



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Ukraine: Organised crime and corruption

Version 3.0

September 2019

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in [the basis of claim](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment on whether, **in general**:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- Claims are likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation’s (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI’s relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the ‘cut-off’ date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

5th Floor

Globe House

89 Eccleston Square

London, SW1V 1PN

Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

Contents

Assessment	6
1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Basis of claim.....	6
1.2 Points to note.....	6
2. Consideration of issues.....	6
2.1 Credibility.....	6
2.2 Exclusion.....	6
2.3 Convention reason(s).....	7
2.4 Risk.....	7
2.5 Protection.....	8
2.6 Internal relocation.....	10
2.7 Certification.....	10
Country information	11
3. Organised crime.....	11
3.1 Nature of organised crime.....	11
3.2 Trends in organised crime.....	12
3.3 Contract killing.....	12
3.4 Links with politics.....	13
3.5 Money laundering.....	14
3.6 Illicit drugs.....	16
3.7 Illegal amber mining.....	19
3.8 Smuggling.....	21
3.9 Human trafficking.....	22
4. Corruption.....	22
4.1 General.....	22
4.2 Corruption in government.....	23
4.3 Corruption amongst the police.....	25
4.4 Anti-corruption activists.....	25
5. Legal position.....	26
5.1 Law on organised crime.....	26
5.2 Implementation of the law.....	27
5.3 Organised crime prosecutions.....	28
5.4 Witness protection.....	30
6. Governmental and other initiatives.....	31
6.1 Corruption.....	31

6.2 Borders.....	32
6.3 Police.....	33
6.4 Justice	34
Terms of reference	38
Bibliography	39
Sources cited	39
Sources consulted but not cited.....	43
Version control.....	44

Assessment

Updated: 9 September 2019

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by organised criminal gangs and other actors (both state and non-state) involved in corruption.

[Back to Contents](#)

1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 The Crown Prosecution Service [defined organised crime](#) as '[...] planned and co-ordinated criminal behaviour and conduct by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. Organised crime in this [UK] and other countries recognises neither national borders nor national interests.'
- 1.2.2 Where a claim is refused, it must be considered for certification under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 as Ukraine is listed as a designated state.

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check whether there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 If the person has been involved with organised crime, decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.2.1 Victims or potential victims of organised criminal gangs in Ukraine do not constitute a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. This is because they do not share an innate characteristic, or a common background that cannot be changed, or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it, and they do not have a distinct identity which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.2.2 Nevertheless, decision makers must consider whether the fear of an organised criminal gang could be related to political or other issues which could bring the person within the provisions of the Refugee Convention. If not, the question is whether the particular person will face a real risk of serious harm sufficient to qualify for humanitarian protection (HP).
- 2.2.3 For further guidance on convention reasons, including particular social groups, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#). For further guidance on HP, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.4 Risk

- 2.4.1 The European Union Advisory Mission considered that organised crime is among the top challenges facing Ukraine and has a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of Ukrainian citizens and hampers the country's economic growth (see [Nature of organised crime](#)).
- 2.4.2 The number of reports of government corruption were low, but there was pervasive corruption in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. It is estimated that a quarter to a half of the population operate in the black market, which is explained by one source by the need to supplement low incomes at a time of recession. The Corruption Perception Index 2018 ranked Ukraine at 120 out of 180 countries for corruption, with a score of 32/100, with 0 being highly corrupt and 100 very 'clean.' There are numerous examples of corruption amongst the authorities, including MPs, the Mayor of Odessa, the Interior Minister, and the police. Some judges stated that they had been pressured by politicians to decide cases in their favour, and others took bribes. Oligarchs continue to hold political influence (see [Nature of organised crime](#), [Corruption](#) and [Organised crime prosecutions](#)).
- 2.4.3 There were reports of organised, politically-motivated killings; one such killing involved a parliamentary aide, and another involved the nephew of a powerful judge in a case which has been referred for trial but proceedings have been criticised for a lack of transparency. Violent attacks against civil society activists increased in 2018 and an anti-corruption activist, Kateryna Handzyuk, died after being attacked with acid in that year (see [Contract killing](#) and [Anti-corruption activists](#)).
- 2.4.4 There are also reports that civil society activists have been targeted by the government for politically-motivated prosecution as a result of their work,

particularly those working to address corruption (see [Organised crime prosecutions](#)).

