformation in its security environment. The 2024-2025 figures, showing some decline from 2023 peaks, may reflect either genuine improvement or simply reduced state capacity to document crimes during intensified conflict.

Crimes against Peace, Security of Mankind and International Legal order (War Crimes)

According to official data of the Office of General Prosecutor, as of 7 August 2022, the Ukrainian authorities were investigating almost 26 thousand criminal cases of suspected war crimes committed after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

In 2023, the number of war crimes increased 246 times as compared to 2021 (62128 crimes). In 2023, the number of crimes was mostly the same (62667 crimes).

However, in 2024, the number of war crimes decreased two times as compared to the previous year (*Figure 34*).

Sex Crimes

As far as *sex crimes* are concerned, the number of mentioned crimes decreased significantly, as could be expected from a wartime society. At the same time, we have the lowest level of sex crimes in the ten-year history of crime prevention in Ukraine (*Figure 35*).

Moreover, in December 2022, there were only 2 sex crimes registered in Ukraine: 621 sex crimes for the period of eleven months of 2022, and 623 sex crimes for the period of twelve months of 2022.

It is obvious that 2021 brought many restrictions concerned with the COVID pandemics which led to the closing of all nightclubs, discos and restaurants where sex offences were often committed. Nevertheless, the number of sex crimes registered in 2021 was one of the highest in the previous ten years of crime prevention. However, the number of sex crimes increased to 947 in 2023 with further decrease in 2024 (872 crimes) and in 2025 (1067 crimes).

At the same time, restrictions imposed due to the wartime period led to a rapid decrease in the crimes of rape in Ukrainian society. The beginning of the War led to a rapid decrease in rapes (406 rapes in 2021, 250 rapes in 2022). However, 450 rapes were registered in 2023, 410 rapes were registered in 2024, and 457 rapes were registered in 2025 (*Figure 36*).

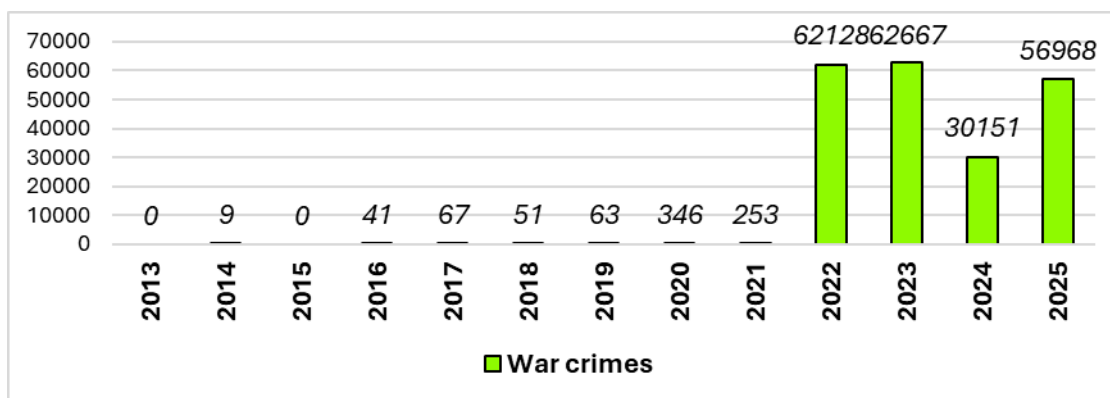


Figure 34. War crimes

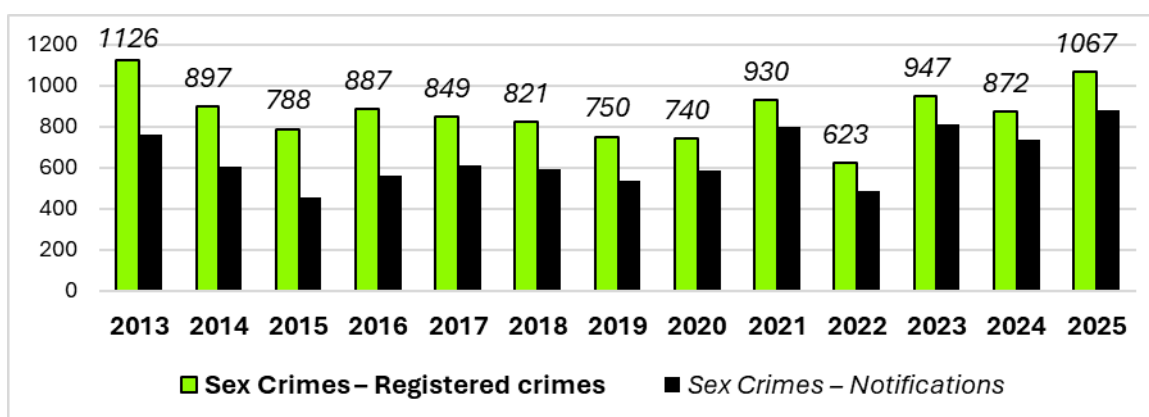


Figure 35. Sex crimes

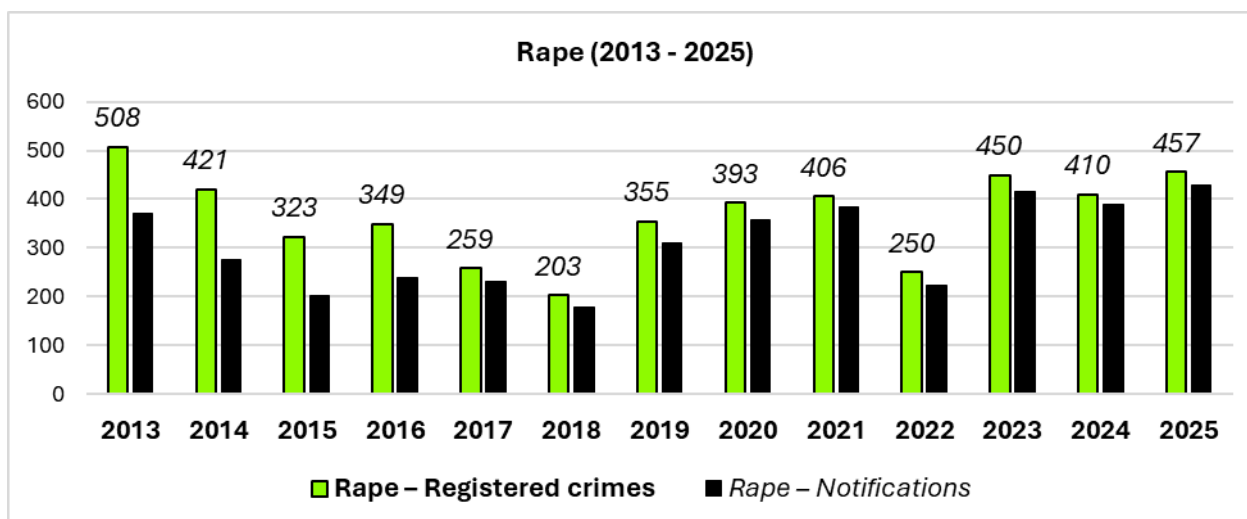


Figure 36. Rape

Crimes against National Security

No less interesting is official statistics of *crimes against national security* for 2013-2024

In 2013, as many as 8 crimes against national security were registered, in which only *one* criminal proceeding had a *concrete suspect*. The rest were so-called “*factual*” criminal proceedings. That is, the ratio between all cases and cases with concrete suspects was 8.

Here, we have visual additional evidence of the *anti-state orientation* of the political regime in Ukraine that was overthrown in 2014. A big country in the centre of Europe with great potential, having a dangerous neighbour to

the East, could not have such performance indicators of the Security Service of Ukraine and other LEA.

Immediately after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, the annexation of Crimea, the occupation of Eastern Ukraine by Russia and before the start of a full-scale military invasion of Russia in 2022 – and regardless of which President was in power – both the number of registered crimes and the number of criminal proceedings with suspicion had the same ratio (*Figure 37*).

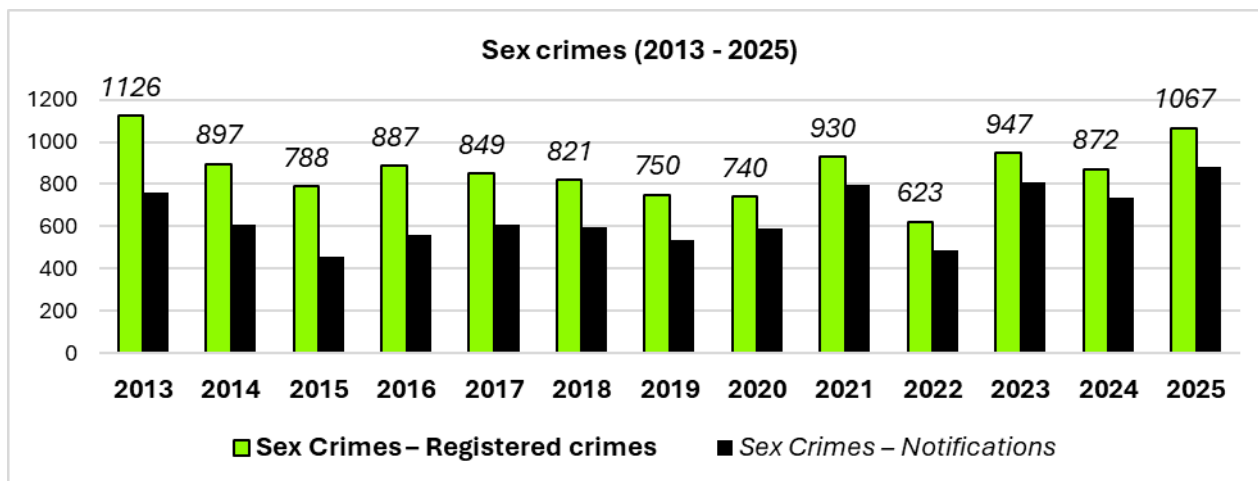


Figure 37. Crimes against national security

Crimes Within the Sphere of Protection of State Secrets, Inviolability of State Borders, Provision of Conscription and Mobilisation

It was clearly expected that the 2022 Russian military invasion would bring a serious increase in the numbers of military forces of Ukraine and transportation of military units within Ukrainian territory. Consequently, it was clearly expected that the 2022 Russian military invasion would bring an increase in the numbers of *crimes in the sphere of protection of state secrets, inviolability of state borders, provision of conscription and mobilisation*.

As a result, as we can observe, the number of the above crimes in 2022 is 2,6 times bigger as compared with 2021. However, the number of the above crimes in 2023 is 2,3 times bigger as compared with 2022 (1000, 2624 and 6279 crimes correspondingly) (*Figure 38*).

A special look should be paid to the crime of *illegal trafficking of persons across the state border of Ukraine* (Article 332 of the Criminal Code) (*Figure 39*). The police registered only 327 of such crimes in 2021. However, the War stimulated a rapid increase in such crimes when 1225 crimes were registered in 2022. Moreover, 2301 crimes were registered in 2023, 3106 crimes were registered in 2024, and 2750 crimes were registered in 2025.

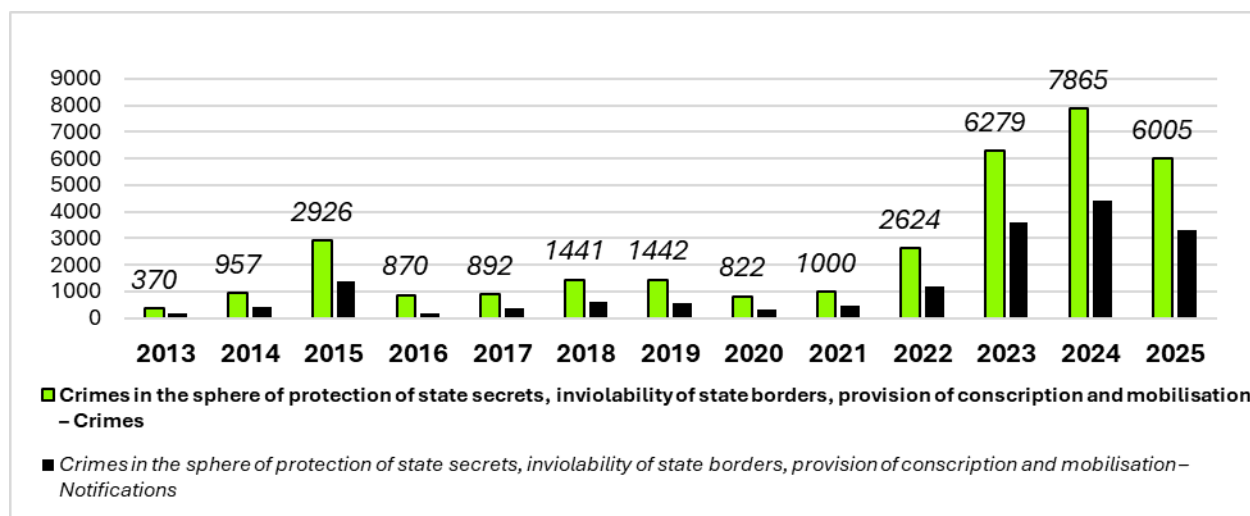


Figure 38. Crimes in the sphere of protection of state secrets, inviolability of state borders, provision of conscription and mobilisation

Undermining Justice Under Fire: Crimes against Justice in War-Time Ukraine

During the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, crimes against justice have predominantly receded into the shadows, presenting a paradoxical statistical landscape that masks a deeper crisis in institutional accountability. Police statistics demonstrate a dramatic volatility in registered crimes against justice, with initial precipitous declines followed by recent surges that suggest systemic dysfunction rather than genuine fluctuations in criminal behaviour. The trajectory reveals a troubling pattern: 7198 crimes in 2021, a dramatic reduction to 3636 crimes in 2022 (a decrease of more than 50%), partial recovery to 5308 crimes in 2023, further increase to 7369 crimes in 2024, and a sharp escalation to 11000 crimes in 2025 (*Figure 40*).

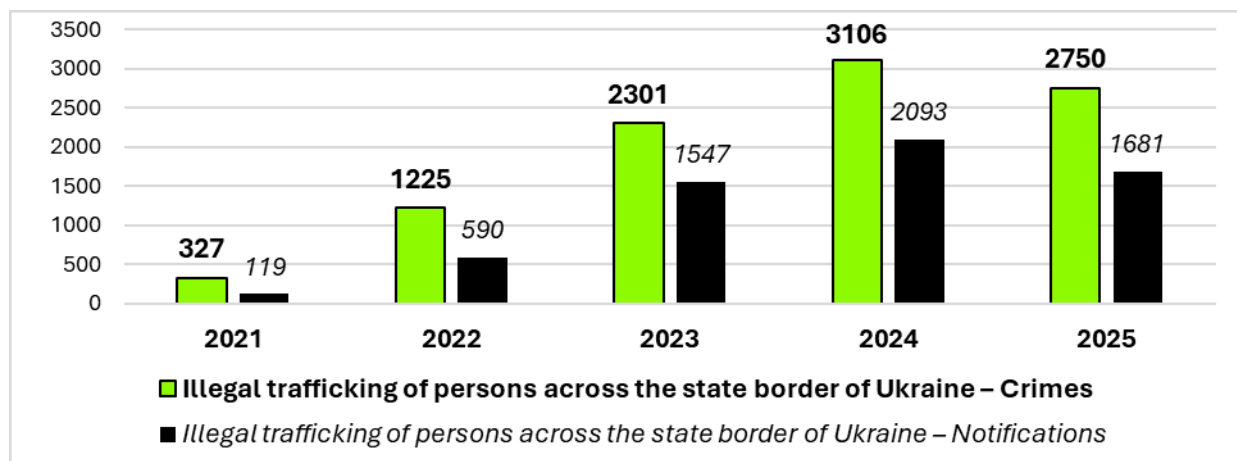


Figure 39. Illegal trafficking of persons across the state border

This statistical volatility cannot be interpreted merely as variations in criminal activity. Rather, the evidence suggests factual sabotage by law enforcement agencies in registering such crimes, particularly during the initial phase of the full-scale invasion in 2022 when institutional capacity was severely compromised and priorities shifted dramatically toward war-related offenses. The subsequent increases in 2024 and 2025, reaching and exceeding pre-war levels, indicate either a genuine surge in crimes against justice or a belated return to more comprehensive registration practices – or potentially both phenomena operating simultaneously.

Perhaps the most alarming trend revealed by the statistical data is the deteriorating ratio between registered crimes against justice (total numbers) and the number of criminal proceedings with suspects. This metric serves as a critical indicator of investigative effectiveness and prosecutorial follow-through. When crimes are registered but suspects are not identified, investigated, or prosecuted, it suggests systemic failures in accountability mechanisms and potentially indicates institutional tolerance for such offences (*Figure 41*).

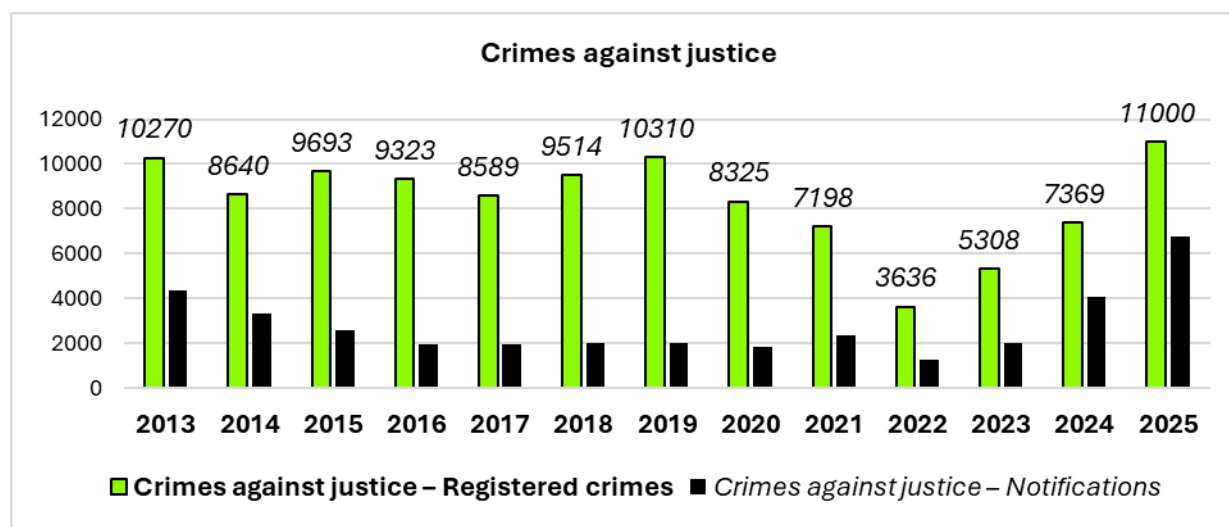


Figure 40. Crimes against justice

The data reveal a troubling pattern: the ratio between registered crimes against justice and notifications of suspicion escalated from 2,34 in 2013 to a peak of 5,61 in 2019, indicating that at the height of dysfunction, nearly six crimes were registered for every suspect identified. This dramatic deterioration suggests a systemic collapse in investigative capacity and prosecutorial will during this period, effectively creating an environment of impunity for crimes against justice (*Figure 41*).

The subsequent decline to 1,62 in 2025, while appearing positive, requires careful interpretation – it may reflect genuine improvement in accountability mechanisms but could also indicate reduced crime registration, changes in statistical methodology, or prosecutorial selectivity. The 2019 peak coincided with a critical period in Ukraine's anti-corruption reforms, potentially capturing the tension between increased reporting and insufficient institutional capacity to investigate. The current lower ratios demand verification through qualitative analysis to determine whether they represent authentic progress or merely statistical artifacts masking continued systemic deficiencies (*Figure 41*).

