

Ecocide as a Weapon of War: How Russian Military Aggression in Ukraine Is Creating a Long-Lasting Ecological Crisis in Eastern Europe

Research question:

What are the ecological and economic impacts of war-driven ecocide in Ukraine and beyond?

Methodology

Qualitative:

- Expert interviews
- Case studies
- Analysis of governmental and NGO reports

Quantitative:

- Publicly available data analysis
- Regression modeling
- Trend analysis of infrastructure and environmental damage

Introduction

The Russian-Ukrainian War (2014-present), has caused extensive environmental damage in Ukraine. Beyond human and infrastructure losses, the conflict has resulted in ecocide (large-scale destruction of ecosystems affecting water, air, and soil), with potential long-term impacts on neighboring countries. Ukraine could become the first country to criminally address war-related environmental crimes.

Acknowledgements

I would like to share my sincere gratitude to the Laidlaw Foundation and the U of T Laidlaw Scholars Programme, without whom this project would not have been possible. Special thanks to my research supervisor, Professor Eduardo Souza-Rodrigues, who so readily and eagerly agreed to be a part of this project. I would also like to thank the U of T Laidlaw Programme team, You Jia Lee and Shraddha Prasad, who provided guidance and emotional support throughout the research experience.

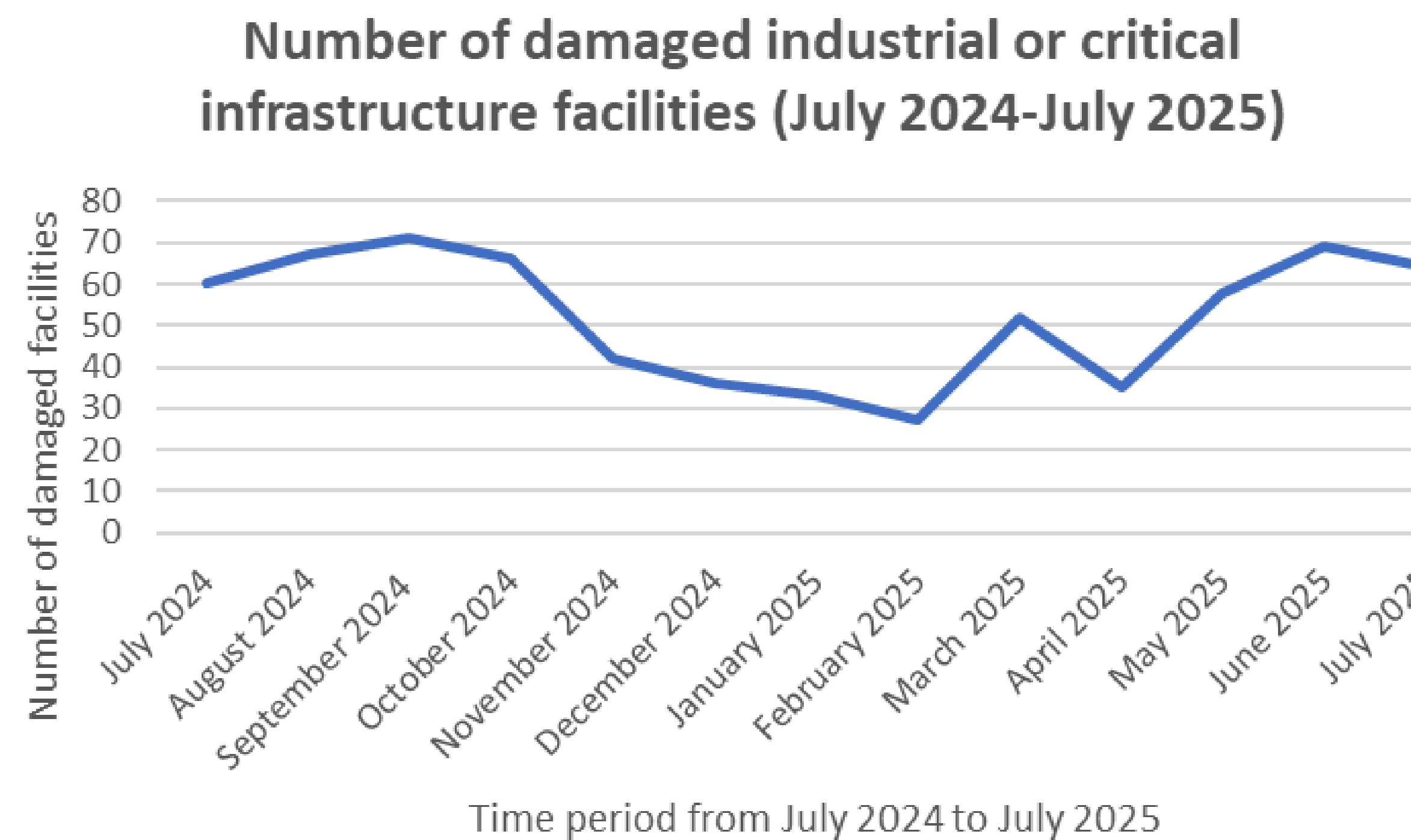


Figure 1: Monthly infrastructure disruptions in Ukraine (July 2024-July 2025)