- 2.4.5 Detailed official statistics indicate that the number of organised crime groups in the country is declining rapidly. Nevertheless, criminal gangs are in control of much of the lucrative Ukrainian amber trade, with the majority of amber production taking place outside the law. Sales of illegal weapons doubled in Ukraine in 2018, fuelled by the conflict in the east. Ukraine is not a major producer of drugs but it is a significant transit country due its geographical position on various drug trafficking routes (see [Trends in organised crime](#), [Illegal amber mining](#), [Smuggling](#) and [Illicit drugs](#)).
- 2.4.6 The country evidence does not indicate that organised criminal gangs in Ukraine pose a real risk of serious harm to the general population, although high profile civil society activists may be at increased risk; in such cases, the onus would be on activists to establish why they may be at risk. In addition, the onus is on a person to establish that a particular criminal gang's behaviour poses a real and serious threat to them personally. In that regard decision makers will need to establish which gang is making the threats, its capabilities, the nature of threat, the profile of the person and why the gang has an adverse interest in them. In order to show that such a threat exists, it will not suffice to show that a criminal gang dislikes the person or even that it has made threats of violence; it has to be shown that the gang has a real intent to inflict the threatened serious harm and to carry out its threats.
- 2.4.7 For further information on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 By 2017, Ukraine had taken various steps to combat corruption, including establishing several anti-corruption bodies, but these bodies faced political pressure which undermined trust and raised questions about the government's commitment to bringing about change. Observers raised a number of concerns about the ability of the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption to fulfil its mandate. The effectiveness of newly-established corruption investigative bodies, such as the National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Special Anticorruption Prosecution Office, was undermined by various impediments to their effective functioning. NGOs played a critical part in combatting corruption (see [Governmental and other initiatives](#)).
- 2.5.2 Steps have been taken to impeach former President Poroshenko following reports linking him to corruption. However, there has been little progress in prosecutions of high-ranking officials and no major corruption cases have resulted in a conviction. Little progress was made in the investigation and prosecution of crimes committed under the Yanukovich administration (see [Nature of organised crime](#), [Corruption](#) and [Organised crime prosecutions](#)).
- 2.5.3 Following the death of Kateryna Handzyuk, an anti-corruption activist who died after being attacked with acid in 2018, there have been calls for the Prosecutor to resign due to the reduction in seriousness of the charges against those suspected of planning and carrying out the attack.

Investigations continued into killings committed during the Euromaidan protests of 2013-14, when protestors were shot and about 130 people were killed, but human rights groups criticised the low number of convictions, despite considerable evidence (see [Contract killing](#) and [Anti-corruption activists](#)). For further information about the effectiveness of the judiciary, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine: Actors of protection](#).

- 2.5.4 The authorities are implementing measures to address money laundering, including drafting new legislation and increasing convictions, but more remains to be done to strengthen legislation and investigate and prosecute high-level officials (see [Money laundering](#)).
- 2.5.5 The authorities are working to disrupt drug trafficking networks and seize drugs and they are cooperating with international counterparts to combat the illegal drug trade. In the first 10 months of 2018, they detected and disrupted 37 international drug trafficking routes, dismantled 115 illegal labs and eliminated 63 organised drug trafficking groups. They also seized a significant quantity of illicit drugs. In March 2019, Ukrainian law enforcement acted on a request for international assistance and detained an Israeli national, the head of a drug cartel which had more than 13,000 members, when he travelled to Ukraine to further his illegal activities (see [Illicit drugs](#) and [Governmental and other initiatives](#)).
- 2.5.6 In July 2016, the government took decisive action when dozens of members of the Ukrainian mafia were arrested in connection with illegal amber mining but there are accusations of powerful officials undermining further reform. Law enforcement and security officials have been denounced for protecting the illegal trade (see [Illegal amber mining](#)).
- 2.5.7 In 2018, legislation to create an Anti-Corruption Court was adopted. In November 2018, the State Bureau of Investigations became operational and will investigate crimes involving senior public officials, judges, law enforcement officers and national anti-corruption bodies, and crimes related to military service. The Strategy for Reform of the Judicial System set out the main priorities for 2015 to 2020 and the provisions are currently being implemented (see [Governmental and other initiatives](#)).
- 2.5.8 European Union Assistance Mission-Ukraine is providing support in combatting corruption in Ukraine and is assisting with criminal investigation by supporting the Ukrainian police, security service, Anti-Corruption Bureau and the State Fiscal Service. The United States Department of State Bureau on International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs has also provided support to the Ukrainian government in combatting corruption and improving security and access to justice (see [Governmental and other initiatives](#)).
- 2.5.9 There is no witness protection scheme, but close-protection support is provided by the police and security service (see [Witness protection](#)).
- 2.5.10 In general, state protection is available for a person in fear of a criminal gang, whether composed of non-state agents or rogue state agents. However, high-profile persons perceived as working to combat corruption may not be able to access state protection. Each case must be considered on its facts. If a person believes that they would not be afforded police

protection or that they would not receive a fair trial, the onus is on them to explain why they would not be able to seek or obtain state protection.

- 2.5.11 However, the situation is different in Crimea where, after its annexation by Russia in 2014, the existing laws of Russia came into force. Similarly under Russian influence, persons in the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics are unable to access the legal protections provided in Ukrainian law (see Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine: Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk](#)).
- 2.5.12 For further information on assessing the availability of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Decision-makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis, taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.6.2 Decision makers need to take account of the nature of the threat and the reach of the criminal gang making those threats. In general where a person does encounter a localised threat they may be able to avoid this by moving elsewhere in Ukraine, but only if the risk is not present there and if it would not be unduly harsh to expect them to do so.
- 2.6.3 In [VS \(Registration on Relocation\) Ukraine CG \[2004\] UKIAT 00242](#), the Tribunal did not consider that the need for registration or the cost involved if bribes are required are sufficient to prevent internal relocation or to make it unduly harsh, especially when contrasted with the cost of using an agent to come to the UK.
- 2.6.4 The onus is on the person to demonstrate why they believe they would be unable to relocate to a specific town/city to mitigate any risk.
- 2.6.5 For further information on internal relocation in Ukraine, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine: Internal relocation](#). For guidance on relocation from Crimea, Luhansk or Donetsk, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine: Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk](#).
- 2.6.6 For further information on considering internal relocation generally and the factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is likely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. This is because effective state protection is available.
- 2.7.2 For further information on certification, see the [Appeals Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