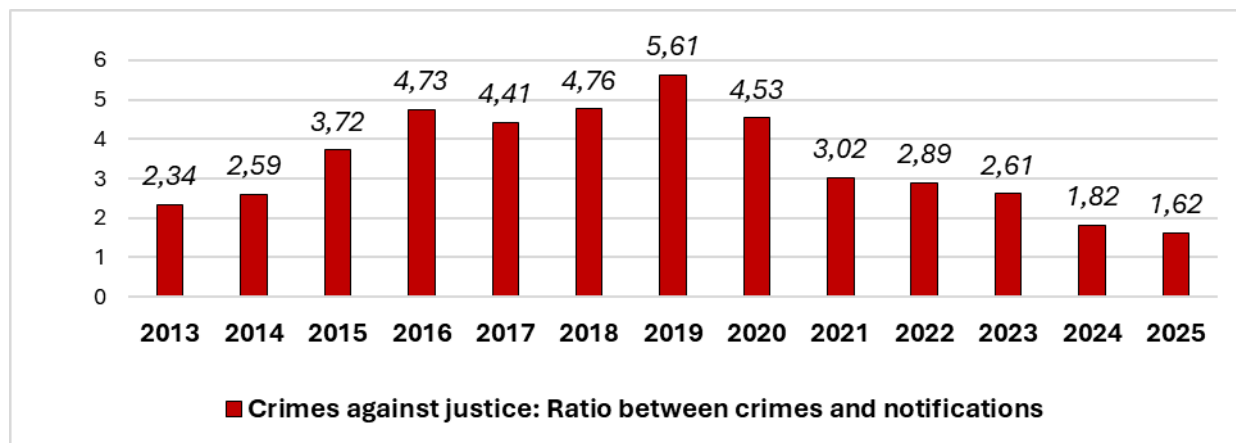


Figure 41. Crimes against justice: ratio between crimes and notifications

Intentional Non-Execution of the Court Decisions

Non-execution of court decisions represents a chronic pathology of the Ukrainian justice system, consistently flagged by the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights as a fundamental breach of the rule of law. The statistical data on criminal proceedings initiated under Article 382 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (intentional non-execution of court decisions) for the period 2013-2025 reveals not merely the persistence of this problem, but its dramatic transformation in the context of Russia's full-scale military aggression against Ukraine.

During the period 2013-2020, the volume of registered crimes under Article 382 demonstrated relative stability, fluctuating within a range of 3200 to 4200 cases annually. The peak occurred in 2019, when law enforcement agencies registered 4212 crimes against justice of this type. This relatively consistent pattern suggested an equilibrium state where the problem existed at endemic levels but remained within certain predictable parameters. Following 2019, a gradual decline commenced: 3448 crimes in 2020, followed by 2668 in 2021 – a reduction that might superficially suggest systemic improvement but more likely reflected evolving enforcement priorities and resource constraints (*Figure 42*).

The year 2022 marked a critical inflection point. The number of registered crimes plummeted to a historic minimum of 1191 – less than one-third of the 2019 level and merely 45% of the 2021 figure. Applying the classical criminological principle that crime within certain boundaries constitutes a normal social phenomenon, this dramatic contraction reveals not improvement but rather the catastrophic impact of Russia's February 2022 escalation on Ukraine's justice infrastructure. The precipitous decline demonstrates how profoundly military aggression disrupted judicial and law enforcement systems that had been painstakingly developed through years of coordinated effort by successive Ukrainian presidents, legislators, executive authorities, and both international and domestic experts and civil society organisations.

However, the 2022 nadir must be interpreted through a dualistic analytical framework. On one dimension, the record-low registration of crimes under Article 382 reflects the objective realities and altered priorities of a wartime society, where judicial enforcement mechanisms necessarily yielded to immediate security imperatives. This dramatic reduction signals not an improvement in court decision execution, but rather the effective collapse of accountability mechanisms, as law enforcement resources were diverted to existential threats and territorial defence. The statistics illuminate a justice system operating in crisis mode, where violations that would ordinarily trigger criminal investigation instead occurred in a zone of impunity created by wartime exigencies.

On the second dimension, an examination of the ratio between total numbers of registered criminal proceedings

and criminal proceedings with identified suspects reveals an equally troubling trajectory. From 2017 through 2021, Ukraine demonstrated gradual but consistent progress in converting registered crimes into criminal proceedings with suspects. The ratio improved steadily: from merely 38 criminal proceedings with suspects identified among 3283 criminal proceedings in 2017 (1,2%) to 218 criminal proceedings with suspects among 2668 criminal proceedings in 2021 (8,2%). This positive trend suggested that the criminal justice system was functioning more effectively, with investigations increasingly producing actionable results and reasonable suspicions grounded in evidence.

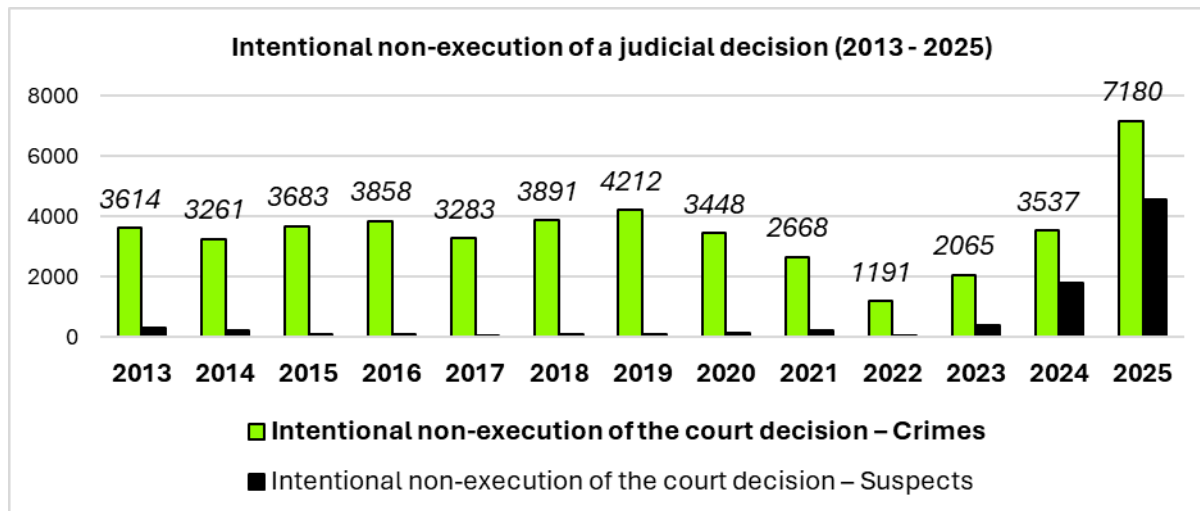


Figure 42. Intentional non-execution of a judicial decision

The 2022 rupture reversed this hard-won progress catastrophically. While only 1191 crimes were registered, a mere 34 suspects were identified (2,9%) that represented significant regression from 2021 levels. More alarmingly, the subsequent period reveals an explosive divergence. In 2023, while crime registration modestly increased to 2065 cases, suspect identification surged to 415 (20,1%). The year 2024 witnessed 3537 registered crimes but an extraordinary 1800 identified suspects (50,9%). Preliminary data for 2025 shows this trend accelerating exponentially: 7180 crimes registered alongside 4576 suspects (63,7%). Judicial independence constitutes a foundational pillar of democratic governance and human rights protection. In recognition of this principle, Article 376 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine criminalises interference in judicial activities, establishing both primary and aggravated forms of liability.

Despite this robust legislative framework and persistent judicial complaints regarding external pressure, prosecutorial outcomes reveal a striking enforcement deficit. Statistical data from 2019-2025 demonstrates a systematic failure to transform registered crimes into concrete criminal proceedings. In 2019, 168 registered crimes yielded zero identified suspects. This pattern persisted through subsequent years: 143 crimes in 2020 (2 suspects), 122 in 2021 (0 suspects), 64 in 2022 (2 suspects), 102 in 2023 (2 suspects), 98 in 2024 (0 suspects), and 108 in 2025 (0 suspects). Cumulatively, 494 registered crimes over five years (2020-2025) resulted in merely four criminal proceedings with identified suspects – an identification rate of 0,8% (Figure 44).

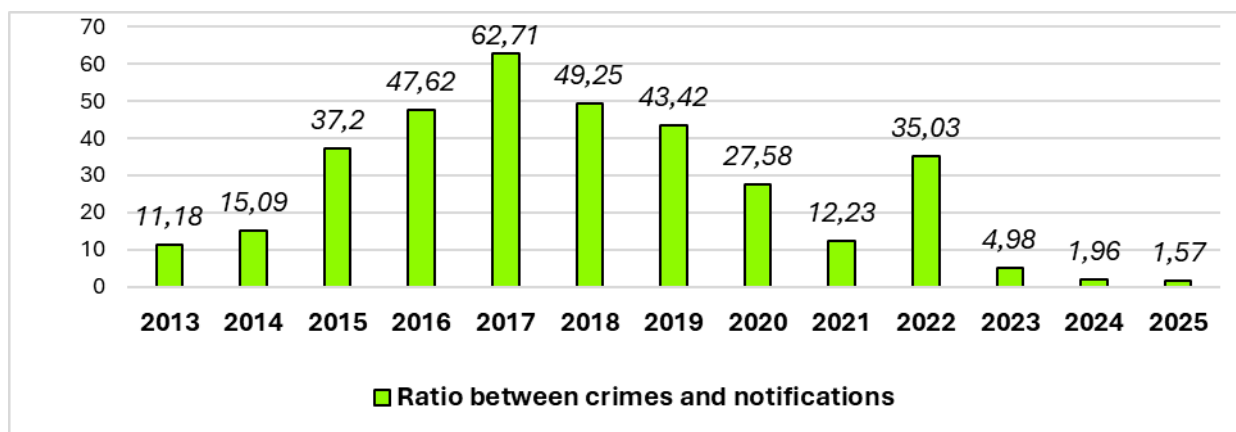


Figure 43. Intentional non-execution of a judicial decision: ratio of crimes and notifications

The current equilibrium – hundreds of registered crimes, virtually no suspects – serves neither judicial independence nor rule of law. It either exposes judges to systematic pressure without remedy or normalises the inappropriate criminalisation of procedural conflicts. Resolution requires empirical investigation into complaint origins, prosecutorial decision-making, and case outcomes, alongside doctrinal clarification of Article 376's proper scope in protecting judicial independence without chilling legitimate advocacy.

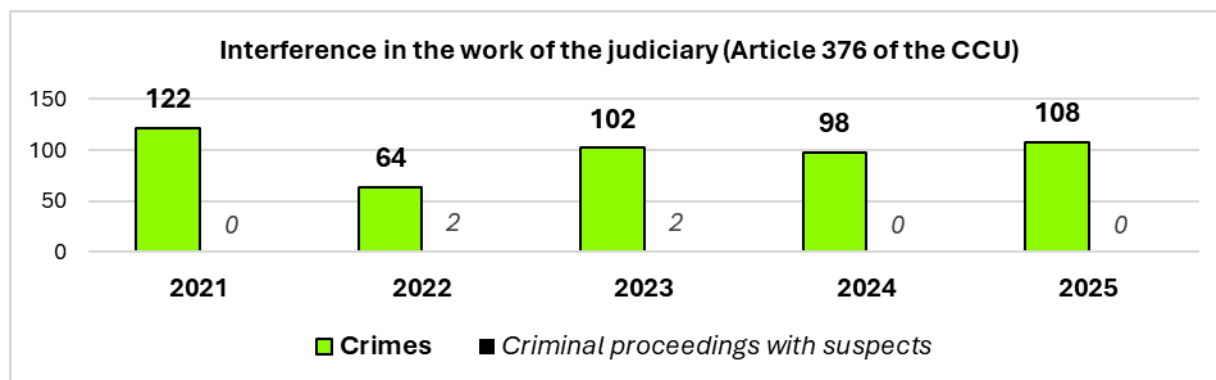


Figure 44. Interference in the work of the judiciary

Interference in the Activities of a Defence Lawyer or Representative

Statistical data pertaining to criminal proceedings initiated under Article 397 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (interference in the activities of a defence lawyer or representative) for the period 2013-2025 reveals a significant pattern of prosecutorial ineffectiveness.

The annual registration of criminal proceedings demonstrates considerable variation: from a low of 28 cases in 2014 to a peak of 165 cases in 2019. Specifically, the data indicates 37 proceedings in 2013, 60 in 2015, 153 in 2018, and 87 in 2024. As of the date of this analysis, 121 proceedings have been registered in 2025. However, the identification of suspects presents a markedly different picture: across this thirteen-year period, suspects were identified in only three cases – one each in 2014, 2018, and 2019. All other years recorded zero suspects despite registered proceedings.

The aggregate figures are particularly instructive: approximately 1200 criminal proceedings were registered across the entire period, yet formal suspects emerged in merely three instances. This yields a suspect identification rate of 0,25% relative to the total number of registered criminal offences targeting legal practitioners.

When these figures are situated within the broader professional context, the magnitude of the issue becomes evident. With approximately 53000 practicing lawyers in Ukraine, and an average annual registration of approximately 100 proceedings under Article 397, the official incidence rate suggests that roughly one in every 530 lawyers (0,19% of the profession) experiences documented interference in their professional activities annually.

This statistical divergence between the volume of registered proceedings and the paucity of identified suspects raises fundamental questions regarding investigative effectiveness and the actual prevalence of interference experienced by defence counsel in Ukraine.

Crimes against Public Services

Here, we provide an analysis of the police statistics related to Section XVII of the Criminal Code (*Criminal offences in the area of official and professional activity related to the provision of public services*), which are following: abuse of authority or office (Article 364), abuse of power by an official of a legal entity of private law, regardless of the organisational and legal form (Article 364-1), excess of authority or official powers by a law enforcement officer (Article 365), abuse of power by persons providing public services (Article 365-2), forgery in office (Article 366), neglect of official duty (Article 367), accepting an offer, promise or receiving an improper advantage by an official (Article 368), (unlawful enrichment (Article 368-2), bribery of an official of a legal entity of private law, regardless of the organisational and legal form (Article 368-3), abuse of influence (Article 369-2), provocation of bribery (Article 370) and others.

A significant decrease in *crimes against public services* points to the fact that most of such crimes have gone into the shadows (Figure 45).

The police statistics are the following:

- 18330 crimes were registered in 2021 (5874 criminal proceedings with suspects);
- 11617 crimes were registered in 2022 (4355 criminal proceedings with suspects);
- 14820 crimes were registered in 2023 (6048 criminal proceedings with suspects);
- 16820 crimes were registered in 2024 (7682 criminal proceedings with suspects);
- 17385 crimes were registered in 2025 (7622 criminal proceedings with suspects).

Crimes against public services are very latent ones by nature but the 2022 Russian military invasion made them *less* latent, which is surprising (Figure 45).

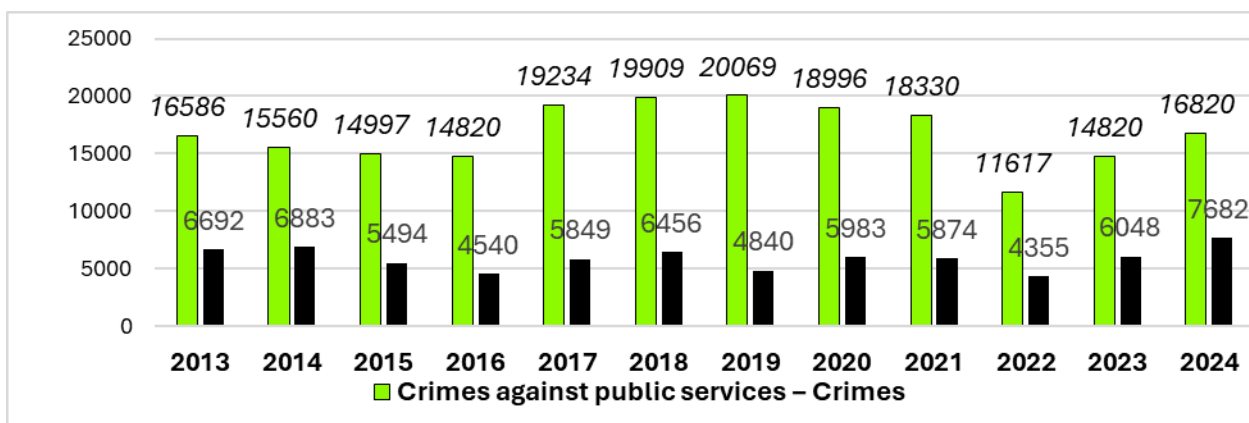


Figure 45. Crimes against public services

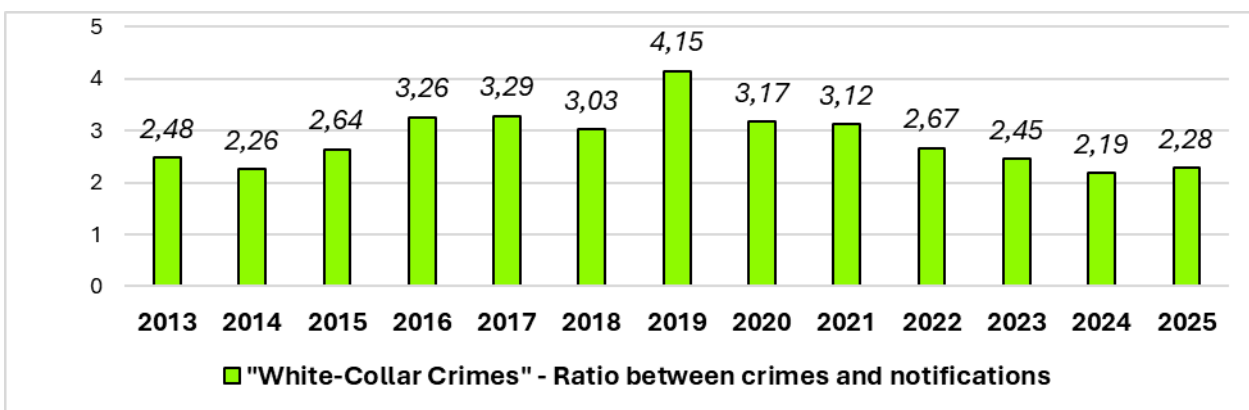


Figure 46. Crimes against public services: ratio between registered crimes and notifications

In 2022, crimes of receiving a bribe have also gone into the shadows: 1566 registered crimes in 2021, and 988 registered crimes (Figure 47).