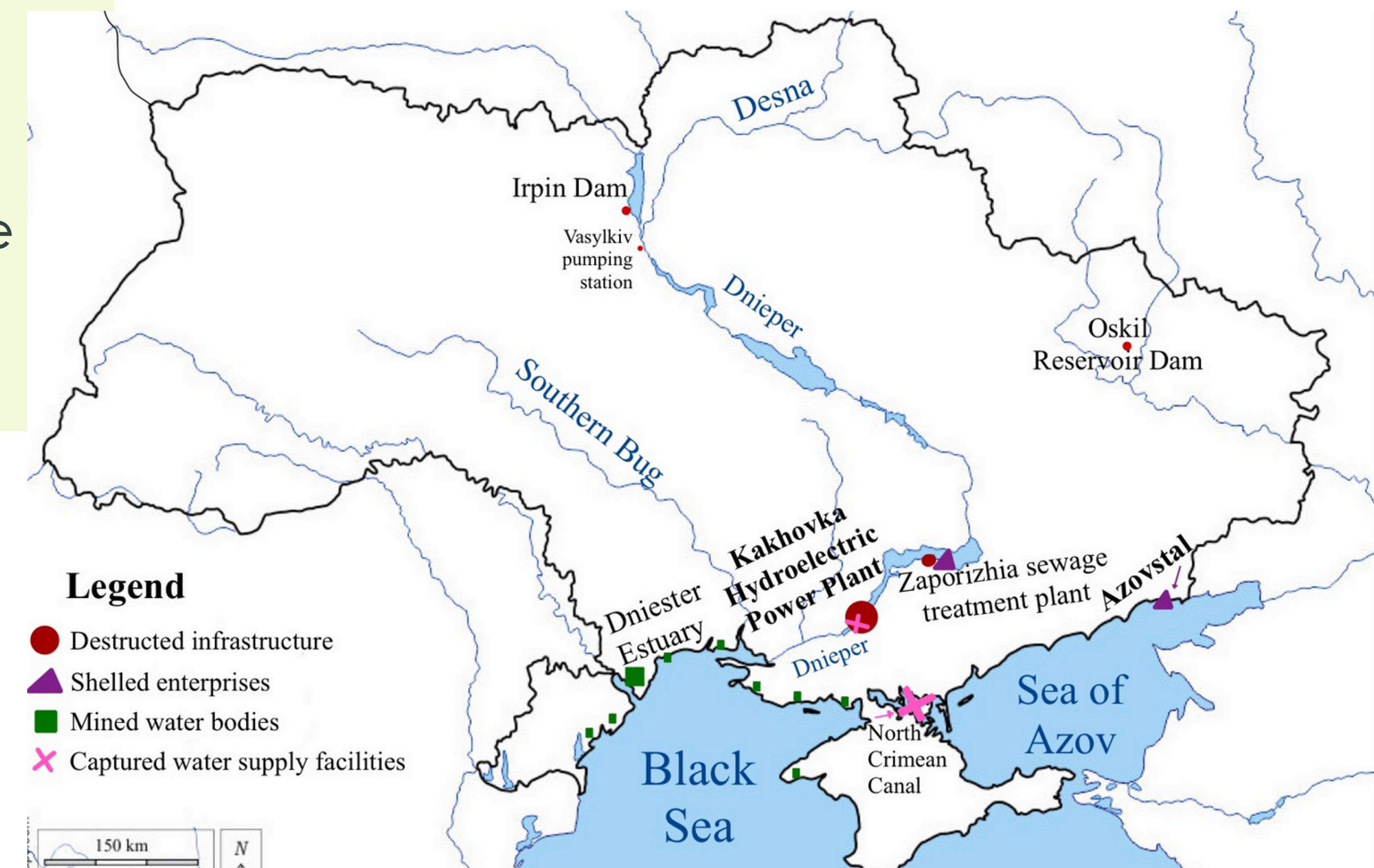


Figure 2: Map of Ukrainian Water Resources and Selected Infrastructure Affected by Ecocide

Results

- Environmental destruction is systematic, with air, water, and soil all severely degraded.
- Regional hotspots: Donbas, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv and Odesa show distinct patterns of damage linked to industrial, agricultural and military significance.
- Critical infrastructure collapse: on average 52 facilities damaged monthly; Kherson & Avdiivka most affected.
- Carbon footprint of war: 230 MtCO₂e emitted (2022–2025), equal to 4 EU countries' annual output; predicted to reach 285 MtCO₂e by 2026.
- Food & water security crisis: Kakhovka Dam destruction devastated ecosystems, agriculture, and Black Sea fisheries, with cross-border ramifications.

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