Section 3 updated: 29 May 2019

3. Organised crime

3.1 Nature of organised crime

- 3.1.1 In September 2018, EU Assistance Mission – Ukraine (EUAM) noted, ‘Organised crime is among the top challenges facing Ukraine and it poses a significant threat to the safety and security of its citizens. Fuelled by the armed conflict in the east and the struggling economy, it has a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of Ukrainian citizens and hampers the country’s economic growth.’¹
- 3.1.2 In December 2017, the Financial Times reported as follows, referring to Mr Tillerson, who was Secretary of State for the United States at the time:
- “As ever, the fundamental problems are corruption and politically-inspired manipulations of the rule of law.” Mr Tillerson spoke out after Ukraine’s National Anti-Corruption Bureau, an independent agency that started work in 2015, came under attack from the nation’s top prosecutor. This episode provided depressing evidence that the organs of state that ought to be upholding the rule of law are as often as not conspiring against it. Similar abuses plague Ukraine’s tax service, police and courts. Across the country, opaque networks link politicians, business oligarchs and organised crime.’²
- 3.1.3 Global Initiative stated in February 2016: ‘Organized crime in its latest manifestations, for instance in Ukraine or Guatemala, appears to have taken yet another turn. In short, it has become a systemic part of governance: a constant resource for politicians and officials, which in certain circumstances can trigger mass public discontent and even political instability. Crime has moved from being a cause of prosecution to a pretext for revolution.’³
- 3.1.4 International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in December 2017, ‘While the war in Ukraine’s eastern province of Donbas rumbles on, the regions of Polissya and Zakarpattya in the country’s west are corroded by systemic state corruption. Resentment toward Kyiv in these peripheral regions is pushing many into the shadow economies and exacerbating state fragility.’⁴
- 3.1.5 The same report noted the corruption in Ukraine, which resulted in, ‘[...] a dramatic weakening of the state: millions of dollars bypassing the official budget, chronic low-level violence in centres of illegal trade, and swathes of rural territory with no legal workforce or tax base to speak of. [...]’
- ‘[Kyiv and its allies] must [...] face the profoundly corrosive effects of continuing systemic corruption. These are suggested by the phenomena of organised crime in, and mass migration from the two western Ukrainian regions of north-western Polissya (along the Belarusian and Polish borders) and south-western Zakarpattya, next to Hungary. Outside meddling is

¹ EUAM, ‘EU supports Ukraine to fight organised crime,’ 18 September 2018, [url](#)

² Financial Times, ‘Too much is at stake to give up on Ukraine,’ 19 December 2017, [url](#)

³ Global Initiative, Dialogue on Organised Crime and Development, 4 February 2016, [url](#)

⁴ ICG, ‘Ukraine: Will the centre hold?,’ Principal findings, 21 December 2017, [url](#)

present in both regions, but corruption at all levels of government is the decisive factor behind the social problems they face. [...] Kyiv must confront their root cause by following through on old promises to hold accountable corrupt officials at all levels. Many residents of these areas live on the state's margins. In Polissya, tens of thousands work in a multimillion-dollar, illegal amber trade controlled by armed gangs and allegedly sheltered by officials. In Zakarpattya, much of the working-age population relies on labour migration and tax-free remittances that deprive entire communities of their workforce or tax base.⁵

- 3.1.6 See [Corruption](#), [Contract killing](#), [Smuggling](#) and [Links with politics](#) for further information on these subjects.

[Back to Contents](#)

3.2 Trends in organised crime

3.2.1 Ukrinform reported in February 2019:

'Last year, the number of serious and most serious crimes decreased by 13 percent compared with 2017. Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman made a relevant statement, presenting the Government's report for 2018 at the Cabinet's meeting, an Ukrinform correspondent reports. "According to official data, Ukraine has seen a decline in serious and most serious crimes. In addition, the cases of robbery, robbery with violence, theft and automobile theft decreased by 24-26 percent. The overall crime rate declines," Groysman said, noting these are optimistic indicators.'⁶

- 3.2.2 The April 2015 Organized Crime Observatory's report stated 'According to official statistics, which are quite detailed in the topic, the presence of "classical" organized crime groups in Ukraine is declining rapidly. Detailed statistics show an evolution of -34.2% which is a considerable achievement, given that the country has suffered extensively at the hands of organized crime groups for over a decade. This trend is confirmed by local and foreign observers and specialized agencies.'⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

3.3 Contract killing

- 3.3.1 The United States Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018 (USSD HR Report 2018) stated:

'There were reports of politically motivated killings by nongovernment actors, and in one case with the alleged involvement of a parliamentary aide. For example, on July 31 [2018], an unknown person poured concentrated sulfuric acid on public activist and advisor to the Kherson city mayor, Kateryna Handzyuk, resulting in serious chemical burns to over a third of her body. Handzyuk died of her injuries on November 4. [...]