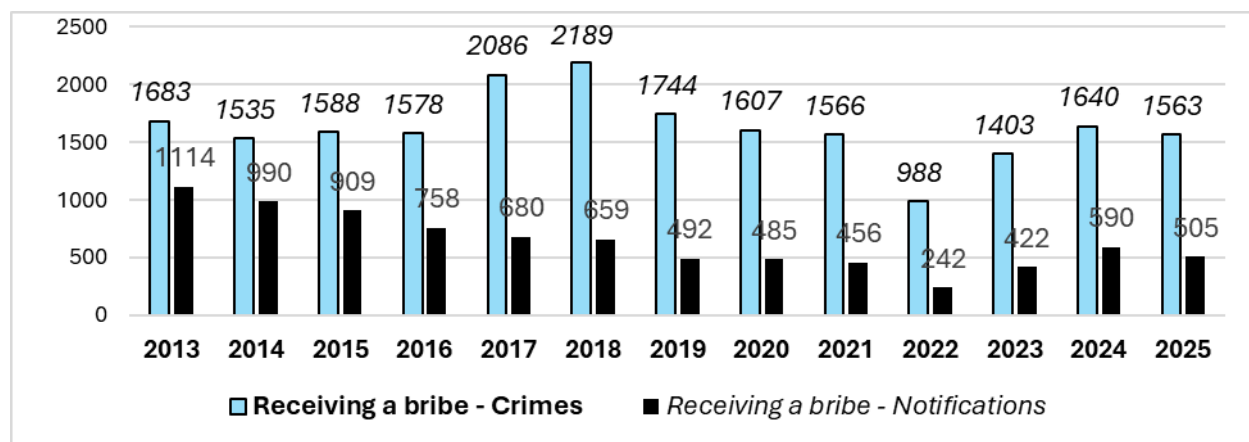


Figure 47. Receiving a bribe

A crime of bribery reflects a *dualistic trend* – a decrease in registered ‘white-collar’ crimes and an increase in

the ratio between registered crimes and the suspects in related criminal proceedings (Figure 48).

Corporate Raiding

In the general structure of criminality in Ukraine, a special place is occupied with crimes concerned with *corporate raiding*.

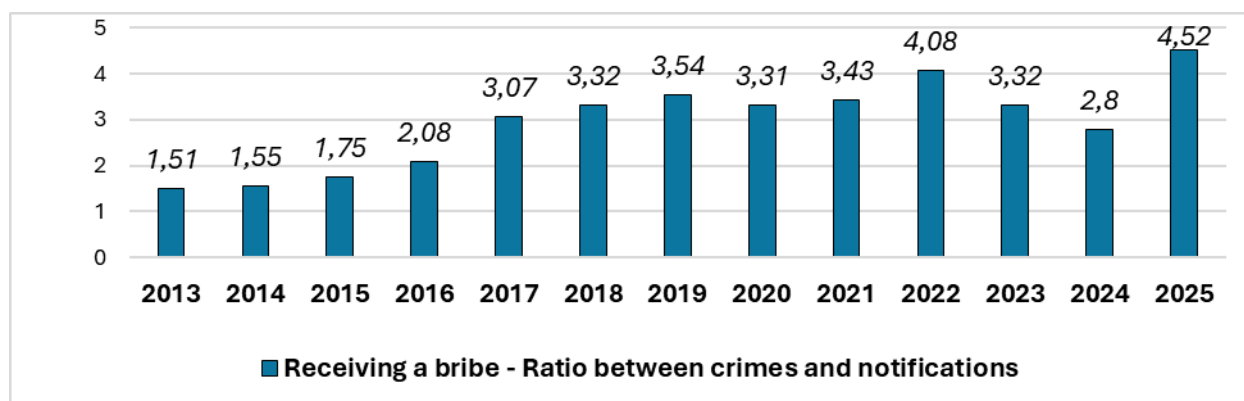


Figure 48. Receiving a bribe: ratio between registered crimes and notifications

Here, we focus attention on two articles of the Criminal Code: obstruction of legitimate economic activity (Article 206) and illegal seizure of property of an enterprise, institution, or organisation (Article 206-2).

Firstly, it should be stressed that these articles are not concerned only with activities of big corporations. Moreover, as practice shows, they are used for the aims of prevention of illegal “conquests” of small legal entities.

Secondly, it should be stressed that Ukraine is a big agricultural country, which supplies food to many states of the European Union. Ukraine is one of the three largest exporters of agricultural products to the EU (the USA and Brazil occupy the first places). According to the European Commission’s statistics, Ukraine has supplied production to the EU by 7 billion euros.

Therefore, the EU is interested in a transparent and stable agricultural market in Ukraine, which is important from the point of view of safety of products and minimizing money-laundering in the agricultural sector. At the same time, one of the most dangerous problems both for Ukrainian justice and the agricultural market is the problem of corporate raiding.

Of course, this is an issue mostly of peacetime, but at the same time, the War also exacerbates this issue as much as possible. If, in peacetime, national and local quasi-elites were highly interested in the existence of the permanent phenomenon of corporate raiding in Ukraine, then during the 2022 Russian military aggression this phenomenon hid even more in the twilight.

Every year the spring-summer-autumn news from Ukraine demonstrated numerous examples of corporate raiding of lands, fields, enterprises, utility premises, agricultural machinery, plants, factories etc., which is often “supported” by violent actions and the use of firearms.

But what about police statistics?

Unfortunately, police statistics say nothing about corporate raiding in Ukraine. As a result, it seems that there is no corporate raiding in Ukraine.

Instead of corporate raiding, there is only a Soviet-style shaped ‘unauthorised action’ (Article 356 of the Criminal Code) which provides punishment for “unauthorised action, that is doing anything contrary to the rules established by law, where the lawfulness of such acts is challenged by an individual citizen, an enterprise, institution or organisation, and where such acts caused any substantial damage to the interests of a citizen, state and public interests, or interests of the owner”.

Let us analyse an issue of the corporate raiding in Ukraine in the light of the police statistics.

Police statistics from the last 10 years indicate that, on average, for the period 2013-2021, notes of suspicion were handed in almost 40% of all criminal proceedings open in Ukraine.

The same indicator for 2022 is 36,5%.

At the same time, the same indicator under Article 206 of the Criminal Code for the period of 2013-2021 is 3,64%. The same indicator for 2022 is 3,57%.

A similar indicator under Article 206-2 of the Criminal Code for the period 2014 – 2021 is 10,04% and 6,66% for the period of twelve months of 2022.

Having analysed the percentage of criminal proceedings under Articles 206 and 206-2 of the Criminal Code (in light of the total number of criminal proceedings), we receive disappointing conclusions, especially considering that, firstly, these crimes are not latent (because of the activities of the victims), and, secondly, the police investigators and prosecutors ‘drive’ the most crimes of corporate raiding under simple ‘unauthorised action’.

Here, we have another clear example that the presence in the Criminal Code related prohibitions does not guarantee that quasi-elites will be interested in restricting themselves in the use of such an illegal source of income.

As a conclusion to this part of our criminological analysis, we should point out that the problem of corporate raiding is a 'face' of a broader problem of corruption in the field of justice and the LEA activities (Figure 49, Figure 50).

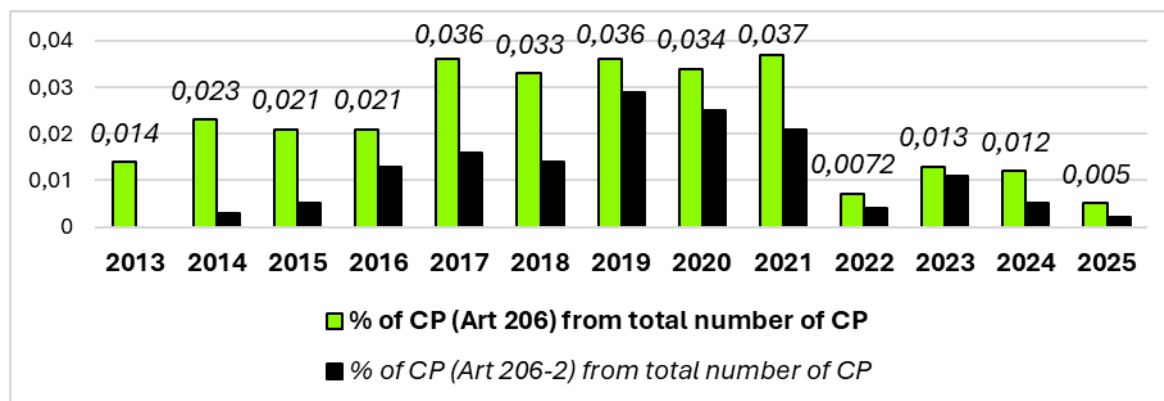


Figure 49. Raiding: percentage of criminal proceedings from total number of proceedings

Here, we would like to take a look at the percentage of criminal proceedings with suspects.

Corporate raiding is a crime where a victim clearly defines a perpetrator. Therefore, such crimes cannot be defined as latent ones.

Criminal proceedings with suspects occupied 39,8% in 2023 and 39,5% in 2024 in general number of all criminal proceedings registered. However, criminal proceedings with suspects in crimes of obstruction of legitimate economic activity occupied only 3,2% and 3,5% in general number of all criminal proceedings registered pursuant to Article 206 of the Criminal Code. Accordingly, criminal proceedings with suspects in crimes of illegal seizure of property of an enterprise, institution, or organisation occupied only 25% and 7,1% in general number of all criminal proceedings registered pursuant to Article 206 of the Criminal Code. The answer lies in systematic failures in investigation of such crimes because of the corruption in the LEA.

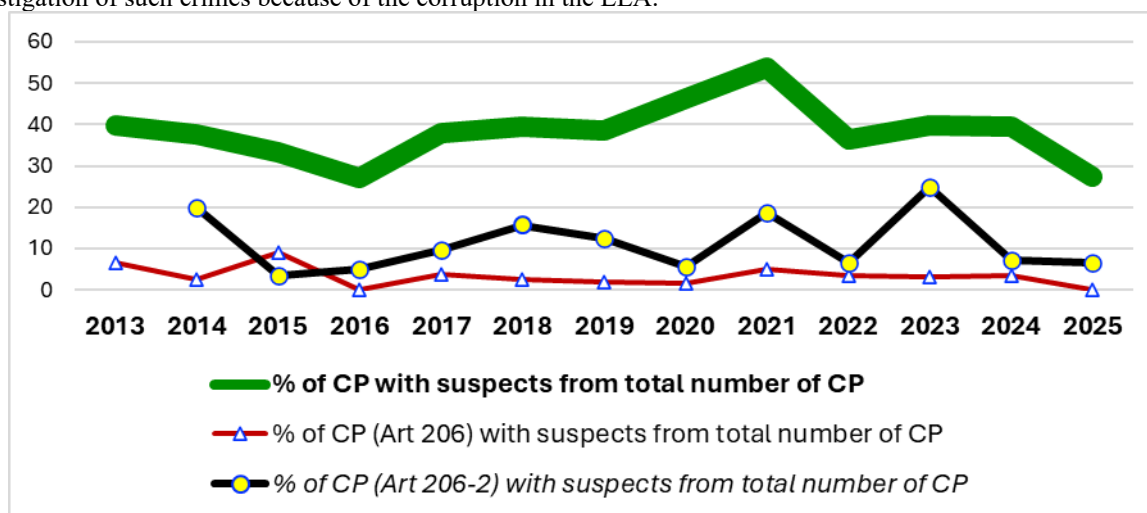


Figure 50. Raiding: percentage of proceedings with suspects from total number of proceedings

Hooliganism

No less interesting for the aims of the analysis of the criminological situation in Ukraine is the crime of *hooliganism* (according to Article 296 of the Criminal Code – “a serious disturbance of public order based on motives of explicit disrespect to community in a most outrageous or exceptionally cynical manner”) which can be used as an example of impacts of harsh wartime restrictions with curfews, military and the police patrols as well as roadblocks on normal social life.

Generally concluding, criminal acts of hooliganism have had a permanent trend to decrease for the last ten

years when the 2021 restrictions resulting from the COVID pandemic should also be noted.

In 2022, a particular decrease of acts of hooliganism should be considered because of the next Russian military invasion. If, in 2021, acts of hooliganism were widely prevented by closing public spaces (shopping centres, cinemas, public transport etc.), the COVID pandemic was almost '*forgotten*' by the general population at the end of February 2022. Accordingly, the end of February 2022 has led to harsher physical restrictions on *possible* actions aimed at violation of public order (*Figure 51*).

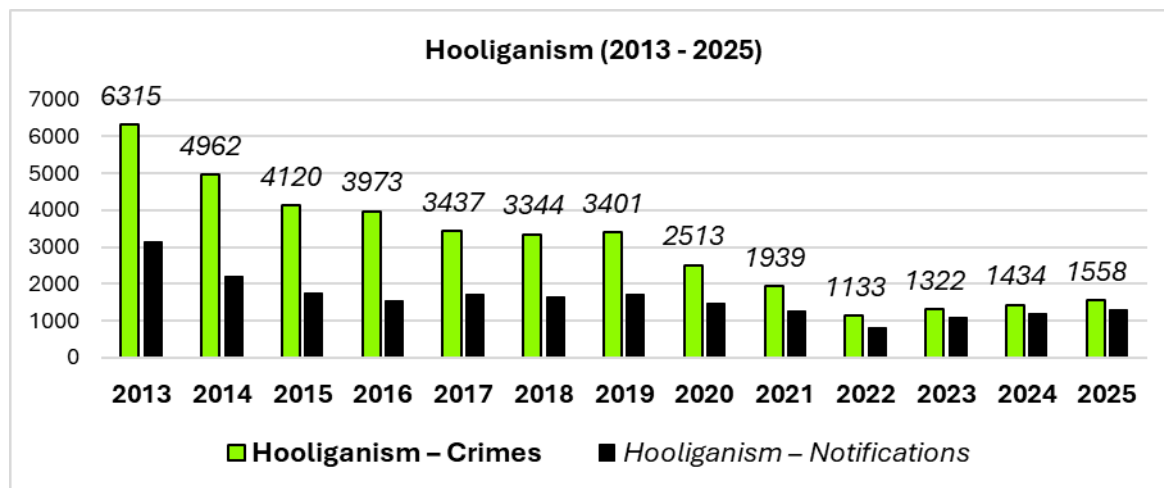


Figure 51. Hooliganism: registered crimes and notifications

In general, 1939 crimes of hooliganism were registered in 2021, 1133 crimes in 2022, 1322 in 2023, and 1434 crimes in 2024.

On the other hand, the number of acts of hooliganism almost disappeared from social life in February-March 2022, has appeared again in April 2022 with a trend to further increase.

Correspondingly, such a trend should be considered an indicator of a partial *stabilisation* of social life in Ukraine, mostly in areas far from the front line.

Certainly, the last two months of 2022 will prove (or not) such a hypothesis. At least data for 2022 has given reasonable grounds to shape it in the above form.

On the other hand, one more conclusion could be drawn from the above situation described. Yes, the number of acts of hooliganism dropped to a particular extent due to the harshest social control measures in Ukrainian history. For example, comparative analysis of crimes of hooliganism for ten months of 2021 and 2022 shows that the number of detected acts of hooliganism decreased.

Nevertheless, the drop was not too insignificant to make a statement that the harshest police restrictions have resulted in decreasing such acts to a minimum level that could be expected from a point of view of proponents of harsher police control over society.

Smuggling

Smuggling from Ukraine to the rest of Europe has been an obvious problem for the stability of public order in the EU for a long time. Therefore, *crimes of smuggling* are no fewer interesting cases for researching the impact of the War because they reflect the state of *protection of the borders* of Ukraine, which, in its turn, reflects the general potential of the *State* to keep its territory safe.

The Ukrainian police statistics show that the crime of smuggling had represented a permanent segment in the general structure of the Ukrainian police until 2022.

In the period of 2016-2021, there has been an increase in detected crimes of smuggling with its highest point of 135 crimes in 2021 (*Figure 52*).

In 2021, 151 criminal proceedings were registered. However, 71 criminal proceedings were registered in 2023, 125 proceedings were registered in 2023, and 151 proceedings registered in 2024.

Here, it should be noted that in 2018, the Criminal Code was supplemented with Article 201-1 according to the Law "*On the introduction of amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine regarding the preservation of Ukrainian forests and the prevention of the illegal export of unprocessed timber*" which has stated a criminal liability for *smuggling of timber*. Therefore, in this paper, data for 2020 – 2024 also reflect the numbers of both crimes of smuggling – the '*classical*' one and the *smuggling of timber*.

Additionally, we would like to make a conclusion that seems to be of great importance in the context of analysis of smuggling in a broader context of Ukrainian criminality.

For the period of 2013-2021, the average ratio between all detected crimes of smuggling (including so-called

‘*factual cases*’) and criminal proceedings with suspects was 2,25.

In 2022, the same indicator increased to 3,74 (that is 1,7 times higher).

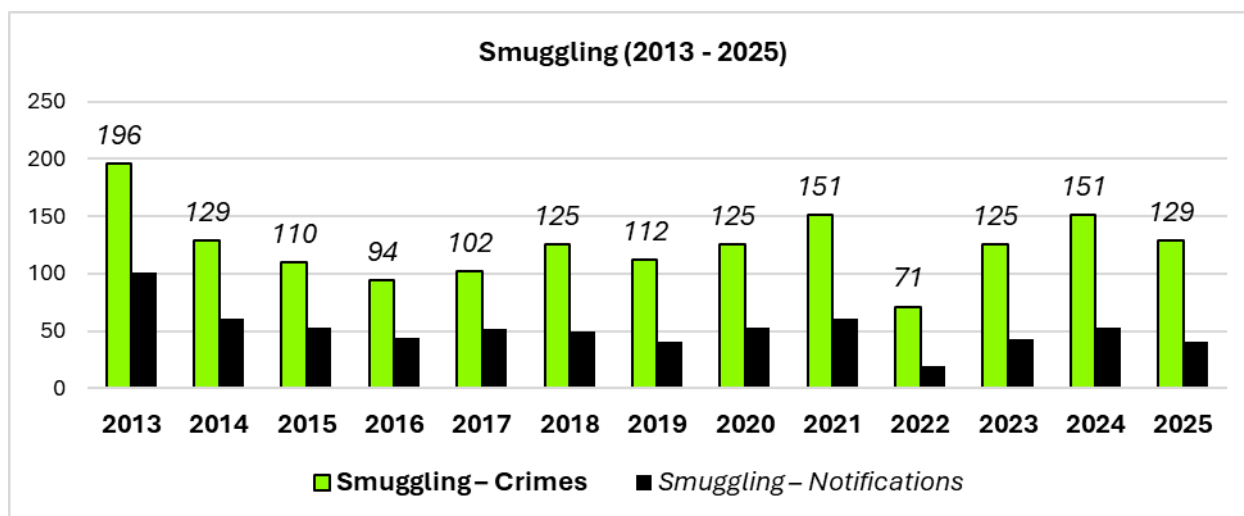


Figure 52. Smuggling: registered crimes and notifications

Considering the fact that crimes of smuggling are often concerned with concrete persons who are crossing the border with smuggled goods, such a state of things poses reasonable questions concerning the effectiveness of the LEA.

Moreover, in the wartime period when all law-enforcement bodies operate in a state of a heightened alertness, such a gap between the mentioned indicators seems to be of an *artificial nature* (Figure 53).

Here, we would also like to analyse crimes of *smuggling of drugs*.

Drug-related offences have already been analysed in a separate chapter of this paper. Nevertheless, here, a focus is made not on drugs but mostly on *smuggling*. Therefore, both crimes – smuggling and smuggling of drugs – are discussed together in a broader context of *immovability of the state borders of Ukraine* in the wartime period.

