

The position of the Expert Network of the International Crimean Platform on the criminal destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station dam by the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the night of June 6, 2023

The blowing up of the Kakhovka HPS dam is another war crime of the Russian Federation, a violation of Article 56 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions for the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts to which Russia is a Party. This act of terrorism is a manifestation of the irresponsible and criminal policy of the Russian authorities against Ukraine, the potential consequences of which may affect the whole of Europe and the world. The flooding of a vast area downstream of the Dnipro River is particularly dangerous and will have significant environmental, social and economic consequences, as well as security risks for the south of Ukraine and the Northern Black Sea.

Changes in the integrity of the established ecosystem, water pollution due to flooding of organized and unorganized storage sites for household waste and pesticides, waterlogging, desalination of the Black Sea coastal waters, death of animals and a significant number of fish, and other environmental impacts will have a long-term negative impact.

The social impacts will be caused by flooding of more than 80 settlements on both banks of the Dnipro River, and complications with water supply in Kherson, Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia regions, as well as the Northern Crimea. Access to fresh water will be severely limited. This could also lead to a deterioration in the epidemiological situation and the spread of infectious diseases in southern Ukraine. Thousands of people are already being evacuated from the flooded areas.

Land reclamation systems in southern Ukraine are under threat, which will affect agricultural activities in Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka and Khersonska oblasts. Flooding of agricultural land will have additional significant negative consequences for global food security. Economic consequences will also be felt by industrial enterprises in the region.

Security challenges are associated with the flooding of territories controlled by the Russian military that were mined and had explosive warehouses, etc. Another factor is the impact on the nuclear safety of ZNPP in order to create preconditions for a high-level incident on the INES scale, since the cooling systems of Zaporizhzhia NPP are supplied with Dnipro water.

Flooding of the territories of southern Ukraine poses a threat to the destruction of indigenous cultural heritage sites and their traditional economy. The destruction of the Kakhovka HPP

dam by Russian troops threatens the existence of historical landscapes and archaeological sites in the areas of Mykolaivka, Olhivka, Tyahynka, Ponyativka, Sadove, Kozachi Lageri, Nova Mayachka - more than 170 burial mounds are under threat of flooding; the settlement monument - the Velyka Kardashynka ash pit and the Ponyativka burial ground of the II century BC - III century AD.

The explosion of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, which was under the effective control of the Russian Federation, is an act of man-made and environmental terrorism, the largest man-made disaster in Europe in recent decades.

The Expert Network of the Crimean Platform calls on international organizations, governments, citizens, and government officials:

1. To strongly condemn the terrorist actions of the Russian Federation at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station and the violation of the Geneva Conventions.
2. To increase pressure on the aggressor country, in particular, to impose additional sanctions against certain sectors of the Russian economy and specific perpetrators of this tragedy.
3. Provide Ukraine with the means, including military, necessary to de-occupy the occupied territories and prevent the recurrence of similar terrorist acts in other temporarily occupied territories.
4. To join forces to urgently overcome the consequences of the environmental and humanitarian disaster, to provide Ukraine with the means and assistance to restore the areas around the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station as soon as possible, to monitor the situation in southern Ukraine and to record the consequences of the damage caused.
5. Consider the possibility of using frozen Russian assets to restore the environmental and socio-economic conditions of the affected areas.
6. To do everything possible to ensure that the aggressor state does not avoid responsibility for the crime, in particular through the mechanisms of international organizations and courts. We call on the International Criminal Court to investigate the war crime of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station explosion.
7. Hold an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly to respond to the Russian terrorist attack. Raise the issue of expelling Russia from UNESCO. Raise the issue of using the «Consensus Minus One» mechanism in the OSCE to limit the voice of the aggressor country.