

# CRIMEA: ♦♦

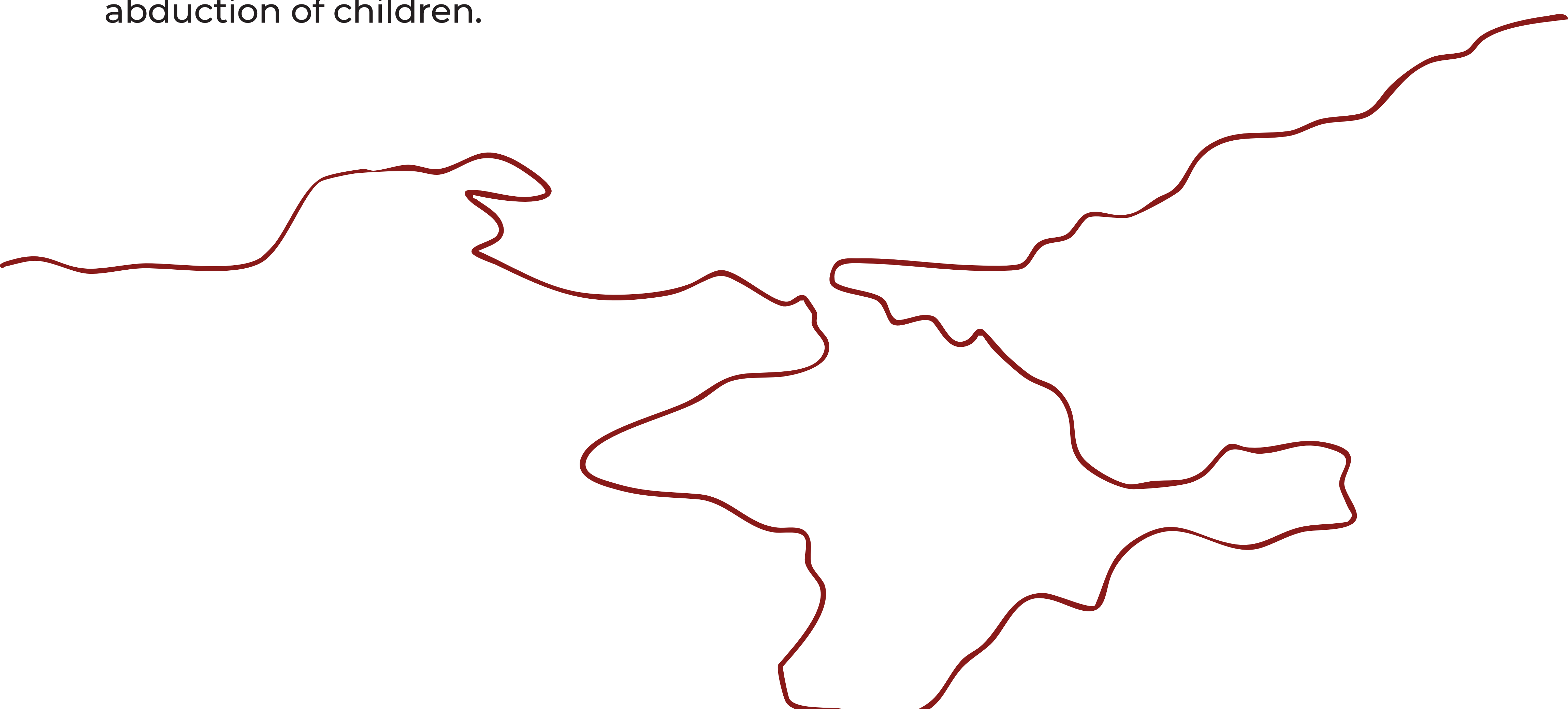
## Over a Decade Under the Russian Occupation

Since the illegal seizure of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation in late February 2014, Crimea – both its people and nature – **has been suffering numerous ordeals of occupation.** These include human rights violations and persecution on religious grounds, attempts to suppress the resistance and erase the cultural heritage of the Indigenous Crimean Tatar people, and illegal displacement and abduction of children.