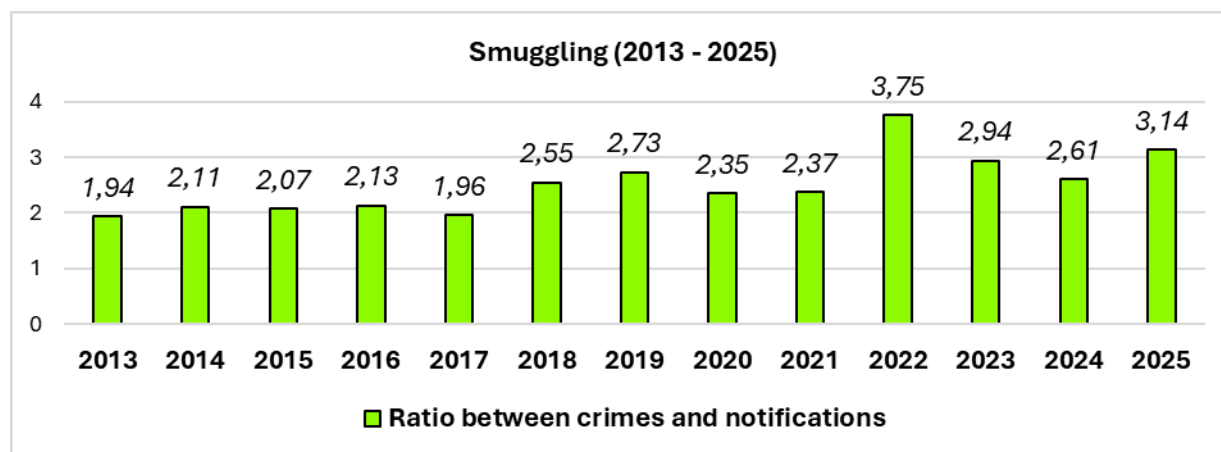


Figure 53. Smuggling: ratio between crimes and notifications

The first conclusion that could be drawn from statistics is that the number of detected crimes of smuggling of drugs decreased (183 criminal proceedings in 2021, 115 proceedings in 2022, 145 proceedings in 2023, 201 proceedings in 2024) (Figure 54, Figure 55).

As in the previous example with smuggling, in the *period of 2013-2021*, the average ratio between detected crimes (so called ‘*factual*’) and criminal proceedings with suspects was 1,55.

In 2022-2024, the same indicator increased to 1,9 (Figure 56).

Human Trafficking:

Common perceptions – which align closely with actual circumstances – indicate that Ukraine has historically

functioned as a corridor for trafficking operations. The European Court of Human Rights, in its 16 February 2021 decision regarding *V.C.L. and A.N. v. the United Kingdom* (applications nos. 77587/12 and 74603/12), highlighted consistent patterns in trafficking routes where victims passed through Ukraine before reaching Poland, the Czech Republic, Germany, and France.

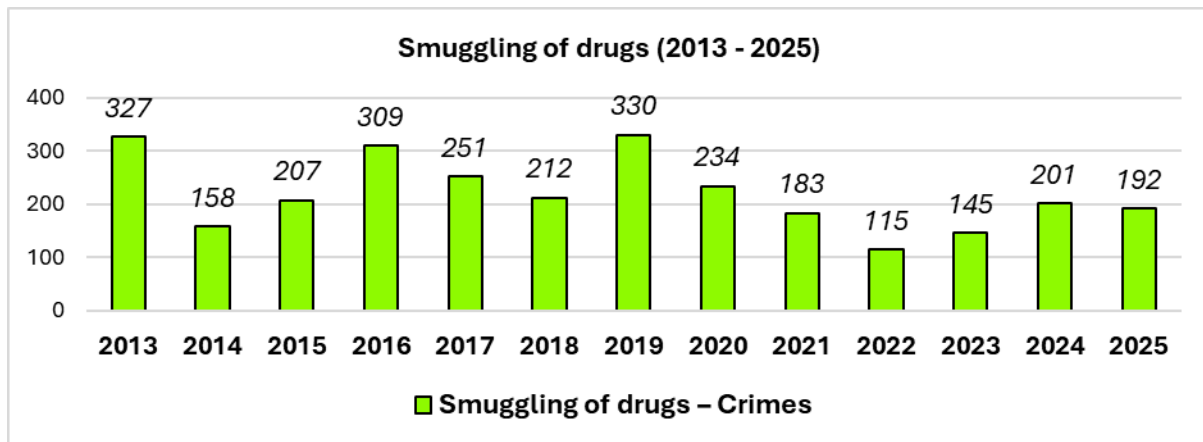


Figure 54. *Smuggling of drugs: criminal proceedings*

Numerous political figures across the EU, Ukraine, and other European nations have emphasised that Russia's 2022 military assault on Ukraine created conditions where countless Ukrainian women and children became vulnerable to exploitation by criminal networks, particularly during the initial chaotic period of the conflict.

Based on the author's firsthand information, certain humanitarian efforts by NGOs and private individuals to relocate Ukrainian refugees to secure destinations within EU member states were interrupted when alternative "shelter opportunities" emerged from individuals with suspected connections to trafficking networks and labour exploitation schemes.

Conversely, scholarly literature challenges the media-constructed image of the 'innocent victim' of trafficking, arguing it diverges substantially from actual circumstances (*Haverkamp, Rita (2019). Victims of Human Trafficking: Consideration from a Crime Prevention Perspective, in 'What is Wrong with Human Trafficking? Critical Perspectives on the Law', R. Haverkamp, E. Herlin-Karnell and C. Lernerstedt (Eds.). London. 280 p.*).

The 2022 Russian military offensive against Ukraine has consequently widened the gap between the 'innocent victim' narrative and the complex reality of trafficking situations.

It is widely recognised that trafficking operations typically involve sophisticated criminal networks requiring coordinated collaboration among perpetrators across multiple jurisdictions. However, following the 2022 conflict's outbreak, Ukraine's government imposed strict border crossing limitations on males in an effort to manage the refugee exodus, despite males comprising the primary demographic involved in such criminal enterprises.

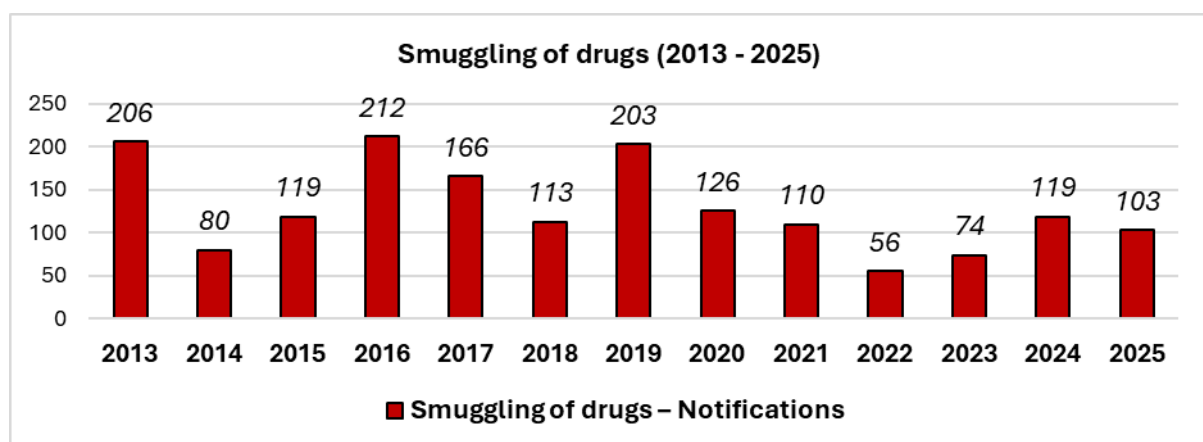


Figure 55. *Smuggling of drugs: criminal proceedings with suspects*

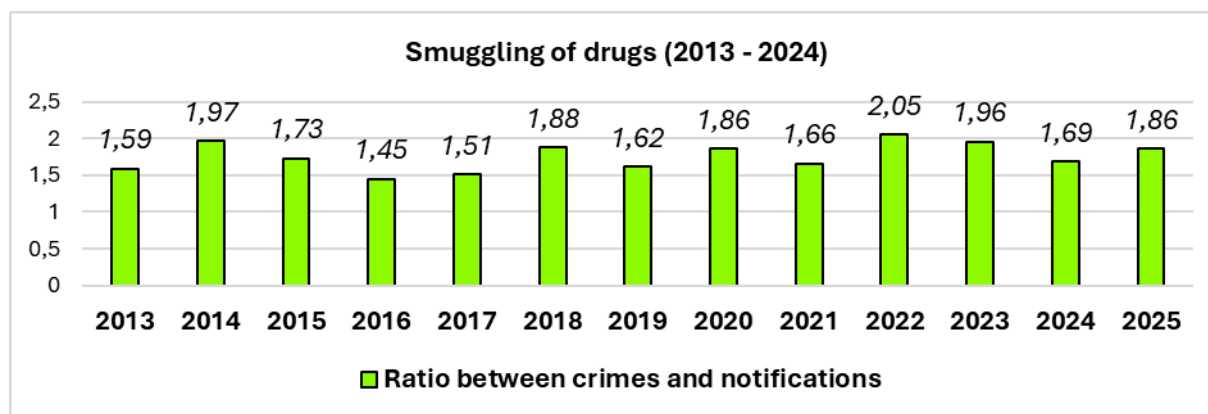


Figure 56. Smuggling of drugs: ratio between crimes and notifications

Regarding Ukraine specifically, law enforcement data indicates that the 2013-2016 period showed consistency in both recorded trafficking offenses and the number of suspects in associated criminal cases.

The evolution of human trafficking (THB) crimes in Ukraine over the past decade reveals a complex and troubling pattern, particularly in the context of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. As illustrated in *Figure 57*, THB crime statistics demonstrate considerable volatility, with a dramatic spike during 2017-2019 (peaking at 342 offenses in 2017 and 320 in 2019) before declining to more moderate levels in subsequent years. However, the post-invasion period presents particularly perplexing trends that warrant critical examination.

Following the February 2022 Russian military incursion, documented THB crimes initially plummeted to zero – an occurrence that raises more questions than it answers. Subsequently, the statistics show 232 offenses in 2021, dropping sharply to 133 in 2022, then rising slightly to 147 in 2023, falling again to 105 in 2024, before increasing to 155 in 2025. The notifications data follows a similar pattern, declining from 163 in 2021 to 93 in 2022, then fluctuating through 109 (2023), 62 (2024), and 109 (2025). While these figures suggest the conflict substantially influenced crime statistics, they paradoxically fail to reflect what should logically be a significant increase in trafficking vulnerability.

This statistical anomaly becomes particularly striking when contextualised against the magnitude of Ukraine's wartime displacement crisis. Approximately 6,5 million Ukrainians departed the country following the invasion, creating unprecedented 'opportunities' for trafficking operations to exploit vulnerable populations fleeing conflict zones. International experience consistently demonstrates that mass displacement, particularly of women and children crossing multiple borders under chaotic conditions, correlates with increased trafficking risks. Yet Ukraine's official statistics show a decrease rather than the expected surge in documented cases.

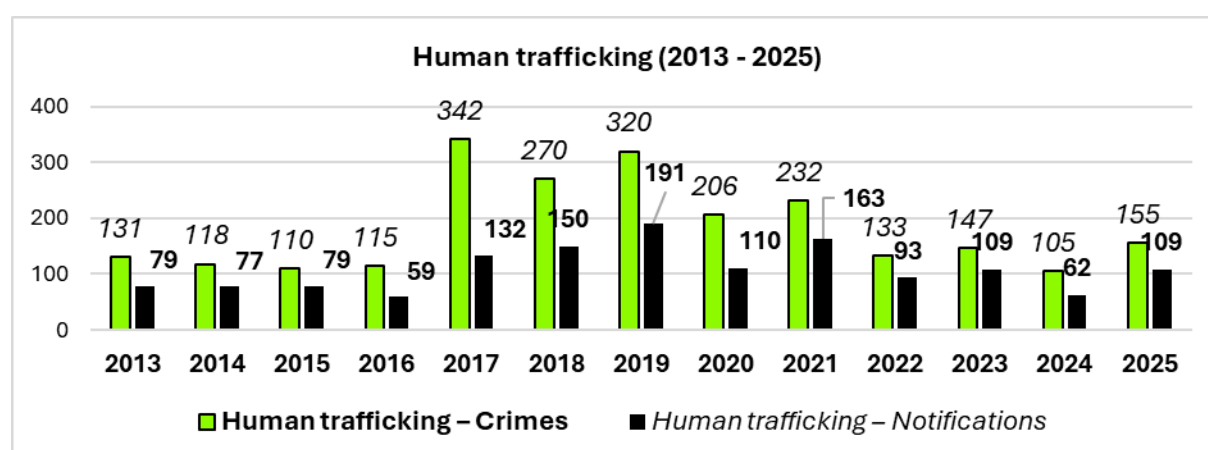


Figure 57. Human trafficking: crimes and notifications

The paradox deepens when examining the operational environment during this period. Ukraine implemented extensive border closures, pervasive police surveillance, strict curfews, and numerous military and police checkpoints throughout 2022 and beyond. Under such conditions, with heightened law enforcement presence and restricted

movement, one might expect either a genuine suppression of trafficking activities or, conversely, improved detection capabilities leading to increased case documentation. Instead, the data suggests neither outcome materialised effectively. The question emerges: how could significant THB operations continue amid such intensive security measures, and if they did continue, why did detection rates remain so low relative to the expanded vulnerable population? The figures of 133 THB crimes in 2022, 147 in 2023, and 105 in 2024 appear grossly insufficient when measured against the scale of displacement and vulnerability. This disparity strongly suggests that THB crimes possess substantially greater latency than law enforcement agencies acknowledge. The gap between probable trafficking incidents and documented cases points to severe deficiencies in both police intelligence regarding THB prevention and the operational capacity of Ukrainian border services to identify and intercept trafficking operations. The data implies that actual trafficking may be occurring at rates far exceeding official documentation.

The corruption factor cannot be overlooked in this analysis. Both police forces and border services operate within institutional frameworks that have historically struggled with integrity issues in Ukraine. During wartime, when resources are stretched, oversight mechanisms weakened, and opportunities for illicit profit multiplied, corruption risks intensify. The possibility exists that some LEA officials may be complicit in, or wilfully blind to, trafficking operations – either through direct participation, acceptance of bribes, or deliberate negligence. Such corruption would systematically undermine detection and prosecution efforts, contributing to the artificial deflation of crime statistics even as actual trafficking potentially escalates.

The data presented in *Figure 57* thus tells a story not of successful trafficking prevention during Ukraine's most vulnerable period, but rather of institutional failure to adequately document and respond to an evolving crime landscape. The disconnect between statistical trends and logical expectations based on displacement patterns suggests that Ukraine's THB response during wartime has been fundamentally compromised – whether through overwhelmed capacity, deliberate corruption, or systemic dysfunction within law enforcement and border control agencies. Determining the true scale of human trafficking in wartime Ukraine requires looking beyond official statistics to recognize the substantial 'dark figure' of unreported and undetected crimes.

The situation with 'satellite crimes' is different.

The data on offenses of *creating or running brothels and procuring* in Ukraine from 2013 to 2025 reveals significant fluctuations that reflect both law enforcement priorities and broader societal disruptions. The period reached its peak in 2014, when authorities registered 509 crimes and issued 379 notifications, representing the highest level of documented activity throughout the entire timeframe. Following this peak, a sustained decline commenced, with registered offenses decreasing to 476 in 2015 and further dropping to 342 cases in 2016, suggesting either improved law enforcement effectiveness or shifts in criminal activity patterns (*Figure 58*).

The temporal dynamics of these offenses during 2013-2021 demonstrated a consistent downward trend, which the onset of armed conflict disrupted. By 2017-2018, the numbers had stabilised at approximately 225-234 registered crimes annually, though a minor uptick to 259 cases occurred in 2019. The year 2020 marked a dramatic inflection point, with registered crimes plummeting to 163 cases, likely reflecting the combined impact of pandemic-related restrictions and law enforcement reorientation (*Figure 58*).

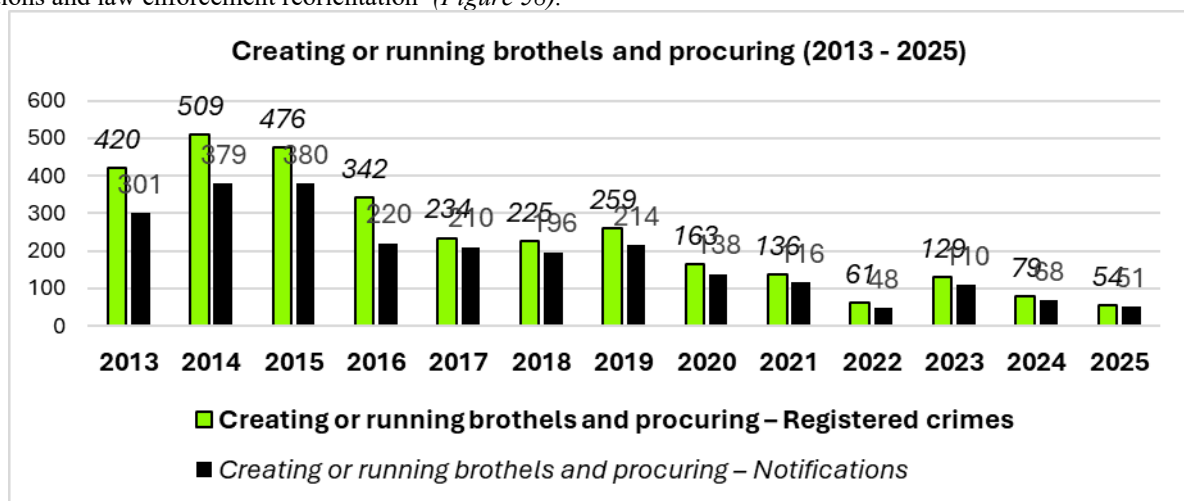


Figure 58. Creating or running brothels and procuring

This declining trajectory intensified through 2021 and reached its nadir in 2022, when only 61 registered crimes were documented – a reduction of more than 88% compared to the 2014 peak.

The dramatic collapse in 2022 coincides directly with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, which fundamentally disrupted both criminal networks and law enforcement capacity in affected regions. Despite a temporary reversal in 2023, when 129 cases were recorded, potentially indicating partial recovery of law enforcement

functions or displacement of criminal activities to safer territories, the subsequent year witnessed a renewed decline to 79 registered offenses. The most recent available data from 2025 reveal a continuation of this declining trajectory, with 54 crimes of this type documented.

The notification data demonstrate parallel patterns, with the ratio between registered criminal proceedings (total numbers) and criminal proceedings with suspects remaining relatively consistent throughout most years, suggesting stable detection and reporting mechanisms. The most recent available data from 2025 reveal a continuation of this declining trajectory, with 54 crimes of this type documented, though this figure represents only partial-year data.

However, we have a strong presumption that the official police statistics do not present a real picture. There is a strong presumption that any war stimulates prostitution and the illegal market of sex services. In January 2026, Ukrainian journalists published an investigation on the issue of the sex industry on the frontline (*Lykhoglyad, L. (2026). From 'massages' to intimacy on the battlefield. How the sex services market works in frontline cities. Ukrainska Pravda, January 8, 2026*), where one of the most remarkable and symbolic points was “No air raid alarm will stop a massage when it's time for one”.

This study demonstrated how war changes the geography, economy, and social dynamics of the sex industry, creating new centres of demand and supply for services.

Kramatorsk has become the main epicentre of the market, serving as a regional hub for service providers from different regions of Ukraine. The market is structured around two main formats: so-called ‘*massage parlours*’ with a base price of 30-40 Euros for services, and classic intimate services for 100-150 Euros. Outcall services to the frontline zone cost from 200 Euros per day plus transport costs. A characteristic feature of the market is the high level of online fraud: according to respondents' estimates, about 90% of online advertisements for services are fictitious, which indicates the possible involvement of organised criminal groups in this segment of the economy.