'On January 2 [2018], the body of lawyer Iryna Nozdrowska was found in a river in Kyiv Oblast with stab wounds and other signs of a violent death. Nozdrowska had criticized law enforcement and court authorities while

⁵ ICG, 'Ukraine: Will the centre hold?,' Executive summary, 21 December 2017, [url](#)

⁶ Ukrinform.Net, 'Crime rate in Ukraine declines,' 13 February 2019, [url](#)

⁷ Organized Crime Observatory, 'Ukraine and the EU: Overcoming criminal [...]'? April 2015, [url](#)

pursuing justice for her sister, who had been hit and killed in 2015 by a car driven by an intoxicated driver, Dmytro Rossoshanskiy, who was the nephew of a powerful local judge. On January 8 [2018], authorities arrested Yuriy Rossoshanskiy, the father of Dmytro, and charged him with murdering Nozdrowska. Yuriy and Dmytro Rossoshanskiy were reported to have previously threatened Nozdrowska and her mother in retaliation for their support of the case against Dmytro. Authorities referred the case for trial on August 15 [2018]. Media and civil society widely criticized a lack of transparency in the investigation and noted that many questions remain unanswered about the case, including the possibility that there were other assailants involved in the killing.

‘Authorities made no arrests during the year in connection with the 2016 killing of prominent Belarusian-Russian journalist Pavel Sheremet. On August 2 [2018], Sheremet’s widow filed a lawsuit against the prosecutor general, alleging inaction by his office on the case. Human rights and press freedom watchdog groups expressed concern about the lack of progress in the government’s investigation, suggesting high-level obstruction or investigatory incompetence as potential reasons. Independent journalistic investigations of the killing released in May 2017 uncovered significant evidence that investigators had apparently overlooked. President Poroshenko expressed dissatisfaction with the progress of the investigation in February during a press conference.’⁸

3.3.2 The same report noted:

‘Law enforcement agencies continued to investigate killings and other crimes committed during the Euromaidan protests in Kyiv in 2013-14. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) noted some progress in the investigation of the killings of protesters. Human rights groups criticized the low number of convictions despite the existence of considerable evidence. According to the Prosecutor General’s Office, as of late November, 279 persons had been indicted and 52 had been found guilty.’⁹

3.3.3 See [Anti-corruption activists](#) and [Links with politics](#) for further information on contract killings.

[Back to Contents](#)

3.4 Links with politics

3.4.1 The USSD HR Report 2018 stated: ‘There were reports of politically motivated killings by nongovernment actors, and in one case with the alleged involvement of a parliamentary aide.’¹⁰

3.4.2 See [Contract killing](#) and [Anti-corruption activists](#) for more information on this subject.

3.4.3 Freedom House noted, ‘The government has made little progress in meeting domestic and international demands to investigate and prosecute crimes

⁸ USSD HR Report 2018, Ukraine, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁹ USSD HR Report 2018, Ukraine, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰ USSD HR Report 2018, Ukraine, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

committed during the last months of the Yanukovich administration in late 2013 and early 2014, which included the shooting of protesters.¹¹

- 3.4.4 See [Corruption in government](#) and [Links with politics](#) for further information on this subject.

[Back to Contents](#)

3.5 Money laundering

- 3.5.1 In May 2019, the US CIA World Factbook noted, 'Ukraine has improved anti-money-laundering controls, resulting in its removal from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF's) Noncooperative Countries and Territories List in February 2004; Ukraine's anti-money-laundering regime continues to be monitored by FATF.'¹²

- 3.5.2 The USSD Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (BINLEA) International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on money laundering, dated March 2019, stated:

'Corruption enables and exacerbates the significant money laundering problem in Ukraine. The authorities have made some progress but need to strengthen AML [anti-money laundering] legislation and focus more on investigating and prosecuting cases involving high-level officials. In 2018, Ukrainian authorities increased money laundering convictions and drafted new legislation to identify ultimate beneficial owners (UBOs).

'Ineffective state institutions and criminal justice system allow criminal proceeds to go undetected. Although authorities are implementing measures to address the problem, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) rarely target large-scale, corruption-related money laundering, with the exception of cases associated with the former Yanukovich administration.

'The use of cash and Ukraine's large informal economy represent significant money laundering vulnerabilities. The primary sources of illicit proceeds include corruption; fraud; trafficking in drugs, arms, and persons; organized crime; prostitution; cybercrime; and tax evasion. Money is laundered through real estate, insurance, financial and non-financial institutions, shell companies, and bulk cash smuggling schemes. Criminals use aliases to register as UBOs of companies to commingle licit and illicit funds.

Transnational organized crime syndicates use Ukraine as a transit country for money and drugs. Transactions are routed through offshore tax havens to obscure ownership, evade taxes, or mask illicit profits.'¹³

- 3.5.3 The report also noted relevant laws and regulations:

'Ukraine's 2015 AML/CFT [Combating the Financing of Terrorism] Law #889-VIII lays out Ukraine's AML regulatory and supervisory regime, obligations of reporting entities, LEA roles, risk-based approaches, due diligence for PEPS, and procedures for determining UBOs. Authorities drafted a new bill in 2018 to amend the AML/CFT law to harmonize it with the Fourth EU AML Directive. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has the draft for comment.

¹¹ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2019,' Ukraine, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

¹² US CIA World Factbook, Ukraine, Transnational issues, Illicit drugs, last updated 22 May 2019, [url](#)

¹³ USSD, BINLEA, 'International [...] Report,' Volume II, Money Laundering, March 2019, [url](#)

'In September 2018, the MOJ introduced stricter registration requirements for legal entities, sole proprietors, and public company formations, aimed at increasing monitoring of UBOs.