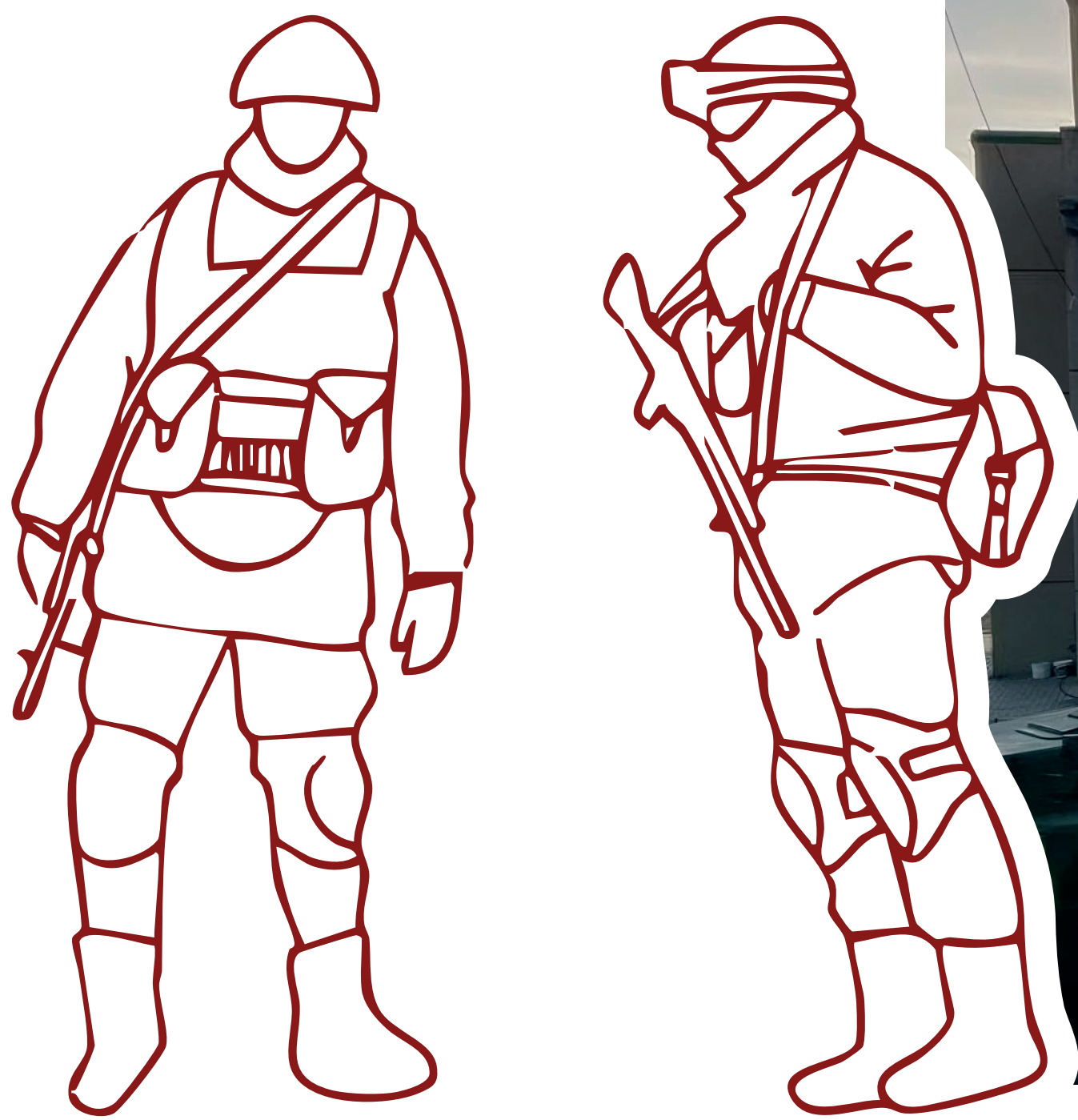
This exhibition briefly highlights certain developments in Crimea that Russia seeks to conceal from the international community.

Still, resistance to the Russian occupation continues.

**Crimea is Ukraine!**



# Religious persecution



Since the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the situation with freedom of **religious expression on the peninsula has deteriorated.** The Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been forced out of the peninsula. Crimean Tatars, who are mostly Muslims, are subjected to systematic illegal searches, criminal prosecution, and imprisonment on trumped-up charges of “**terrorism**” and “**extremism.**”

Jehovah’s Witnesses’ communities are banned, and their members are subject to searches, arrests and prison terms.

Protestant, Catholic, and other communities face bureaucratic obstacles, administrative pressure and interference in their activities.

Restrictions of religious freedom in occupied Crimea grossly violate fundamental international norms. **These violations are part of a broader system of repression by the Russian** occupiers aimed at destroying Ukrainian cultural identity, marginalizing Indigenous peoples, and strengthening colonial control over the peninsula.

# Human rights



For almost 12 years the Russian occupants **have been systematically using repressive methods to suppress any manifestation of pro-Ukrainian sentiments and resistance in occupied Crimea.** The occupying administration actively uses the criminal and administrative legislation of the Russian Federation to persecute the local population, who do not support the occupying regime and openly express their position in support of Ukraine. **The criminal code articles treat support for Ukraine as extremism or treason,** which allows the occupying law enforcement and judicial bodies to fabricate charges against the residents of Crimea.

Among **218** Crimean political prisoners, who were accused of fabricated charges, is Halyna Dovhopola, a 70-year-old woman from Sevastopol. In 2021, she was sentenced by the Russians to 12 years in a penal colony for the accusations of “high treason” for openly expressing her dissent with the occupation of Crimea. **This elderly woman suffers from numerous health issues and needs to be urgently released!**

# Deportation of children



Since 2014, the Russian Federation has systematically violated international law and committed war crimes by **forcibly displacing and abducting Ukrainian children, altering their identity, imposing Russian citizenship, and placing them with Russian families.** The main route for deporting Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of southern and eastern Ukraine to Russia passes through the Crimean Peninsula.

The deportation involves displacement and re-education. **Some children are featured in television shows and propaganda videos.** These actions have high human costs: siblings are separated, vulnerable teenagers are set against each other, and young children without relatives are concealed in Russian-controlled territories.