According to military personnel, clients' motivations are multifactorial and not limited to physiological needs. The study identifies three main reasons for using these services: satisfying physiological needs in conditions of prolonged separation from partners, psychological relief after combat stress, and the search for emotional support and the illusion of care. The latter reason seems to be the most important from a socio-psychological perspective, as it points to a lack of psychological support for military personnel and a need for emotional contact, even in the context of commercial relationships. At the same time, the study notes that a significant proportion of military personnel refrain from using such services out of loyalty to their partners.

From a public health perspective, the situation is critical. The lack of medical supervision, combined with the high prevalence of HIV infection among service providers, poses epidemiological risks. Some workers in the industry try to minimise risks by distributing free condoms from charitable organisations, but there is no systematic medical supervision. The legal status of sex work in Ukraine remains in a grey area: formally prohibited by administrative law, it is effectively tolerated in frontline regions, depriving workers of legal protection and the possibility of receiving medical care without the risk of administrative prosecution.

The study demonstrates that the war not only changed the geography of the sex industry but also reveals deeper social problems: insufficient psychological support for the military, the lack of effective legal regulation of sex work, and gaps in the public health system. The economic migration of service providers to frontline areas reflects the rational logic of seeking solvent demand, which is confirmed by the significant increase in military personnel's incomes compared to the pre-war period.

Comparative analysis of the police statistics proves the trend of decreasing numbers of crimes of running brothels, which are traditionally considered as ‘*shadow crimes*’ or ‘*satellite crimes*’ in relation to THB crimes. Therefore, the police statistics should be analysed more than critically, considering the realities and alternative investigations.

The analysis of official police statistics on brothel management and procuring in Ukraine from 2013 to 2025, when contrasted with journalistic investigations and field evidence, reveals a fundamental paradox that illuminates the enduring relationship between law enforcement and the sex industry during wartime. While registered offenses declined by 88% from their 2014 peak to reach historic lows in 2022-2025, empirical evidence from frontline regions demonstrates not the disappearance of the sex industry, but rather its expansion and structural transformation under conflict conditions.

Prostitution remains fundamentally a police-controlled business, rather than a genuinely suppressed criminal phenomenon. The dramatic collapse in official crime registrations coinciding with Russia's full-scale invasion does not reflect the elimination of sex work – as the Kramatorsk case study vividly demonstrates – but rather signals the reorientation of law enforcement priorities, the collapse of traditional regulatory mechanisms, and potentially the continuation of informal police oversight in new forms. The emergence of Kramatorsk as a major hub for sex services, operating with apparent impunity despite formal legal prohibitions, suggests that the traditional model of police-managed tolerance has adapted to wartime conditions rather than disappeared.

This divergence between official data and documented reality carries profound implications for criminal justice policy, public health protection, and our understanding of state capacity during wartime. The critical public health risks identified in frontline regions – including high HIV prevalence among sex workers operating without medical supervision, widespread fraud in online markets suggesting organised crime involvement, and the psychological vulnerability of military personnel seeking emotional support through commercial intimacy – remain invisible in

official statistics and therefore unaddressed by policy interventions.

The case of wartime Ukraine demonstrates that ‘*satellite crimes*’ associated with human trafficking and sexual exploitation cannot be accurately measured through conventional police statistics when the fundamental relationship between law enforcement and the sex industry remains one of controlled tolerance rather than genuine suppression. Researchers, policymakers, and international monitors must therefore approach official crime data with heightened critical awareness, recognizing that declining statistics may reflect not improved conditions but rather the invisibilisation of persistent problems under the pressures of armed conflict. The continued operation of the sex industry in frontline areas, documented through alternative investigative methods, proves that war disrupts the statistical recording of these phenomena far more than it disrupts the phenomena themselves – a reality that demands both methodological innovation in crime measurement and fundamental policy reconsideration of the legal status and health protection of sex workers in conflict zones.

The same could also be said about a crime of *pimping or engaging the person in prostitution*. Even considering an increase in this type of crime in 2023 (348 registered crimes), the next year has indicated a decrease (244 crimes) (Figure 59).



Figure 59. *Pimping or engaging person in prostitution*

The War cut the official rates of crime of engaging minors in criminal activity (Article 304 of the Criminal Code) (122 crimes in 2021, 79 crimes in 2022, 73 crimes in 2023, 91 crimes in 2024) (Figure 60).

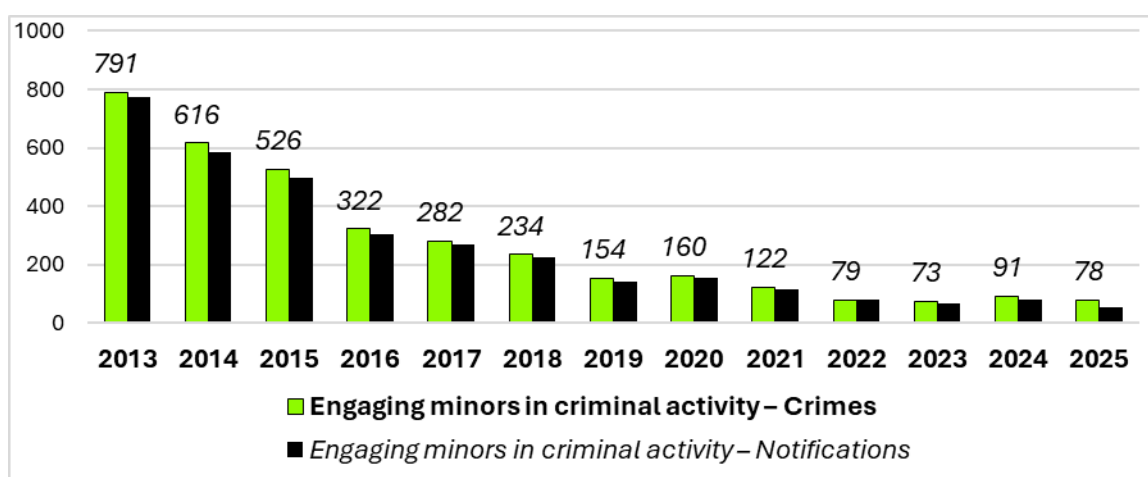


Figure 60. *Engaging minors in criminal activity (Art. 304)*

At the same time, it is hard to say that the War cut the official rates of crime of use of a minor for begging (Article 150-1 of the Criminal Code) (4 crimes in 2021, 3 crimes in 2022, 3 crimes in 2023, 1 crime in 2024) (Figure

61).

The same could be concluded in respect of the official rates of crime of use exploitation of children (Article 150 of the Criminal Code) (4 crimes in 2021, 3 crimes in 2022, 3 crimes in 2023, 1 crime in 2024, and 2 crimes in 2025) (Figure 62).

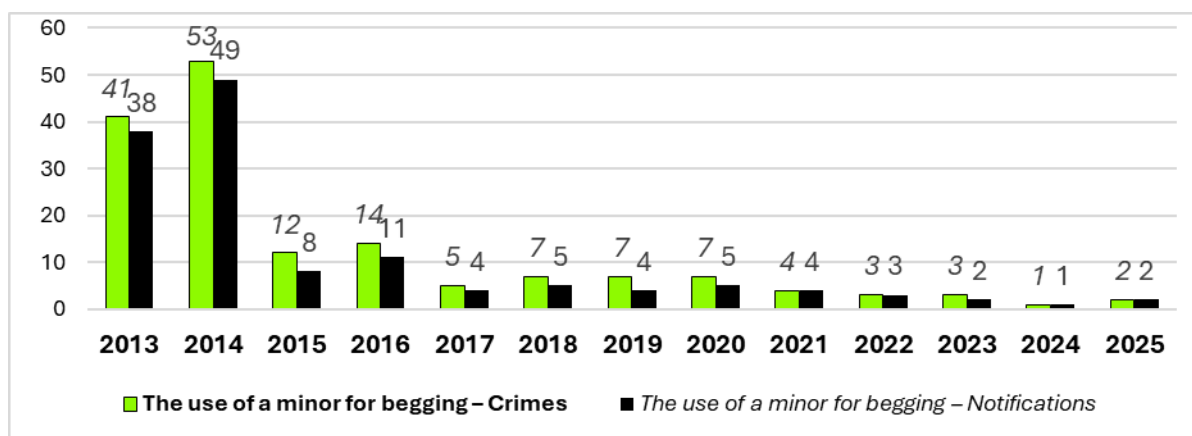


Figure 61. The use of a minor for begging (Art. 150-1)

At the same time, it is hard to say that the War cut the official rates of crime of use of a minor for begging (Article 150-1 of the Criminal Code) (zero crimes in 2021, 1 crime in 2022, 1 crime in 2023, 1 crime in 2024, and 2 crimes in 2025).

Crime trends in Ukraine for the last ten years are a good example to prove the common social nature of THB crimes and 'satellite' ('shadow') crimes' discussed above. The common feature of all the mentioned crime trends is the fact that they are changing almost the same way (Figure 63, Figure 64).

Analysing the problem of human trafficking, we guess it is necessary to have one more look at the problem but from another perspective. As we mentioned earlier, during the War, the number of crimes of illegal trafficking of persons across the state border of Ukraine increased drastically.

At the same time, the number of THB crimes decreased. Moreover, the number of such crimes was not very impressive in the light of the official police statistics. However, both mentioned types of crimes are strictly concerned with the state borders. In the first case, trafficking of persons across the state border is a compulsory element of crime. In the second case, most persons in Ukraine are trafficked through the state border.

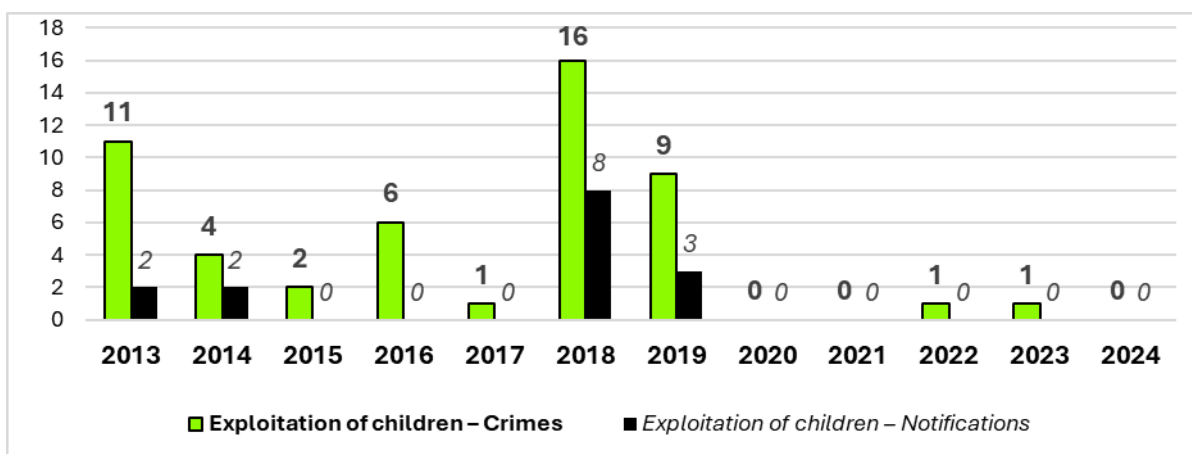


Figure 62. Exploitation of children (Art. 150)

So, all perpetrators aim at the easiest points on the border to cross. They are looking for the most appropriate 'assistants' for their criminal activity, including corrupted officers from the Army and the State Border Guards Service. Demand generates supply: they do find such corrupted officers.

Therefore, the question arises: why the numbers of illegal trafficking of persons across the state border are so large as compared with the THB crimes?

One can argue that it is much easier to transport the unpretentious males who wish to be trafficked and who are not victims, as compared with mostly female victims of human trafficking. Such an argument should be considered with no doubt. However, it does not explain the difference in numbers in the mentioned above two types of crimes. Probably, the answer lies around corruption on the border and minimisation of the risks of perpetrators being arrested. The answer could also be concerned with the more latent nature of THB crimes during the War. In any case, if you can create the channel for transportation of males-perpetrators, you can use the same channel for trafficking of female victims of human trafficking. Moreover, the police statistics indicate that the last year, more perpetrators avoided charges for illegal trafficking of males across the border.

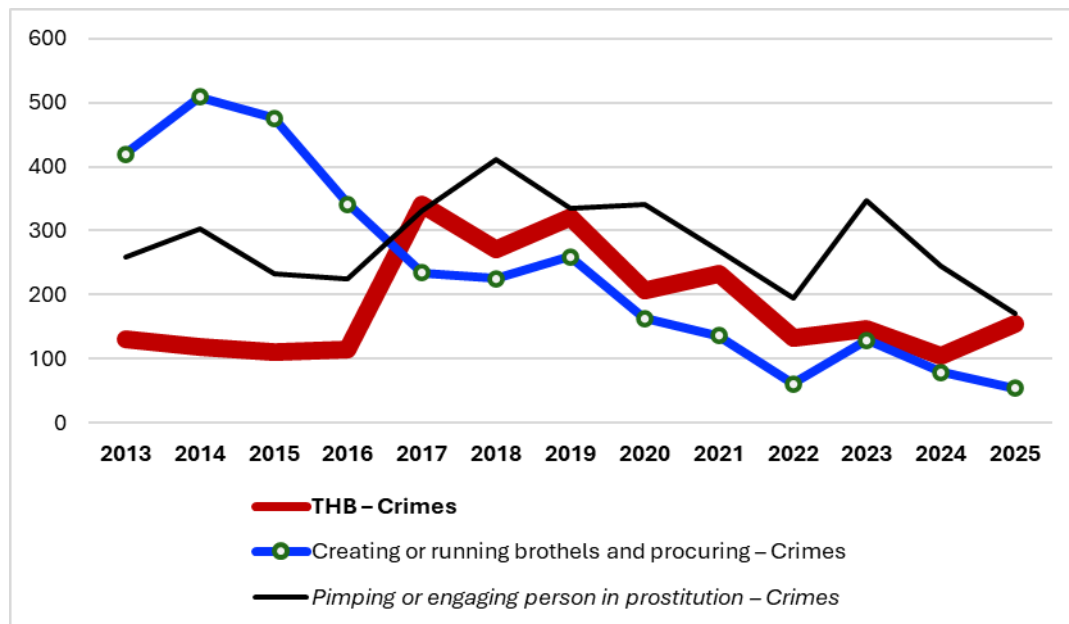


Figure 63. THB crimes and 'satellite' crimes

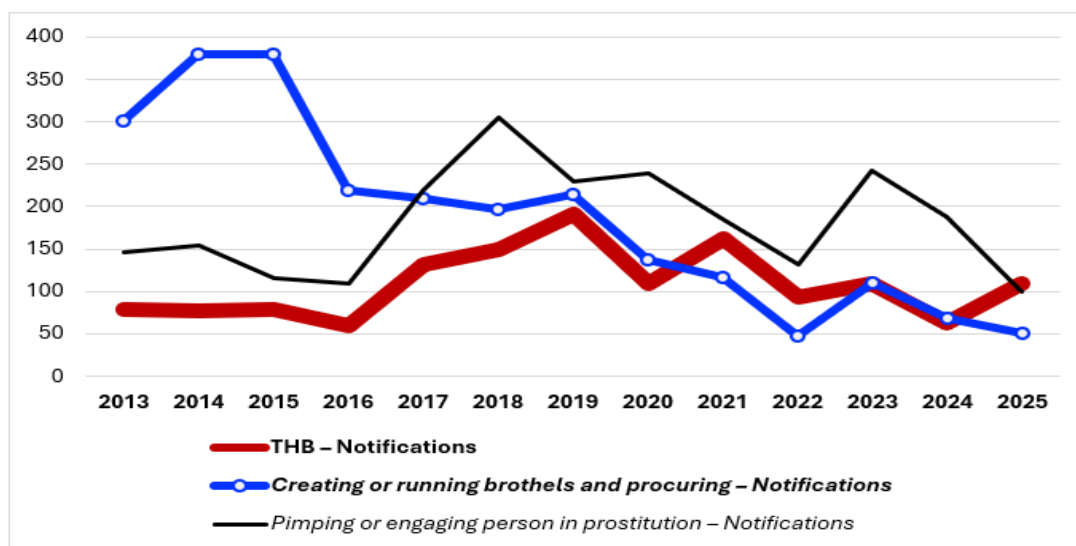


Figure 64. Criminal proceedings with suspects in THB and 'satellite' crimes

Law-Enforcement Agencies in the Light of the Police Statistics

Here are presented the numbers of criminal proceedings opened by different law-enforcement agencies, with corresponding analysis.

The longitudinal data spanning 2013-2025 reveals a marked divergence in the institutional patterns of criminal proceedings registration between the Prosecution Service and the Police, with particularly notable shifts occurring during the wartime period beginning in 2022. The Prosecution Service demonstrates relative stability in caseload

initiation, fluctuating within a narrow bandwidth of approximately 7000-12000 proceedings annually, whereas the Police exhibit substantially greater variability and significantly higher absolute numbers throughout the observation period. The most dramatic discontinuity occurs between 2013 and 2014, when police-initiated proceedings precipitously declined from 118505 to 65147 cases, representing a 45% reduction that suggests possible structural reforms or changes in registration methodology during this transitional period (*Figure 69*).

