



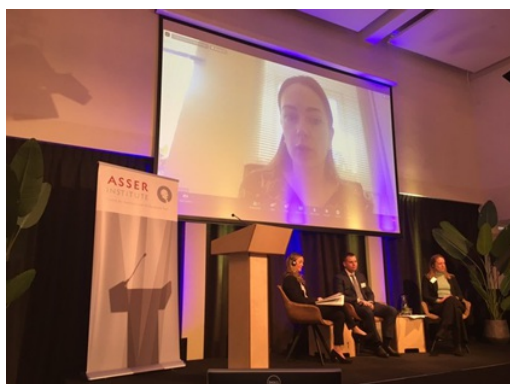
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MATRA-Ukraine Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2022

About

The MATRA project “Strengthening Ukraine’s Capacity to Investigate and Prosecute International Crimes” is a joint initiative of the T.M.C. Asser Instituut (Asser) and Global Rights Compliance (GRC). The project is designed to assist criminal justice actors, including investigators, prosecutors, lawyers, judges, civil society organisations and journalists in investigations, prosecuting, adjudicating and reporting on international crimes in Ukraine.

For all information on the project, please visit our MATRA-Ukraine website [here](#). Please encourage your colleagues to [sign up](#) for this Newsletter to keep informed about upcoming activities for 2023.



Oleksandra Matviichuk from 2022 Nobel Peace

Recent MATRA-Ukraine Activities and Publications

Mid-term Conference

The MATRA-Ukraine mid-term conference ‘Strengthening Ukraine’s national efforts to investigate, prosecute, adjudicate and report on international crimes’ was held on 14 November 2022 at Beeld & Geluid in The Hague and online. The aim of the conference was to listen to

Prize laureate Center for Civil Liberties (CCL).

Ukrainian perspectives and re-assess their needs, identify the main challenges, learn best practices from (inter)national experts, and share ideas and insights on how the Ukrainian national authorities could proceed going forward.

It held three panel discussions on themes representing different aspects of the MATRA-Ukraine project's work: 'Strengthening and coordinating investigations and prosecutions,' 'Strengthening the judicial capacity to adjudicate international crimes,' and 'Enhancing the fairness of the justice process.' The speakers of the panels included various Ukrainian and international experts, both in-person and online. Further opening remarks were made by Myroslava Krasnoborova, Counsellor of the Ukrainian Embassy in The Hague and Mauritz Verheijden of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which funds the project.

The conference held a full house of attendees who provided active and positive engagement throughout the Q&A sessions after each panel. Some conclusions from the panel discussions include the need to implement survivor-centric approaches to investigations, especially for victims of sexual and gender-based violence within the Ukrainian context, the Ukrainian judiciary's willingness and continued efforts to implement international standards and administer justice for impending war crimes cases, and the historical lack of valuable defence and victim perspectives in international crimes cases which highlight questions on ensuring an equality of arms, adequate protective measures, and judicial transparency.

Read the full report of the conference [here](#).



Asymmetrical Haircuts

During the MATRA-Ukraine Conference, Janet Anderson and Stephanie van den Berg from international justice podcast “Asymmetrical Haircuts” talked to Ukrainian judges Hanna Maina (Novomoskovskyi Court of Dnipropetrovsk) and Svitlana Yakovleva (Supreme Court of Ukraine) about the realities and pressures of the Ukrainian judiciary in adapting their work to the conflict and the role of the international system in supporting their efforts. For a broader perspective on these trials, Asymmetrical Haircuts also caught up with Gaiane Nuridzhanian from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in Ukraine and the UiT-Arctic University of Norway. They discuss topics from organisational solutions being taken to effectively tackle war crimes in domestic courts, the experience at first-instance courts, to whether Ukrainian defence lawyers can be fair, and what holistic justice may mean for Ukrainians.

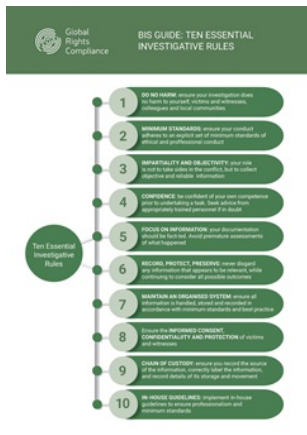
Listen here to the [full podcast](#).

Podcast: ‘Ukrainian War Crimes Trials with Ukrainian Judges’

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Basic Investigative Standards Guides (BIS)

The [BIS Guides](#) are designed to provide essential information in an easily-accessible format for stakeholders in Ukraine engaged in documenting and investigating international crimes.



Watch the [MATRA-Ukraine](#) website for the forthcoming Basic Investigative Standards Manual for Documenting International Crimes in Ukraine and the accompanying mobile App.

Training for CSOs Held on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

Between June and August 2022, GRC’s Ruby Mae Axelson participated as a trainer in five training sessions under the auspices of the MATRA-project on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) for Ukrainian CSOs organised jointly by Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice (‘WIGJ’) and the Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group (‘ULAG’). This training reflected the needs of civil society working on CRSV in the context of Russia’s latest invasion of Ukraine and sought to build upon local expertise and best practices when documenting CRSV.

The training was interactive and included sessions on an introduction to CRSV and gender-sensitive approaches to investigations (9 June 2022), interacting with victims of CRSV and interviewing techniques (16 June 2022), classifying crimes and recognising the elements of international crimes relevant to CRSV (23 June 2022), and evidentiary standards in CRSV cases, including the role of corroboration and overcoming negative and gendered myths and stereotypes when documenting CRSV crimes (4 August 2022). A separate interactive interview role-play was held on 21 July 2022, during which participants identified and discussed good and bad practices when interviewing victims of CRSV.

Commentary by MATRA-Ukraine Team Members

Anna Mykytenko and Maksym Vichchyk, ‘“All Our Hope is in the Famine”: Why an Investigation into Starvation Crimes in Ukraine is Urgently Needed’, *OpinioJuris*, 9 August 2022

‘Before diving into the discussion, it is necessary to outline the term “starvation crimes”, which we define as the intentional deprivation of objects indispensable to the survival of civilians (OIS) intended to cause starvation. This involves impeding the capacity of targeted civilians to access the means of sustaining life.’ [...]

Read the full article [here](#).

Clingendael Spectator, ‘Q&A: Russia’s War and the Power of International Law’ (26 October 2022)

‘Russia’s war on Ukraine sends shockwaves across Europe and the wider world. This Clingendael Spectator Q&A series explores the wider geopolitical consequences with key analysts from across the globe. In the second episode Victoria Kerr (Asser Institute) examines the impact of the war on international law.’ [...]

Read the full Q&A [here](#).

Harriet Salem, 'Ukraine Series: Interview with Wayne Jordash' Maastricht Blog on Transitional Justice (21 November 2022)

'This week, MBTJ spoke to Wayne Jordash KC, Managing Partner of Global Rights Compliance (GRC) about supporting Ukrainian prosecutors and investigators working on war crimes cases. GRC advises governments, civil society and corporations on international human rights and humanitarian law worldwide. Jordash has worked in all the significant international criminal courts over the last two decades, representing governments, military and political leaders and victims.' [...]

Read the full interview [here](#).

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