Ukrainian volunteers and officials report that returning these children is increasingly difficult as they grow older and are further influenced by Russian propaganda.

Russian propaganda deliberately invokes children's safety to deflect responsibility for human rights violations. Russia's goal is to **forcibly transfer children between national groups and erase their Ukrainian identity. These actions exhibit characteristics of genocide.**

# Resistance to occupation

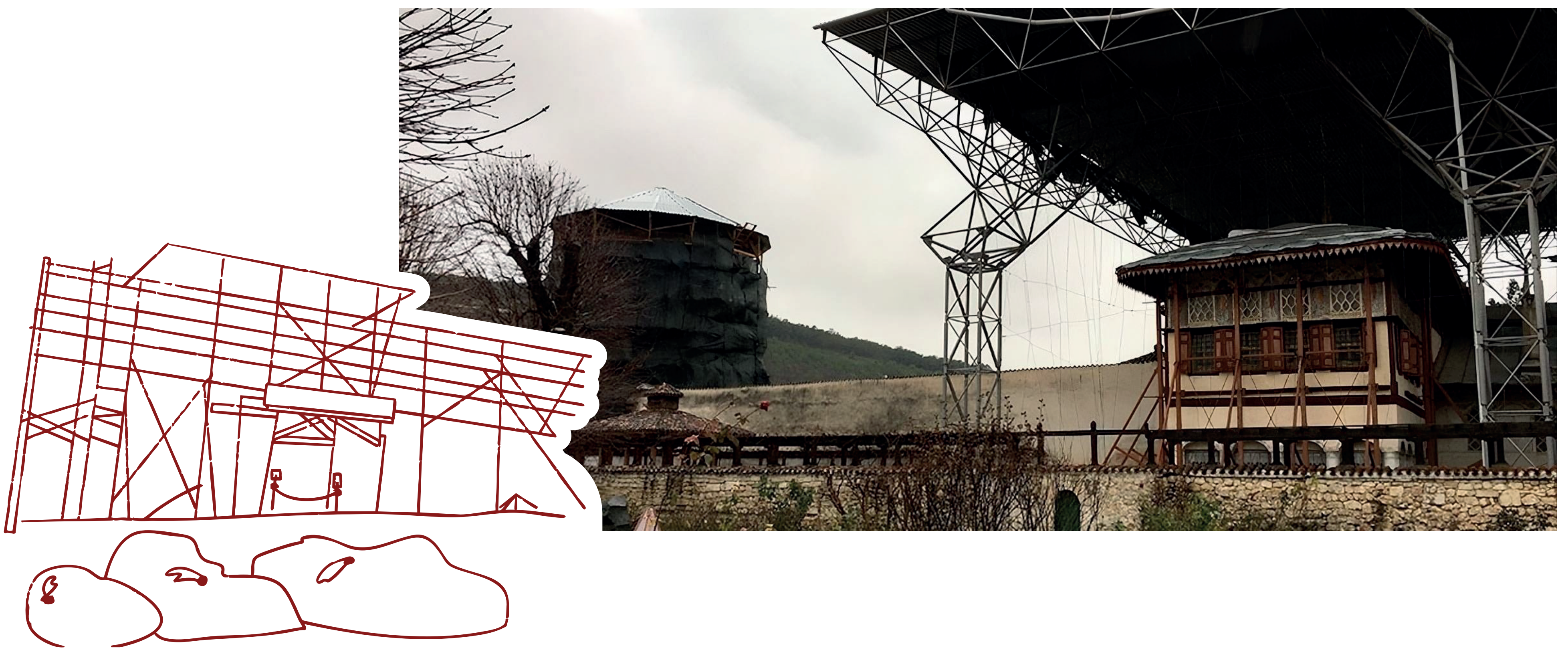


Civil resistance movements play a crucial role in opposing both occupation and war. As of the beginning of 2025, four movements – the Crimean Combat Seagulls, ATESH, Yellow Ribbon, and Zla Mavka – are consistently, actively and publicly engaged in resistance efforts.

**These movements operate across occupied territories of Ukraine and, in some cases, within Russia itself.** Their activities broadly include underground and public resistance, informational campaigns, intelligence gathering, sabotage of military and logistical infrastructure, and efforts to undermine the occupying administrations' control.

Relying on decentralized networks and strong local participation, **they promote de-occupation, support Ukrainian sovereignty, resist propaganda, and maintain visible and psychological pressure on the occupying regime despite severe risks.**

# Cultural heritage



The Bakhchysarai Palace of the Crimean Khans is on the UNESCO Tentative List, representing the 16th-century political and cultural center of the Crimean Khanate. **It is the only surviving example of Crimean Tatar palace architecture**, as well as a unique architectural complex of European Islamic, Mediterranean, and Black Sea culture.

The Khan's palace manifests the centuries-long history of state formation and political agency among the Crimean Tatars, one of Ukraine's Indigenous peoples.

In its attempts to erase the cultural heritage of the Indigenous Crimean Tatar people, **Russia conducts an inappropriate "reconstruction" of the Khan's Palace, thus threatening its very existence.**