'The Asset Recovery Management Agency (ARMA), established in 2017, is responsible for tracing and managing assets derived from corruption and other crimes. It gives authorities the necessary powers and tools, on paper, to locate, recover, and manage assets. The ARMA is not yet fully functioning as designed.

'Ukraine and the United States have a MLAT [mutual legal assistance treaty].

'Ukraine is a member of MONEYVAL, a FATF [Financial Action Task Force]-style regional body. Its most recent MER [mutual evaluation report] is available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/moneyval/jurisdictions/ukraine>.¹⁴

3.5.4 The report further noted policy and other deficiencies:

'While money laundering investigations may be opened without a conviction for a predicate offense, legal professionals widely assume such a conviction is essential before a money laundering case can be taken to court.

'Agents acting on behalf of other individuals are not obligated to report suspicious activities and not liable for failing to report such activity. The law also allows for PEPs [politically-exposed persons] to be de-listed three years after leaving public office, which is not consistent with international standards.

'Efforts to establish bilateral mutual legal assistance agreements for asset seizure and forfeiture remain hindered by corruption, breaches of confidentiality, weaknesses in document seizure procedures, and the absence of a system to prioritize requests. The authorities should take steps to correct these deficiencies and to counter corruption.¹⁵

3.5.5 The report also noted and commented on implementation issues:

'Ukraine's AML/CFT Council approved a national risk assessment (NRA) report in 2016. Authorities should more thoroughly examine the significant amounts of money flowing through the banking system related to cybercrime and associated transnational organized criminal activities. It should examine how gaming is used to launder money and either enforce its prohibition on gaming or regulate its gaming industry. Authorities also should investigate how the informal sector and MVTs [Money or Value Transfer Service] are used to transfer illicit proceeds. Ukraine should enact its draft bill on international law enforcement cooperation.

'Money laundering convictions increased in 2018. Money laundering is prosecuted under two criminal codes, Article 209 (money laundering as a broad criminal offense) and Article 306 (drug-related money laundering). From January-September 2018, there were 17 convictions under Article 209. All 17 are now under appeal. Under Article 306, 105 cases were sent to

¹⁴ USSD, BINLEA, 'International [...] Report,' Volume II, Money Laundering, March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵ USSD, BINLEA, 'International [...] Report,' Volume II, Money Laundering, March 2019, [url](#)

court, compared to 37 in 2017. There is no additional data available on these cases.

‘Banking and securities regulators have made strides in ensuring the transparency of beneficial ownership of banks and securities firms and in removing criminal elements from control. Other supervisory authorities often appear unable or unwilling to verify whether relevant reporting entities are beneficially owned or controlled by criminal elements or their associates.

‘Ukraine should improve the implementation of its asset freezing, confiscation, and forfeiture provisions. It is unclear how often judges are using these provisions and how many final forfeiture orders have been issued. In some cases, ARMA has seized assets that were already being managed by a competing agency.

‘Shortcomings in personnel capacity and resources hamper Ukraine’s ability to conduct financial investigations. The State Financial Monitoring Service, the FIU, produces high-quality financial intelligence; however, its work is hindered by an ever-increasing workload, antiquated IT systems, low staffing levels, and low wages. The Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor (SACP) is pursuing senior members of the former Yanukovich regime and current senior PEPs for corruption and, to some extent, money laundering. More resources are needed to develop financial investigation capacity in SACP, and in law enforcement generally.’¹⁶

3.5.6 See [Corruption](#) for further information on this subject.

[Back to Contents](#)

3.6 Illicit drugs

3.6.1 In May 2019, CIA World Factbook described the situation regarding illicit drugs as below ‘Limited cultivation of cannabis and opium poppy, mostly for CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] consumption; some synthetic drug production for export to the West; limited government eradication program; used as transshipment point for opiates and other illicit drugs from Africa, Latin America, and Turkey to Europe and Russia [...].’¹⁷

3.6.2 The USSD BINLEA published the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report in March 2019, which stated:

‘Although Ukraine is not a major drug source country, its location astride several important drug trafficking routes into Western Europe leaves it vulnerable as an important transit country. Ukraine’s numerous ports on the Black and Azov seas, its extensive river routes, and its porous northern and eastern borders make Ukraine an attractive route for drug traffickers into the European Union’s (EU) illicit drug market.

‘Heroin from Afghanistan is trafficked through Russia, the Caucasus, and Turkey, before passing through Ukraine. Latin American cocaine is moved through Ukrainian seaports and airports for both domestic use and further transit to EU countries. Ukrainian law enforcement occasionally interdicts large shipments of drugs in commercial shipments transiting southern ports.

¹⁶ USSD, BINLEA, ‘International [...] Report,’ Volume II, Money Laundering, March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷ US CIA World Factbook, Ukraine, Transnational issues, Illicit drugs, last updated 22 May 2019, [url](#)

Usually, however, drugs are found in small quantities, ranging from several grams to several hundred grams. Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine, including arming, training, and fighting alongside separatists, has created a new vulnerability for drug transit through the region.

‘The use of synthetic drugs and psychotropic substances, especially amphetamine-type stimulants, has been rapidly increasing in Ukraine over the past decade, following international trends. Synthetic drugs are trafficked to Ukraine primarily from Poland, Lithuania, and the Netherlands, but they are also produced locally in small clandestine labs.