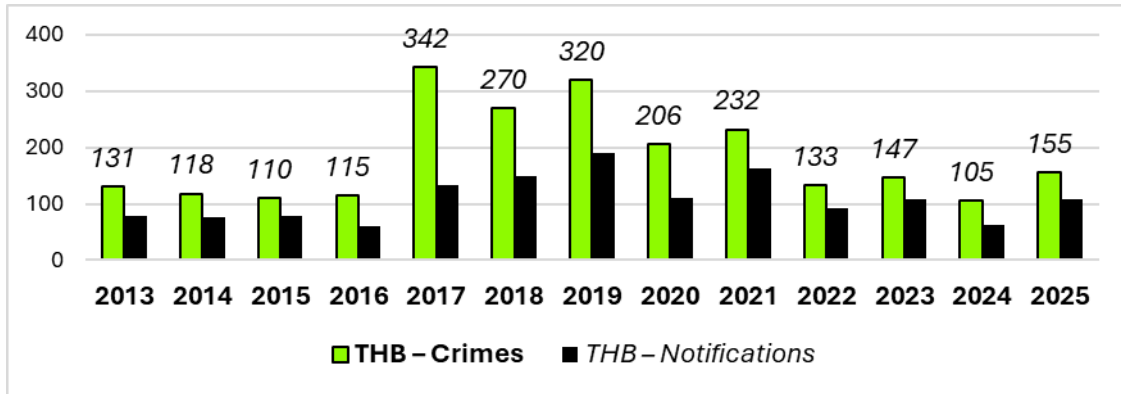


Figure 65. THB crimes and notifications in THB crimes

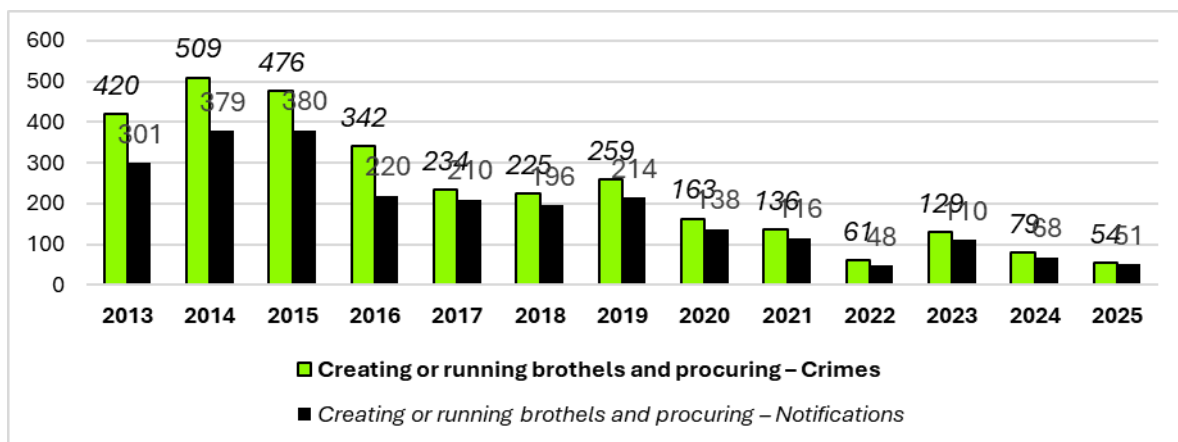


Figure 66. Creating or running brothels and procuring: crimes and notifications

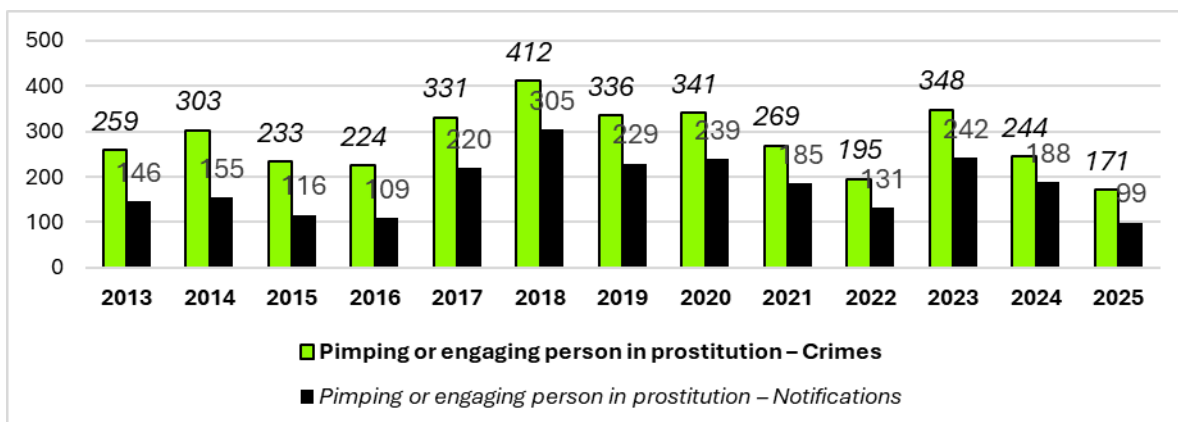
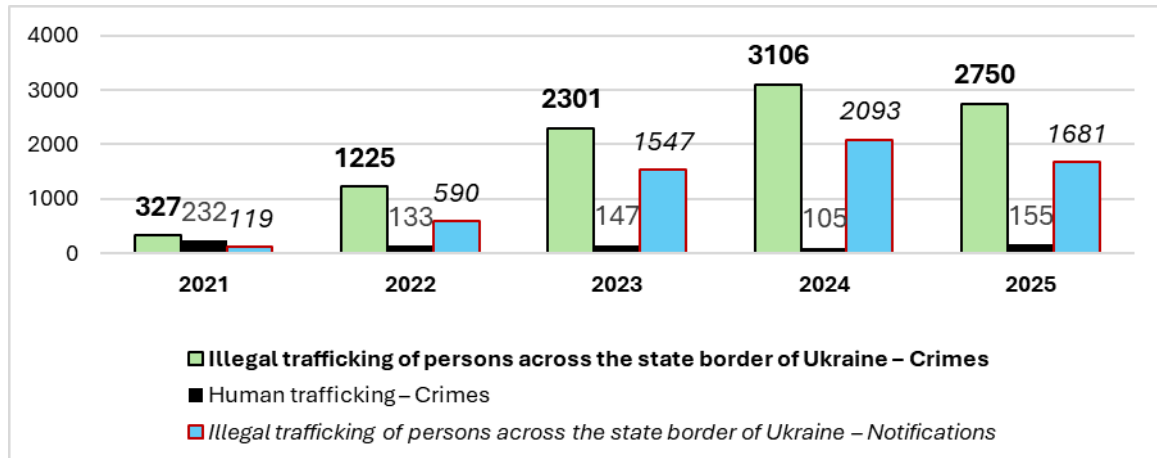


Figure 67. Pimping or engaging person in prostitution: crimes and notifications

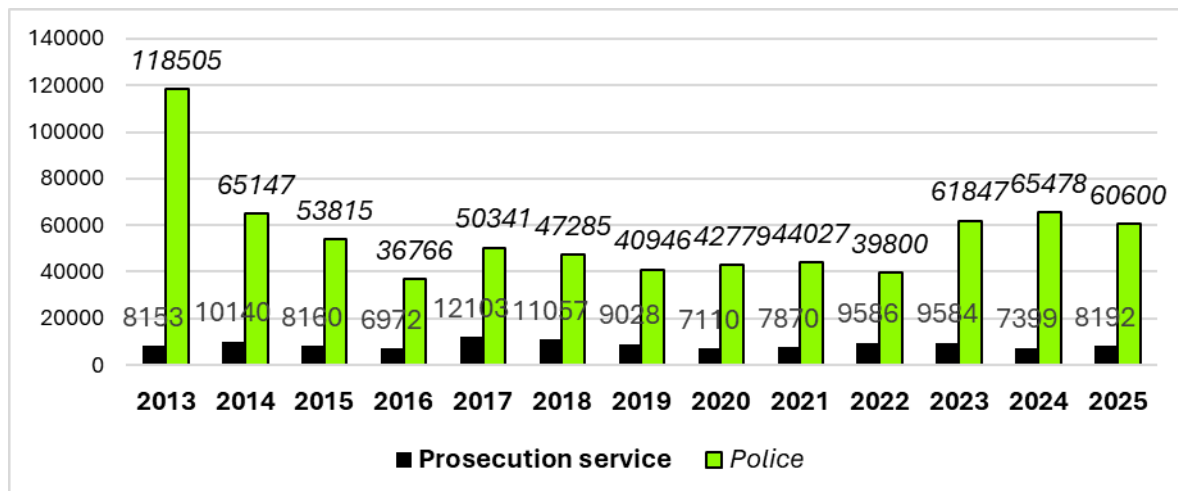
Table 3

Crimes concerned with illegal crossing the state border of Ukraine

	Illegal trafficking of persons across the state border of Ukraine – Crimes	Illegal trafficking of persons across the state border of Ukraine – Notifications	Human trafficking – Crimes
2021	327	119	232
2022	1225	590	133
2023	2301	1547	147
2024	3106	2093	105
2025	2750	1681	155

*Figure 68. THB and the states borders*

The subsequent years (2014-2022) demonstrate a continued downward trajectory in police-registered proceedings, reaching a nadir of 36766 cases in 2016 before stabilizing at approximately 40000-47000 cases annually between 2017-2022. Conversely, the wartime period (2023-2024) presents a countercyclical pattern whereby police-initiated proceedings increased substantially to 61847 in 2023 and 65478 in 2024, while simultaneously the Prosecution Service registered its lowest volume during the entire observation period at 7399 proceedings in 2024. This inverse relationship during wartime conditions suggests a potential reallocation of investigative responsibilities or changes in jurisdictional authority favouring police primacy in criminal case initiation. The ratio between police and prosecution proceedings evolved from approximately 14,5:1 in 2013 to 8,9:1 in 2024, indicating a gradual convergence in institutional caseloads despite the absolute decline in police registrations during the pre-war period.

*Figure 69. Criminal proceedings opened by Prosecution Service and the Police*

The 2025 preliminary data, showing 8192 prosecution proceedings and 60600 police proceedings, suggests a potential stabilisation of the wartime pattern, though the slight decrease in police registrations may indicate emerging constraints on investigative capacity. The sustained disparity between institutional registration volumes raises important questions regarding the division of labour within Ukraine's criminal justice system, the criteria determining which institution initiates proceedings, and the potential implications for case processing efficiency and procedural safeguards. The wartime surge in police-initiated proceedings, occurring concurrently with reduced prosecution service activity, warrants further investigation into whether this reflects genuine changes in criminal activity patterns, conflict-related resource constraints, or strategic adaptations in prosecutorial policy prioritizing case selectivity over volume.

The data reveal divergent institutional responses to Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) dramatically expanded its prosecutorial activity, with criminal proceedings surging from 5035 in 2021 to 11841 in 2022 – a 135% increase reflecting heightened security threats and counterintelligence operations. Conversely, the Tax Police experienced a precipitous decline from 1324 proceedings in 2021 to merely 218 in 2022, suggesting institutional reorientation or capacity diversion during the initial invasion period. The subsequent stabilisation of SBU activity at approximately 11000 proceedings (2022-2025) indicates sustained wartime investigative demands rather than temporary escalation (*Figure 70*).

Meanwhile, the Tax Police's gradual recovery from 2023 onwards (945→1347→1404 proceedings) demonstrates economic sector adaptation and the re-emergence of white-collar crime enforcement as Ukraine's wartime economy normalised (*Figure 71*).

The comparative analysis of criminal proceedings initiated by Ukraine's principal anti-corruption agencies reveals notable divergences in investigative activity over recent years (*Figure 71*). In 2022, both the State Investigation Bureau (DBR) and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) maintained investigative volumes consistent with their 2021 performance levels, with the DBR registering 1340 proceedings compared to 1341 in the previous year.

This period of relative stasis proved temporary for the DBR, which subsequently demonstrated a marked escalation in enforcement activities. During 2023, DBR investigators registered 2906 criminal proceedings, representing a 117% increase over the preceding year. The upward trajectory intensified further in 2024, when the DBR initiated 4971 proceedings, constituting a 71% year-on-year growth and nearly quadrupling the 2022 baseline. By 2025, this exponential expansion reached 8920 proceedings, underscoring the bureau's dramatically enhanced investigative capacity. In contrast, NABU's caseload exhibited considerably more modest growth, rising from 119 proceedings in 2022 to 355 in 2025, thereby highlighting the increasingly disproportionate enforcement burden assumed by the State Investigation Bureau (*Figure 71*).

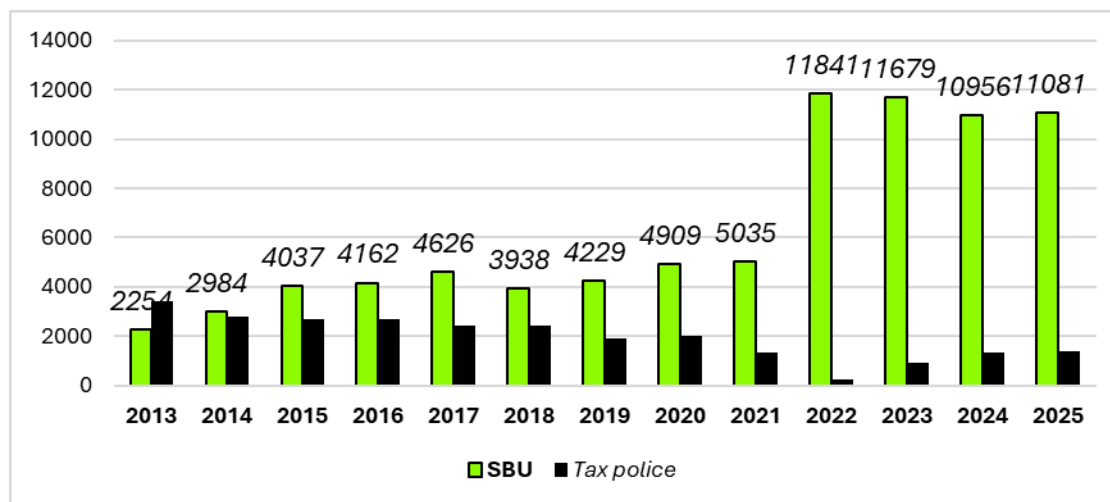


Figure 70. Criminal proceedings opened by the SBU and the Tax Police

In contrast, NABU's caseload exhibited considerably more modest growth, rising from 119 proceedings in 2022 to 355 in 2025, thereby highlighting the increasingly disproportionate enforcement burden assumed by the State Investigation Bureau (*Figure 72*).

As far as the situation with notifications of suspicions given to suspects in criminal proceedings, police statistics provide us with the following results.

The police investigators decreased the number of notes of suspicion in 2022 (28633 notifications in 2022, 36562 notifications in 2021).

The number of notifications of suspicion given in criminal proceedings opened by prosecutors in 2022 was

mostly the same as in 2021 (Figure 72).

The number of notifications of suspicion given in criminal proceedings opened by investigators by the tax police and the Security Service of Ukraine is very controversial in the context of its transformation.

In 2013, both law enforcement agencies started with the same numbers of criminal proceedings with given notifications of suspicions (Figure 73). In 2023, the differences between them have reached a historical point. The indicators of the tax police almost reached zero level. At the same time, the indicators of the Security Service of Ukraine reached its historical maximum (Figure 73).

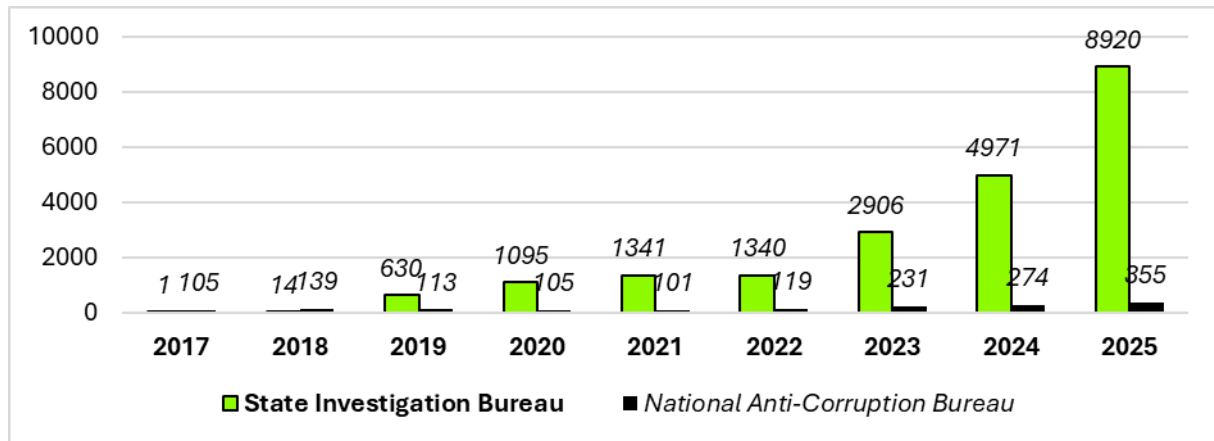


Figure 71. Criminal proceedings opened by the DBR and the NABU

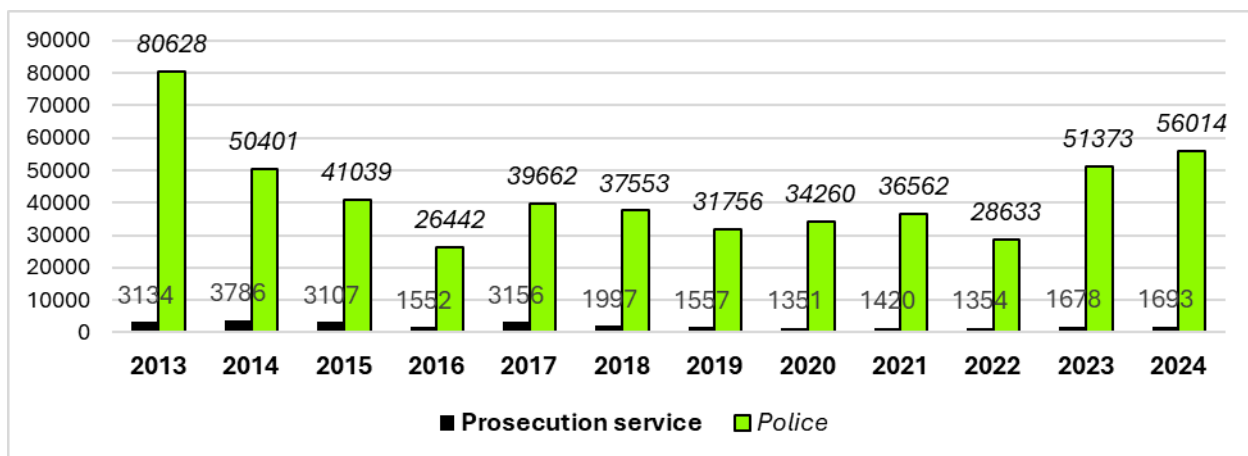


Figure 72. Criminal proceedings with suspects opened by the Prosecution Service and the Police

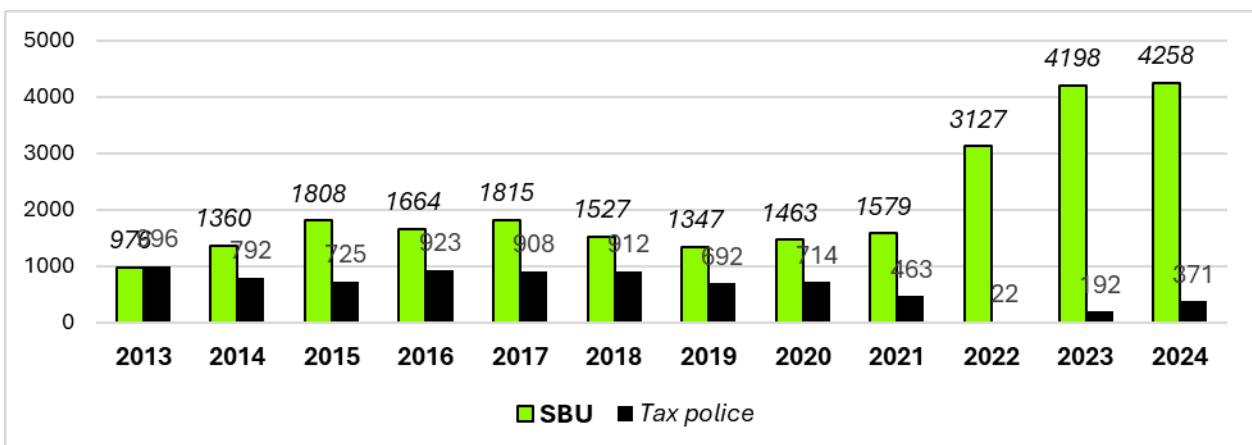


Figure 73. Criminal proceedings with suspects opened by the SBU and by the Tax Police

Indicators of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), as statistics demonstrate, were not significantly impacted by the War. In contrast, indicators of the State Bureau of Investigation (DBR) increased more than significantly (*Figure 74*).