‘Most domestic drug abuse, however, continues to be focused on drugs made from illicit drug crops (cannabis and opium poppy) grown in the region. These account for more than 90 percent of the total drug market in Ukraine. In most instances, these drugs are either locally produced or supplied from Russia and Moldova.

‘During the first 10 months of 2018, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies (National Police of Ukraine, or NPU) reportedly detected and disrupted 37 international drug trafficking routes, dismantled 115 clandestine labs, and eliminated 63 organized criminal drug trafficking groups. Approximately 3.89 metric tons of narcotics, psychotropic drugs, and other controlled substances were seized, including 38.9 kilograms (kg) of cocaine and 32 kg of psychotropic drugs.’¹⁸

3.6.3 Ukrainian Independent Information Agency of News (UNIAN), a Ukrainian news outlet based in Kyiv, reported in March 2019:

‘Law enforcers revealed that back in 2017, an Israeli national created in one of the online messengers a channel for wholesale drug trade, the Ukraine’s security Service [SBU] press center wrote. Within a few years, the illegal business expanded and such “trading platforms” started operating in other social networks, [...] more than 13,000-strong syndicate included smugglers, dealers, group admins in social networks, and other accomplices. On Tuesday, based on the request for international assistance, Ukrainian law enforcers detained the head of the drug cartel after he arrived in Kyiv to establish “business connections” with representatives of local criminal circles. The suspect was handed over to the National Police to arrange for his extradition to the country of origin.’¹⁹

3.6.4 112.International, an English language Ukrainian online news website, released an interview with the Head of the Department of Drug Control, Andriy Kikhtenko in July 2018; Andriy Kikhtenko stated: “The world market for illicit drugs is changing; this is due to globalization and the development of the technologies. Previously, in order to engage in a ‘serious’ level of drug trafficking, it was necessary to have a criminal biography, some weight in the criminal world, communications and so on.”²⁰

3.6.5 UNIAN reported in July 2018:

¹⁸ USSD, BINLEA, ‘International [...] Report,’ Volume I, Drug & Chemical Control, March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹ UNIAN, ‘Leader of one of the world’s largest drug syndicates arrested in Kyiv,’ March 2019, [url](#)

²⁰ 112.International, ‘New drugs gaining popularity via online stores in Ukraine,’ 5 July 2018, [url](#)

'Ukrainian law enforcers on Tuesday detained members of [an] international drug trafficking group and seized 6 kg of cocaine worth \$1.14 million (UAH 30 million) upon the couriers' arrival in airport Boryspil from Brazil. The key suspect acted as the scheme coordinator, in particular, seeking out routes of cocaine supplies, managing logistics and ensuring safe communication between couriers and drug dealers overseas. The gang also included a 28-year-old resident of Odesa region, tasked with searching for and recruiting drug couriers on popular social networks. All members of the international drug trafficking group have been arrested and now face up to 12 years in prison.'²¹

3.6.6 In April 2018, Interfax-Ukraine reported:

'The issues of combating drug trafficking, including joint counteraction to international drug trafficking, were discussed during the meeting by Interior Minister of Ukraine Arsen Avakov, first deputy head of the National Police of Ukraine, head of the criminal police Viacheslav Abroskin and Acting Administrator of the Headquarters of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) of the U.S. Justice Department Robert Patterson.

"Cooperation with foreign law enforcement agencies is very important for us, in particular, in the issues of combating drug trafficking, because today criminal groups operate not only within the borders of one country, they actively use innovative technologies, digital payment platforms and virtual crypto currency. And in this case, for the collection of electronic evidence, it is necessary to organize interaction with other bodies, including at the international level," the press-service of the Interior Ministry of Ukraine quoted Avakov as saying, who is on a working visit to the United States.

'The minister said that the parties agreed on a Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Police of Ukraine and the Office of Drug Control of the U.S. Justice Department.

[...]

'He also recalled that in July 2017 a plan of joint actions was signed between the National Police and the American side for the implementation of the international technical assistance project of the Department for Combating Drug Trafficking.

"They have provided long-term financial support for the development of the Department, modeled on the best law enforcement agencies fighting the drug business, and the first tranche of \$1 million has already been allocated," Abroskin said.'²²

3.6.7 In November 2018, Ukrinform reported that Ukraine and Argentina would cooperate in countering drug trafficking:

'Head of the National Police of Ukraine Serhiy Knyazev discussed this issue during a meeting with Chief of the Argentine Federal Police Nestor Roncaglia on November 20 [2018], the press service of the Interior Ministry of Ukraine reported.

²¹ UNIAN, 'Ukraine's drug enforcement police bust cocaine traffickers [...],' 3 July 2018, [url](#)

²² Interfax-Ukraine, 'Ukraine, U.S. to cooperate in fight against intl drug [...],' 17 April 2018, [url](#)

"The parties discussed ways of cooperation to combat drug-related crime, in particular, the establishment of a prompt and effective channel for the information exchange," the report reads.

[...]

"There is the problem of drug trafficking from Latin America. Today, communication with our Argentine counterparts takes place in two operational ways - through Interpol and through the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Therefore, such direct cooperation is faster and more efficient way to exchange information," Knyazev added.²³

[Back to Contents](#)

3.7 Illegal amber mining

3.7.1 National Geographic stated in January 2017:

'A chaotic scene in the Ukraine has miners pitted against each other and the government, often with deadly consequences and significant environmental harm.

'The town [Dubrovtytsya] sits in the heart of Ukraine's Wild West—the thousands of acres of ravaged pine and birch forests whose sandy soils hide millions of dollars in amber. As in other gold rushes, violence has followed the scramble for the semiprecious gemstone, with gangs fighting over lucrative pits and claims rife that corrupt government officials are battling for territory and control.

'On January 15 [2017], assailants armed with machine guns and grenades attacked young men in a coffee shop in the town of Olevsk, killing one and seriously wounding around a dozen others.

'The stakes are enormous. To show me, Stas [a former Ukrainian police officer who now illegally mines] pulled out his phone and showed me a text message from an illegal Chinese wholesale buyer in Kiev, Ukraine's capital. A rare, 100-gram stone is worth \$4,800, it read. An intact, 50-gram piece pays out \$3,800. Even a 2-gram piece is worth \$150. "Right now the Chinese are paying about \$2,000 to \$3,000 per kilogram, if you have big stones," said Stas. The amber is then made into jewelry and other products, much of which is sold in China. "Fights happen all the time, every day," Stas added. A man was recently arrested on suspicion of transporting a 26.5-pound sack of amber stones worth around \$20,700.'²⁴

3.7.2 Radio Free Europe/Radio Europe (RFL/RE) reported in August 2017:

'Criminal gangs remain in control of much of Ukraine's amber business. The business is worth as much as \$500 million each year. Nine Ukrainian companies are licensed to mine amber legally, but the vast majority of production takes place outside the law.'²⁵

3.7.3 ICG reported in December 2017:

'Ukrainian amber began to attract the interest of organised crime in the 1990s [...] Strong protection rackets reportedly overseen by figures close to

²³ Ukrinform, 'Ukraine, Argentina to cooperate in countering drug trafficking,' 20 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁴ National Geographic, 'The Dramatic Impact of Illegal Amber Mining [...],' 31 January 2017, [url](#)

²⁵ RFL/RE, 'Ukraine's Amber Mining outlaws,' 23 August 2017, [url](#)

Kyiv emerged in the 2000s, when increases in the global price of amber stimulated illicit mining. [...] Under Presidents Yushchenko and Yanukovich, lawmakers attempted to regulate the trade but were said to have lost their nerve as they came to understand the magnitude and power of the protection rackets. In 2014, with the instability that accompanied Maidan and the start of the Donbas war, amber mining exploded as the economy slid into recession and Ukraine's currency plummeted in value, driving many citizens to supplement their meagre incomes through the black market. With the new volume of mining came increased chaos. Rival bands vying for turf filled the vacuum left by the consolidated protection racket that disintegrated after Yanukovich fled. Ukraine's depleted security structures were overwhelmed by the 2014 challenges; unable to stem the 24 to 36 tonnes of illegal amber exported from Ukraine in 2013 for shadow earnings of roughly \$1 million, according to news reports. In 2014, Ukraine may have illegally exported as much as 300 tonnes, worth an estimated \$300 million to \$600 million, based on black market rates of at least \$1,000 per kilo. [...] Local police are largely ineffectual at countering illegal amber. Observers point to corruption: the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) arrested four high-ranking Rivne oblast police officials in 2016 on accusations of sheltering the trade, and in early 2017 a key officer was rumoured to have struck a deal with "amber mafia" elements. Accounts abound of officers treating amber as an earning opportunity...' ²⁶

3.7.4 ICG further reported on the government's response:

'In July 2015, Poroshenko denounced law enforcement and security service officials in the three amber oblasts for protecting the illegal industry. His ultimatum gave them two weeks to purge their ranks of amber racketeers [...]. He also called on Ukraine's parliament – Verkhovna Rada – to draft a bill to formalise and institutionalise a framework for regulating the trade in early 2015. But there was little change in the amber regions for almost a year until March 2016, when Rivne's governor requested National Guard deployment. [...] And in July 2016, Kyiv sent 300 personnel from various security organisations to conduct a series of raids in northern Rivne. They arrested dozens of alleged mafia operatives, including the first deputy oblast prosecutor, current and former police personnel, SBU officers and other rumoured "representatives of the criminal world". While national and municipal officials praised the raids as a turning point in the fight against illegal mining, others were more sceptical. A high-ranking interior ministry official said the operation broke the back of the trade, but many locals claim little has changed on the ground. [...] Meanwhile, efforts to regulate the trade by 2018 [...] have gone awry. A bill that would have facilitated mining licencing for individuals, as well as companies, and mandated creation of communal enterprises overseen by oblasts, failed to pass its second parliamentary reading in February 2017. [...] After the bill sank in the Rada, Boryslav Rozenblat, a national deputy from the president's party and one of the bill's co-authors, accused powerful officials involved in the trade of working behind the scenes to undermine reform. Then the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) accused him and his co-authors of accepting bribes to revise the draft; they also accused Rozenblat individually

²⁶ ICG, 'Ukraine, Will the Centre Hold?', Section II, 21 December 2017, [url](#)

of improperly influencing officials to approve mining licenses on behalf of an offshore company. [...] There are strong, competing views as to who is ultimately to blame for, and to benefit from, the stalled legislative efforts and ad hoc interim measures. The bottom line, as several officials point out, is that a government widely perceived to be looting the state cannot credibly tell citizens to stop doing the same.²⁷