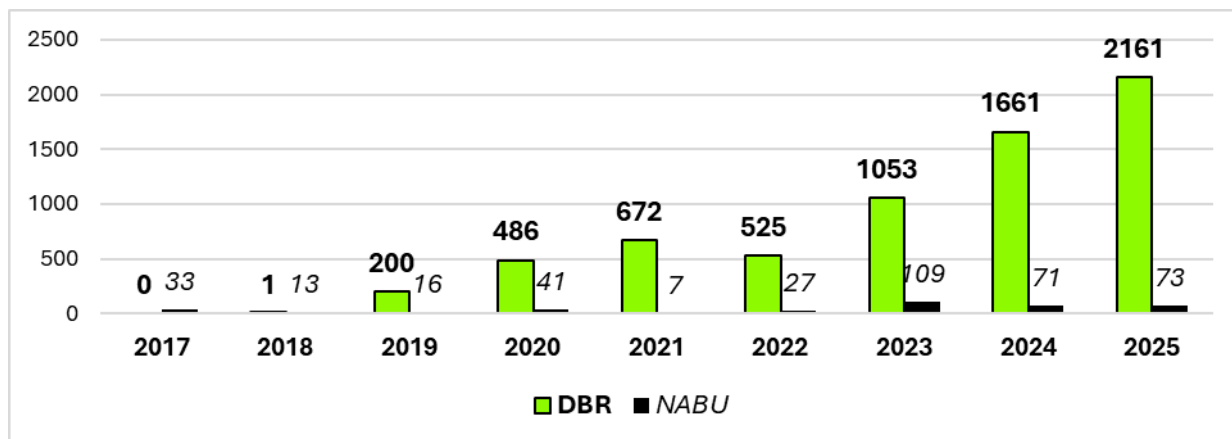


Figure 74. Criminal proceedings with suspects opened by the DBR and by the NABU

Quality and Quantity of Criminal Investigations during the War

No less interesting is the issue of researching the impact of the War on the indicators of the work of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, where, according to statistical forms, we take as a basis two indicators – the total number of criminal proceedings opened by one or another law enforcement agency (prosecutor's office, the police, security service, tax police, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine), and the number of criminal proceedings with suspects opened by the relevant law enforcement agency.

Analysis of *Figure 75* reveals notable fluctuations in the prosecution service's activity between 2013 and 2025, with particularly significant developments following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The data demonstrates that during 2022, the first year of the invasion, prosecutors opened substantially more criminal proceedings (9586) compared to the pre-invasion year of 2021 (7870), representing a 21,8% increase in prosecutorial activity (*Figure 75*).

However, this expansion in opened proceedings was not accompanied by a proportional increase in notifications of suspicion, which actually declined from 1420 in 2021 to 1354 in 2022, suggesting potential challenges in advancing investigations to the formal accusation stage. The subsequent years show that while the elevated level of opened proceedings continued into 2023 (9584), a decline occurred in 2024 (7399) before partially recovering in 2025 (8192). Conversely, notifications of suspicion increased in the post-2022 period, reaching 1678 in 2023 and maintaining similar levels in 2024 (1693) and 2025 (1730).

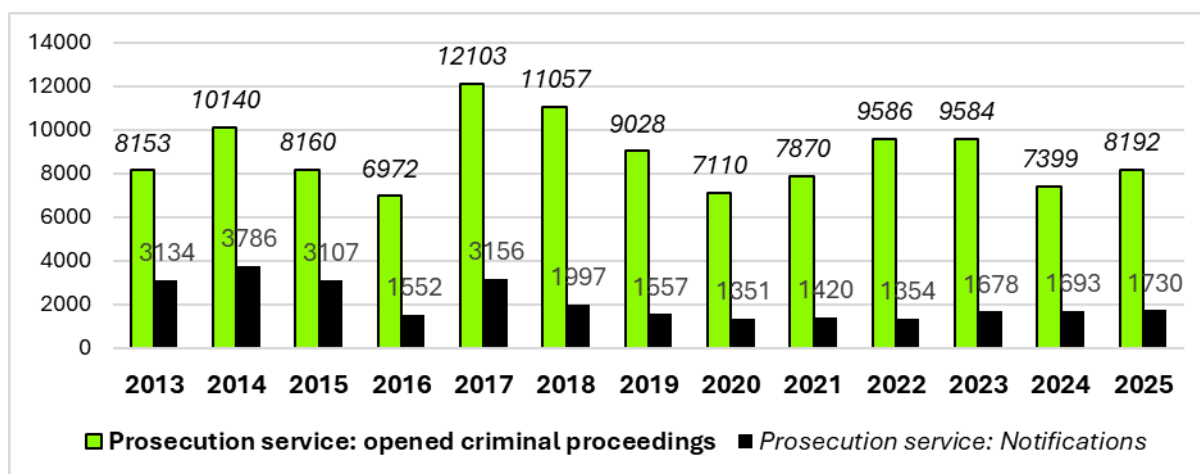


Figure 75. Criminal proceedings opened by Prosecution Service

These trends suggest that while the prosecution service initially responded to the wartime crisis by significantly

expanding the number of initiated criminal proceedings, the system subsequently experienced difficulties in maintaining both the volume of new cases and the efficiency of processing them through to formal charges. The data thus reflects the dual pressures of wartime criminal justice demands and institutional capacity constraints in Ukraine's prosecution system (*Figure 76*).

The data on criminal proceedings registered by police over the period 2013-2025 reveals significant fluctuations that reflect broader transformations in Ukraine's law enforcement system (*Figure 78*). The most dramatic trend is the sharp decline from 2013, when police opened 118505 criminal proceedings, to 2016, when this figure dropped to 36766 – representing a reduction of approximately 69%. This precipitous decrease coincided with comprehensive reforms of Ukraine's law enforcement agencies and the transition from the militia to the National Police model, which fundamentally restructured investigative procedures and institutional practices.

Following this nadir, the period from 2017 to 2022 demonstrated relative stabilisation, with annual figures fluctuating between approximately 40000 and 50000 opened proceedings. In 2022, the police registered 39800 criminal proceedings, of which 28633 involved identified suspects, marking a slight decrease from 2021's figures of 44027 total proceedings and 36562 with suspects (*Figure 76*).

However, a remarkable surge occurred in 2023, when police opened 61847 criminal proceedings (51373 with suspects), followed by a further increase in 2024 to 65478 proceedings (56014 with suspects). This substantial escalation – nearly doubling the 2016 minimum and approaching levels not observed since 2014 – likely reflects the operational challenges and expanded criminal activity associated with wartime conditions following Russia's full-scale invasion.

The consistent ratio between total opened proceedings and those with identified suspects, typically ranging from 70-85%, suggests systematic investigative capacity, though the absolute numbers indicate significant volatility in criminal justice workload across this transformative period (*Figure 78*).

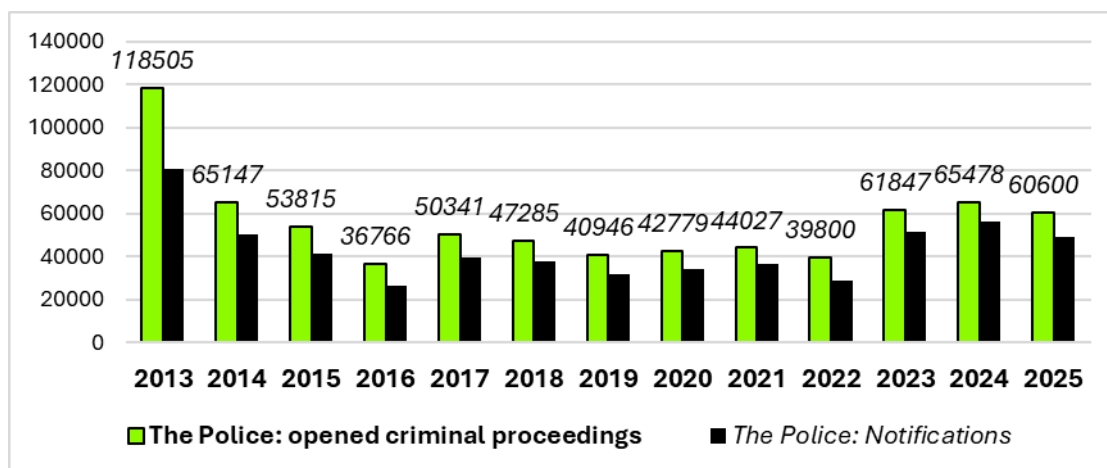


Figure 76. Criminal proceedings opened by the Police

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 fundamentally transformed the operational landscape of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), producing both quantitative and qualitative shifts in its criminal detection capabilities. The data reveal a complex picture that challenges simplistic narratives about wartime law enforcement effectiveness.

The immediate war impact manifested in an unprecedented surge of registered criminal proceedings. In 2022, the SBU registered 11841 criminal proceedings – a 135% increase from the 5035 proceedings registered in 2021. This dramatic escalation reflects the emergence of war-specific criminal categories, including treason, collaboration with occupying forces, sabotage, and violations of the laws and customs of war, which became priority areas for SBU investigation. The agency's mandate expanded significantly to address threats to national security emerging from the full-scale invasion, fundamentally reconfiguring its investigative priorities and resource allocation (*Figure 77*).

However, the subsequent trajectory demonstrates a nuanced pattern. The years 2023-2024 witnessed a slight decline in total registered proceedings (11679 and 10956 respectively), suggesting an initial stabilisation following the crisis mobilisation of 2022. Yet this apparent decrease masks a more significant development: a substantial improvement in detection quality, as measured by the proportion of proceedings with identified suspects. Criminal proceedings with notifications (indicating suspect identification) increased from 3127 in 2022 to 4198 in 2023 and further to 4258 in 2024 – representing approximately 36-39% of all proceedings, compared to only 26% in 2022 (*Figure 77*).

This improved detection rate amid high caseloads suggests several institutional adaptations. First, the initial flood of 2022 cases required triage and investigative prioritisation, with resources increasingly directed toward cases

with viable prosecution prospects. Second, wartime conditions likely facilitated certain investigative activities, particularly in treason and collaboration cases where digital evidence, intercepted communications, and witness testimony became more readily available. Third, the concentration of SBU efforts on national security crimes – offenses typically characterised by clearer evidence trails than traditional criminal investigations – may have enhanced detection efficiency.

Nevertheless, the persistence of elevated caseloads through 2025 (11081 proceedings with 4471 notifications) indicates that wartime conditions continue to generate substantial investigative demands on the SBU, while simultaneously requiring the agency to maintain improved detection standards despite resource constraints imposed by ongoing hostilities (*Figure 77*).

The data presented in *Figure 78* reveals a troubling trajectory in the Tax Police's investigative effectiveness, particularly regarding the conversion of opened criminal proceedings into cases with identified suspects.

During the pre-war period, the Tax Police maintained relatively consistent detection rates, with suspect notifications averaging 27-34% of opened proceedings. The period 2013-2018 showed the strongest performance, with 2400-3400 proceedings annually producing 700-900 cases with suspects. This represented a stable, if modest, investigative capacity. The gradual decline from 3431 proceedings in 2013 to 1902 in 2019 already signalled systemic challenges, though detection rates remained within acceptable bounds (*Figure 78*).

The year 2022 represents a catastrophic breakdown in Tax Police functionality. The dramatic reduction to merely 218 criminal proceedings with only 22 suspects identified (10,1% detection rate) reflects the profound institutional disruption caused by Russia's full-scale invasion. This tenfold decrease suggests near-total organisational paralysis, likely attributable to mobilisation, resource reallocation to defence priorities, and displacement of investigative personnel.

The subsequent recovery demonstrates a concerning pattern: while the volume of registered proceedings rebounded substantially – 945 (2023), 1347 (2024), and 1404 (2025) – the detection rates remain significantly depressed. The 2023 detection rate of 20,3% and 2024's 27,5% still lag behind historical norms, suggesting that institutional capacity has not fully recovered despite increased caseloads (*Figure 78*).

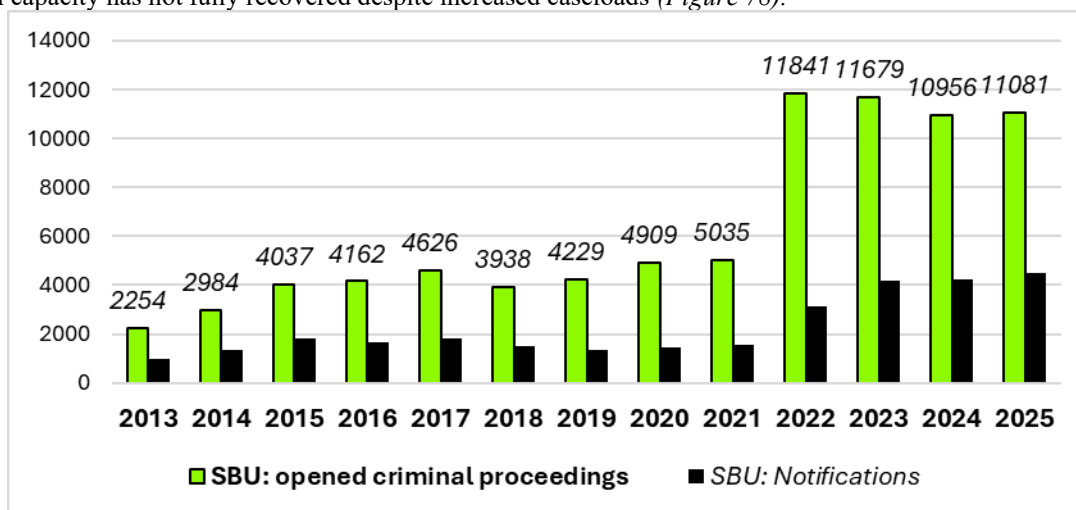


Figure 77. Criminal proceedings opened by SBU

This gap between quantity and quality points to several potential problems: superficial case registration to meet statistical targets, insufficient investigative resources relative to opened proceedings, loss of experienced investigators during the war, or deliberate strategy prioritizing case initiation over completion. The 2025 data (32,3% detection rate) suggest marginal improvement but remains below pre-2019 standards, indicating persistent structural deficits in the Tax Police's investigative capability during wartime conditions (*Figure 78*).

The statistical data on criminal proceedings handled by the State Bureau of Investigation reveals a concerning trend in investigative effectiveness, particularly following the onset of full-scale war in 2022. While the absolute number of opened criminal proceedings has grown exponentially – from a single case in 2017 to 8920 in 2025 – the detection rate, measured by the ratio of cases with identified suspects (notifications) to total opened proceedings, tells a markedly different story (*Figure 79*).

The DBR's detection rate peaked in 2021 at 50,1% (672 notifications from 1341 proceedings), suggesting that investigators were successfully identifying suspects in half of all cases. However, this effectiveness deteriorated sharply following Russia's full-scale invasion. By 2025, the detection rate had plummeted to just 24,2% (2161 notifications from 8920 proceedings) – less than half the 2021 rate. This decline is particularly striking given the intermediate rates: 39,2% in 2022, 36,2% in 2023, and 33,4% in 2024, indicating a consistent downward trajectory rather than a temporary wartime disruption (*Figure 79*).

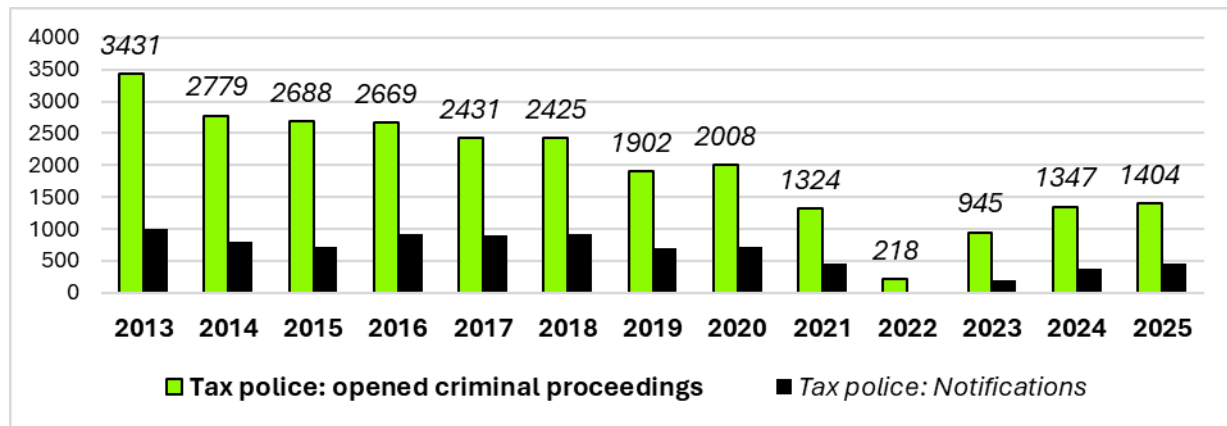


Figure 78. Criminal proceedings opened by the Tax Police

This pattern substantiates the thesis that the DBR is increasingly transformed into a body primarily documenting crimes rather than solving them – opening ‘factual cases’ without meaningful prospects of identifying perpetrators. The dramatic expansion in caseload volume, which nearly doubled year-over-year from 2023 onward, has evidently overwhelmed investigative capacity. The war has simultaneously diverted resources, complicated evidence collection, and likely expanded the types of crimes under DBR jurisdiction (including war crimes and sabotage), creating a perfect storm for declining effectiveness.

The implications extend beyond mere statistics. A detection rate below 25% undermines public confidence in law enforcement, creates a culture of impunity, and fails to fulfil the Bureau’s core mandate. While wartime conditions present extraordinary challenges, this trend demands urgent structural reforms, resource reallocation, and potential recalibration of the DBR’s investigative priorities.

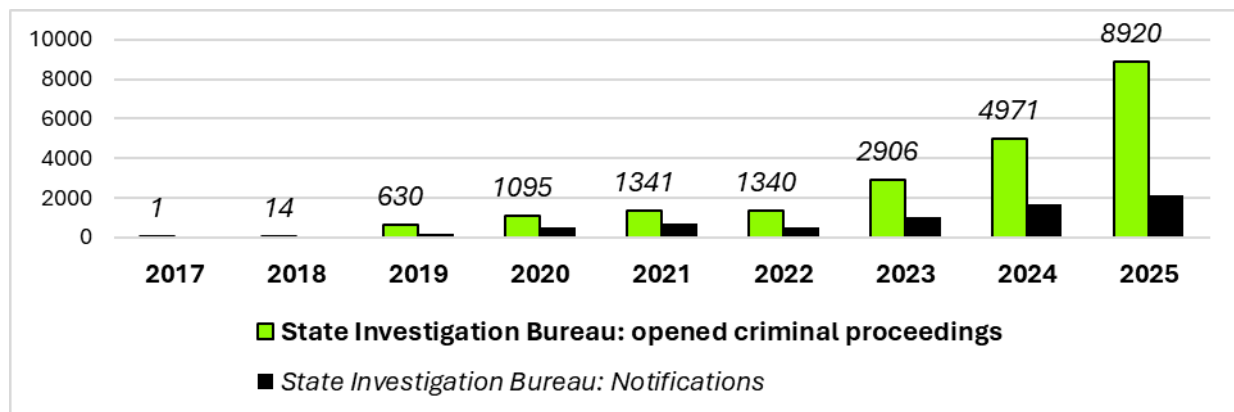


Figure 79. Criminal proceedings opened by the DBR

Based on the data presented in *Figure 80*, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine has demonstrated a dramatic increase in opened criminal proceedings, rising from 105 cases in 2017 to 355 cases in 2025, representing a 238% growth over eight years. However, the detection rate – measured as the ratio of criminal proceedings with identified suspects (notifications) to total opened proceedings – reveals significant inconsistency and concerning volatility throughout NABU’s operational history. The detection rate peaked in 2023 at approximately 47,2%, when 109 notifications were issued against 231 opened proceedings, suggesting a period of enhanced investigative effectiveness. In stark contrast, 2021 recorded the lowest detection rate at merely 6,9%, with only 7 notifications issued despite 101 opened criminal proceedings, raising serious questions about investigative capacity during that year (*Figure 80*).

The post-2022 period shows a troubling trend: while opened proceedings more than tripled from 119 in 2022 to 355 in 2025, notifications increased only from 27 to 73, indicating a widening effectiveness gap. The detection rate for 2025 stands at approximately 20,6%, which is substantially lower than the 2023 peak, suggesting that rapid case expansion has outpaced NABU’s capacity to identify suspects and build prosecutable cases. The average detection rate across all years is approximately 24,2%, meaning that roughly three-quarters of NABU’s opened criminal proceedings

do not result in suspect identification, which represents a significant challenge to the Bureau's anti-corruption mandate.

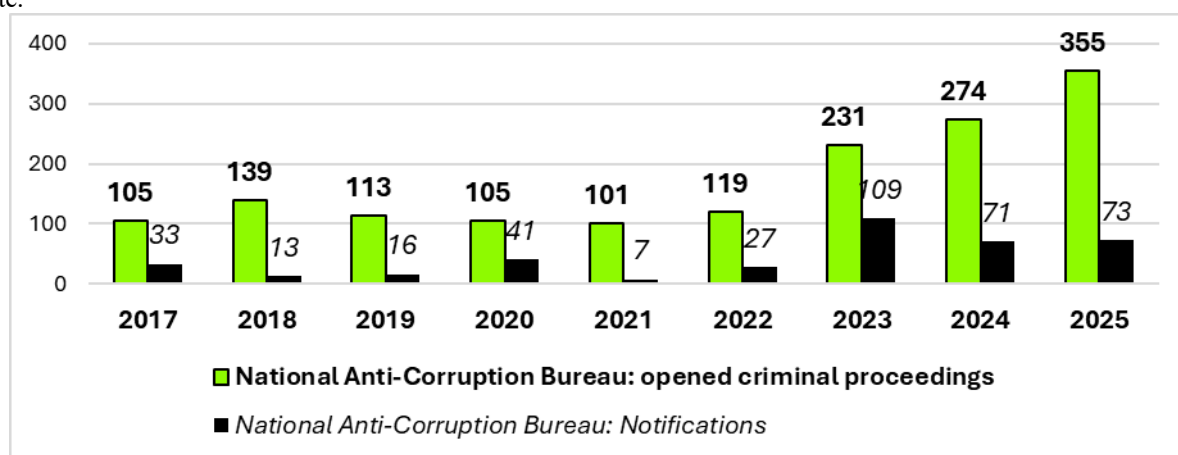


Figure 80. Criminal proceedings opened by the NABU

The war's impact appears paradoxical: while the text claims stability since 2022, the actual data shows explosive growth in proceedings but declining proportional success in suspect identification, potentially indicating either increased corruption detection or decreased investigative thoroughness. The sharp increase in both metrics during 2023 (231 proceedings, 109 notifications) followed by continued high case numbers but declining proportional suspect identification in 2024-2025 suggests possible resource constraints or strategic shifts in NABU's operational approach. Overall, NABU's effectiveness remains questionable when measured by detection rates, as the growing disparity between opened proceedings and identified suspects indicates systemic challenges in converting investigations into actionable cases against corruption perpetrators, potentially undermining public confidence in Ukraine's anti-corruption infrastructure.

Conclusions

Having synthesised the developments presented throughout this study, we offer the following conclusions that reflect crime trends in Ukraine across the period 2013-2025, with particular emphasis on the profound transformations precipitated by Russia's full-scale military aggression.

Following conclusions articulated in our previously published papers, we emphasise that the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine constitutes the first full-scale war in central Europe since World War II in which a contemporary democratic state operating under European legal frameworks has maintained systematic crime data collection while fighting an existential conflict. This unique combination of institutional transparency amid catastrophic disruption has created an unprecedented field for criminological research on how modern warfare reshapes criminality and tests the resilience of justice institutions in digital and technological societies.

Ukraine's wartime crime landscape exhibits a dualistic nature that distinguishes it from historical conflict-related criminality patterns. While total crime initially surged from 321443 registered offenses in 2021 to 475595 in 2023 and 492479 in 2024, the trajectory accelerated dramatically in 2025, reaching 608191 cases – an 89% increase from the pre-war baseline. This escalating pattern reflects not merely wartime disruption but fundamental restructuring of Ukraine's criminal ecosystem, incorporating entirely new categories of offenses alongside traditional crime forms that have adapted to conflict conditions.

The most alarming finding concerns the *systematic degradation of investigative capacity*. While Ukraine registered unprecedented crime volumes, the proportion of criminal proceedings with identified suspects collapsed from 53% in 2021 to 39% in 2024 and further to 27,3% in 2025 – the lowest rate in the entire observation period. This deterioration created a justice gap of over 442000 uninvestigated criminal proceedings in 2025 alone, representing a crisis of accountability that threatens both immediate public safety and long-term rule of law restoration. The ratio between registered crimes and notifications of suspicion deteriorated from 1,86 in 2021 to 3,66 in 2025, effectively doubling the investigative inefficiency and suggesting that Ukraine's criminal justice system has reached a critical threshold of institutional exhaustion after four years of sustained conflict.

The war fundamentally altered the *spatial distribution of criminality* in Ukraine. Crime became significantly *more rural*, with the proportion of rural offenses increasing from approximately 20% during 2013-2021 to 32,3% in 2025. The urban-to-rural crime ratio declined from a stable 4:1 throughout the pre-war period to barely 2:1 in 2025, reflecting multiple conflict-related factors: systematic criminal activity by occupation forces in rural territories, property crimes in evacuated frontline settlements, and military-related offenses concentrated in non-urban combat zones. This 13%-point shift from urban to rural crime between 2013 and 2025 represents a fundamental restructuring of Ukraine's criminal geography with implications for post-war policing strategies and resource allocation.

Crimes against human life and health demonstrated particularly troubling trajectories during the wartime

period. Registered offenses increased from 33657 in 2021 to 85422 in 2025, yet the suspect identification rate collapsed from 67% to merely 25%, indicating severe operational weakness in investigating violent crime. The detection rate for intentional homicides deteriorated catastrophically: only 5% of perpetrators were identified in 2022, 2,8% in 2023, and 1,9% in 2024, before partially recovering to approximately 3% in 2025. This near-complete investigative failure for the most serious violent offenses creates dangerous impunity and undermines deterrence mechanisms essential for social order.

The prosecution of **torture** presented paradoxical patterns that challenge conventional assumptions about the relationship between state resources and criminal justice effectiveness. Despite wartime conditions that would logically impede torture investigations – displaced populations, overwhelmed institutions, diverted resources – the system demonstrated marked improvement in investigative effectiveness. The 2024-2025 period achieved the highest conversion rates in the entire observation period, with approximately 62,9% of registered torture crimes resulting in proceedings with suspects and 46,8% reaching indictment stage, compared to pre-war rates of 24-46% for suspect identification and 16-32% for indictments. This wartime improvement fundamentally challenges resource-centric explanations of criminal justice dysfunction, suggesting that pre-war failures stemmed primarily from lack of political will, inadequate prosecutorial prioritisation, or institutional capture rather than insufficient capacity. However, this improved effectiveness coexists with zones of absolute impunity in occupied territories where torture occurs beyond the reach of Ukrainian investigative authorities, meaning that official statistics severely undercount actual torture incidence.

Domestic violence crimes exhibited complex dynamics influenced by wartime social disruptions. Following an initial decrease to 3360 cases in 2022 – likely reflecting mass migration of potential victims and military mobilisation of potential perpetrators – registered offenses surged to 6805 in 2023, 8900 in 2024, and 8121 in 2025. The average number of domestic violence crimes during 2023-2025 was 2,9 times higher than the 2013-2021 average, indicating that wartime conditions ultimately exacerbated rather than reduced intimate partner violence, possibly due to combat-related trauma, economic stress, and breakdown of social support networks. Notably, the proportion of offenses classified under Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (domestic violence as a *specific crime*) decreased from approximately 50% pre-war to 27-35% during wartime, suggesting potential misclassification or under-reporting within the specific domestic violence category.

Drug-related crimes presented perhaps the most counterintuitive pattern in Ukraine's wartime crime landscape. Despite military operations, closed borders, curfews, and ubiquitous checkpoints that would logically suppress drug trafficking, registered drug offenses increased from 34398 in 2022 to 39124 in 2023 and 48233 in 2024. The ratio between registered drug crimes and identified suspects remained among the highest across all crime categories, averaging approximately 1,5 - 1,7 throughout the wartime period, suggesting that law enforcement continued prioritising minor drug offenses even during existential military threat. This pattern indicates that the '*artificial market*' for drug-related crimes – where police officers effectively know where and when offenses will occur – '*should not stand idle*' even during war, raising profound questions about resource allocation and institutional priorities when investigative capacity for violent crimes simultaneously collapsed.

Military crimes demonstrated the expected wartime surge but with troubling investigative deficits. Police registered 16515 military service offenses in 2023 and 66240 in 2024 yet identified suspects in only 2239 and 7398 proceedings respectively. This 11-14% suspect identification rate indicates that the vast majority of military crimes – including desertion, unauthorised abandonment of units, and other breaches of military discipline – remained uninvestigated despite their direct implications for combat effectiveness and military morale. The pattern suggests systematic challenges in military justice administration under combat conditions.

Property crimes exhibited unexpected patterns that challenge assumptions about wartime criminality. Rather than the anticipated surge in property offenses amid weakened policing, recorded property crimes decreased significantly: 158729 in 2021, 113137 in 2022, 178902 in 2023, 132910 in 2024, and 89150 in 2025. Theft crimes followed a similar trajectory, declining from 113517 in 2021 to 28416 in 2025 – a 75% reduction reflecting mass displacement, emigration, and criminal justice system saturation with more serious wartime offenses. Car thefts, robberies, aggravated robberies, and racketeering all demonstrated comparable decline patterns. However, fraud crimes deviated dramatically from this trend, increasing from 23847 in 2021 to a peak of 82609 in 2023 before moderating to 64978 in 2024 and 48871 in 2025. This divergence suggests that educated, socially adapted individuals with higher status increasingly engaged in economic crimes during wartime – a phenomenon the author characterised as morally significant, wherein war made criminal behaviour less permissible for traditionally '*criminally addicted*' strata while becoming more permissible for previously law-abiding educated social classes.

Economic crimes demonstrated remarkable adaptation to wartime conditions. Following an initial decrease to 3414 crimes in 2022, economic offenses recovered to 4840 in 2023, 5139 in 2024, and 5180 in 2025, nearly reaching pre-war levels despite ongoing conflict. Money laundering crimes exhibited particularly effective '*adaptation*', increasing from 395 in 2021 to 437 in 2022, 969 in 2023, 1132 in 2024, and 1344 in 2025 – a 240% increase over four years suggesting that criminal enterprises successfully exploited wartime chaos and weakened oversight to launder proceeds. The sustained growth in money laundering prosecutions indicates either genuine expansion of financial crime or improved detection, though given the simultaneous collapse in investigative capacity for other offense categories, the former explanation appears more probable.

Firearms-related crimes presented complex patterns that defy simplistic assumptions about weapon proliferation and violent crime. Despite massive distribution of military-grade weaponry to territorial defence units, police, and irregular formations, firearms crimes did not produce the catastrophic surge that might be expected. While intentional homicides committed with firearms spiked dramatically to 909 cases in 2023 (25 times the 2021 baseline of 36 cases), the figure declined to 295 in 2024 and 187 in 2025. However, these official statistics likely represent severe undercounting, particularly in conflict zones where bodies remain unrecovered, crimes unreported, and perpetrators unidentified. The tragic January 27, 2026, incident in Cherkasy region, where a murder suspect killed four police officers during arrest, exemplifies how demobilised combatants with military training and superior firepower pose unprecedented challenges to civilian law enforcement. Crimes committed with explosives demonstrated a concerning upward trajectory: from 20 in 2021 to 63 in 2023, 86 in 2024, and 98 in 2025, with suspect identification rates declining to approximately one-third of cases, indicating severe investigative capacity deficits for this weapons category.

War crimes statistics revealed the expected wartime explosion but also demonstrated institutional adaptation. Police registered 62128 war crimes in 2022 and 62667 in 2023 – 246 times the 2021 baseline – before the figure decreased to approximately half that level in 2024. This reduction may reflect either genuine decline in war crimes commission, territorial stabilisation reducing access to crime scenes, or investigative capacity limitations preventing continued documentation at peak rates.

Sex offenses exhibited counterintuitive wartime patterns. Despite the conflict's expected disruption of social settings where such crimes typically occur, registered sex crimes initially decreased to 623 in 2022 but subsequently recovered to 947 in 2023, 872 in 2024, and 1067 in 2025. Rape statistics followed similar trajectories: 406 in 2021, 250 in 2022, 450 in 2023, 410 in 2024, and 457 in 2025. The recovery of sex crime rates to near pre-war levels by 2024-2025 suggests that wartime social disruptions initially suppressed reporting or opportunity structures but that these offenses resumed as populations partially stabilised and conflict became a normalised aspect of daily life.

Crimes against national security demonstrated patterns reflecting institutional priorities and external threats. In 2022, law enforcement agencies registered five times more crimes against national security compared to the entire 2013-2021 period, though this figure dropped approximately three-fold in 2023 before stabilising. Crimes in the sphere of protection of state secrets, inviolability of state borders, and provision of conscription and mobilisation increased 2,6-fold from 2021 to 2022, then 2,3-fold from 2022 to 2023, reaching 6279 cases. Illegal trafficking of persons across state borders surged from 327 crimes in 2021 to 1225 in 2022, 2301 in 2023, 3106 in 2024, and 2750 in 2025, indicating sustained pressure on border integrity and likely reflecting both genuine illegal migration and corruption among border guard personnel.

Corruption-related offenses (*'Crimes against public service'*) exhibited adaptation patterns consistent with economic crime trends. Following initial decline to 11617 crimes in 2022 (down 1,6-fold from 2021), such offenses increased 1,3-fold in 2023 to 14820 crimes, continued rising to 16820 in 2024, and reached 17385 in 2025 – representing a 1,1-fold increase compared to 2022 and nearly reaching pre-war levels. This recovery trajectory indicates that corruption networks successfully exploited wartime chaos, weakened oversight, and emergency procurement procedures to resume operations. However, the suspect identification rate for corruption offenses improved from approximately 32% in 2021-2022 to 41-45% in 2023-2025, suggesting either enhanced investigative focus or strategic case selection prioritising prosecutable matters.

Human trafficking statistics revealed a profound and troubling disconnect between expected vulnerability and documented cases. Despite approximately 6,5 million Ukrainian refugees creating unprecedented exploitation opportunities, registered trafficking crimes remained remarkably low: 133 in 2022, 147 in 2023, 105 in 2024, and 155 in 2025. These figures are grossly insufficient considering the displacement scale, strongly suggesting that trafficking crimes possess substantially greater latency than law enforcement agencies acknowledge. The disconnect implies severe deficiencies in police intelligence regarding trafficking prevention and in Ukrainian border service capabilities, with corruption likely playing a significant role in systematic under-detection. Analysis of *'satellite crimes'* associated with trafficking – including brothel operation (61 cases in 2022, 129 in 2023, 79 in 2024, 54 in 2025) and procuring offenses – further confirms this pattern. Investigative journalism revealing the expansion of sex industry operations in frontline cities like Kramatorsk, with systematic prostitution occurring despite formal legal prohibitions, demonstrates that declining official statistics mask continued criminal activity rather than reflecting genuine suppression. This case exemplifies how war disrupts statistical recording of phenomena far more than it disrupts the phenomena themselves.

The institutional performance of law enforcement agencies exhibited divergent patterns reflecting wartime adaptation and capacity constraints.

The National Police registered significantly more criminal proceedings in 2023-2024 (61847 and 65478 respectively) compared to 2022 (39800), with 2025 showing 60600 proceedings and suspect identification rates of approximately 70-85% throughout the period.

In contrast, **the Prosecution Service** registered fewer proceedings: from 9586 in 2022 to 7399 in 2024 and 8192 in 2025, suggesting strategic withdrawal from direct case initiation in favour of supervisory functions.

The Security Service of Ukraine demonstrated initial wartime surge – registering 11841 criminal proceedings in 2022 (a 135% increase from 2021's 5035) – before stabilising at approximately 10956-11679 proceedings annually through 2023-2024. However, suspect identification improved substantially during this period, from 26% in 2022 to

36-39% in 2023-2024, indicating that while total caseload moderated, investigative quality increased. The 2025 data showed 11081 proceedings with 4471 suspects (40,4%), maintaining this improved effectiveness pattern.

The Tax Police exhibited catastrophic 2022 collapse – from 1324 proceedings in 2021 to merely 218 in 2022 (with only 10% suspect identification) – before gradual recovery to 945 in 2023, 1347 in 2024, and 1404 in 2025. However, suspect identification rates remained depressed at 20-32% compared to pre-war standards, suggesting persistent institutional capacity deficits despite increased case registration.

The State Bureau of Investigation experienced explosive caseload growth from 1340 proceedings in 2021-2022 to 2906 in 2023, 4971 in 2024, and 8920 in 2025, yet suspect identification rates collapsed from 50% in 2021 to 24,2% in 2025. This pattern indicates transformation into a body primarily documenting crimes rather than solving them, with the dramatic expansion overwhelming investigative capacity.

Conversely, **the National Anti-Corruption Bureau** maintained more modest growth from 119 proceedings in 2022 to 355 in 2025, with suspect identification rates fluctuating between 7% and 47%, averaging approximately 20-25% in recent years.

The evidence comprehensively demonstrates that Ukraine's criminal justice system operates in a state of *severe crisis* under prolonged armed conflict. Registered crimes have increased 89% from pre-war levels while capacity to identify and prosecute suspects has declined catastrophically, creating a widening justice gap that reached over 442000 uninvestigated proceedings in 2025. The 2025 spike to 608191 registered crimes with merely 165904 identified suspects (27,3%) represents an unprecedented challenge to rule of law in a European democratic state. This deterioration manifests across multiple dimensions: violent crime investigation has collapsed, property crime patterns have inverted expectations, economic and corruption offenses have adapted successfully to wartime conditions, and entirely new categories of conflict-related criminality have emerged while traditional offense types simultaneously evolve.

These findings illuminate critical challenges confronting democratic states attempting to maintain rule of law under existential military threats. Ukraine's experience demonstrates that institutional transparency and statistical continuity can be maintained even under extreme pressure, but effectiveness inevitably suffers when resources divert to survival imperatives. The growing gap between registered crimes and prosecuted cases represents not merely statistical phenomenon but fundamental challenge to social order, public safety, and democratic governance with consequences extending well beyond hostilities cessation.

The accumulated deficit in justice delivery – over 1,5 million uninvestigated criminal proceedings across 2022-2025 – will require sustained international support for institutional strengthening, technical assistance in investigation techniques, and comprehensive post-war reconstruction planning. Ukraine's case study provides essential lessons for policymakers, international organisations, and scholars addressing states facing similar existential challenges, demonstrating both the remarkable resilience of democratic institutions under catastrophic pressure and the profound limitations of state capacity when confronting total war while attempting to preserve rule of law.