3.7.5 See [Corruption in government](#) for further information on this subject.

[Back to Contents](#)

3.8 Smuggling

3.8.1 The United States Department of State Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) reported in June 2018: 'Due in part to the ongoing war in the east, illegal weapons-related crimes continued to increase in 2017.'²⁸

3.8.2 OCCRP reported in October 2018:

'Sales of illegal weapons have doubled in Ukraine in the past year, according to the national police, many of them smuggled from the east of the country where a war against Russia-backed separatists still simmers. Vyacheslav Abroshkin, the first deputy head of Ukraine's National Police, as he spoke to reporters about the rising tally of police seizures. "During one of these operations, 913 items of firearms, 804 grenades and 266 explosives from illicit trafficking were seized. Also, almost 100,000 units of ammunition and 195 kilograms of explosive substances were seized," he said.'²⁹

3.8.3 The same OCCRP report stated: 'Ukraine has long been a hotspot in the global arms trade.'³⁰

3.8.4 OCCRP reported in August 2018 'Three smugglers attacked a Ukrainian border guard in a village bordering Romania Tuesday, after the guard's detachment caught them flying illegal cigarettes across the border on a drone. Smugglers are increasingly using drones to move cigarettes from Ukraine to Europe where they can be sold tax-free at a tidy profit, according to Ukraine's State Border Guard. The trade has been estimated at over US\$2 billion annually.'³¹

3.8.5 Hromadske, an NGO online news outlet dedicated to reporting on events in Ukraine with impartiality reported in August 2017: 'Ukraine's State Border Guard Service made a surprising discovery, an illegal "pipeline" crossing through the Kuchurgan Reservoir from Moldova into Ukraine's Odesa region. The authorities believe its purpose was to illegally smuggle alcohol between the two countries.'³²

3.8.6 See [Corruption](#) for further information on this subject.

[Back to Contents](#)

²⁷ ICG, 'Ukraine, Will the Centre Hold?', Section II, 21 December 2017, [url](#)

²⁸ OSAC, Ukraine 2018 Crime and Safety Report, 15 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁹ OCCRP, 'Ukraine sees jump in illegal weapons sales,' 23 October 2018, [url](#)

³⁰ OCCRP, 'Ukraine sees jump in illegal weapons sales,' 23 October 2018, [url](#)

³¹ OCCRP, 'Drone Smuggling, Customs fraud highlight Ukraine's corruption woes,' 9 August 2018, [url](#)

³² Hromadske, 'Ukraine Border Guards uncover illegal booze-smuggling pipe,' 25 August 2017, [url](#)

3.9 Human trafficking

- 3.9.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine:Trafficking](#) for information on this subject.

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 4 updated: 29 May 2019

4. Corruption

4.1 General

- 4.1.1 The Corruption Perception Index 2018 ranked Ukraine 120 out of 180 countries for corruption with a score of 32/100, with 0 being highly corrupt and 100 meaning very clean³³.
- 4.1.2 Freedom House reported in 2019, ‘Corruption remains a serious problem, and there is little political will to fight it despite strong pressure from civil society. Anticorruption agencies have repeatedly been ensnared in politically fraught conflicts with other state entities and elected officials.’³⁴
- 4.1.3 Freedom House noted, ‘Although due process guarantees exist, in practice individuals with financial resources and political influence can escape prosecution for wrongdoing.’³⁵
- 4.1.4 In the ‘Nations in Transit 2018’ report, Freedom House noted:
- ‘Ukraine has struggled with implementing anticorruption reforms under the strategy approved after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. As of 2017, the country had established several anticorruption institutions and set up new mechanisms, including online publication of public-servant asset declarations, and ensuring transparent public procurements. Most of these changes, however, have had little impact on citizens’ lives, and public perceptions of corruption have remained high. According to one survey, a third of Ukrainians reported that they had a personal experience with corruption in the preceding three months, and a majority—85 percent—saw no improvements in this sphere. Almost half of Ukrainians (44 percent) viewed corruption as one of the major causes of tension in the society, while an overwhelming majority of businesspeople also reported high levels of corruption. Corrupt elites continued to resist the change by undermining reform initiatives.
- ‘The National Anticorruption Strategy, which was approved in 2014, expired in 2017; the new strategy for the period 2018–20 was prepared by the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) but so far has not been registered in the parliament.
- ‘NGOs played a critical role in anticorruption reform advocacy, policy development, and monitoring during the year. Formal NGO councils have been established within newly created institutions, including NABU, NAPC, and the Agency for Recovery and Management of Assets (ARMA). At the

³³ Transparency.org, The Corruption Perceptions Index 2018, Ukraine, [url](#)

³⁴ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2019,’ Ukraine, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

³⁵ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2019,’ Ukraine, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

same time, NGOs, particularly anticorruption watchdog groups, have come under increasing political pressure for their work.³⁶

- 4.1.5 See [Anti-corruption activists](#) for further information about the treatment of anti-corruption activists. See [Money laundering](#) for information about links between money laundering and corruption. See [Governmental and other initiatives: Corruption](#) for further information about the NAPC.

[Back to Contents](#)

4.2 Corruption in government

- 4.2.1 The USSD HR Report 2018 noted, 'While the number of reports of government corruption was low, corruption remained pervasive at all levels in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.'³⁷

- 4.2.2 The ICG reported in 2017:

'Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Ukraine's leaders have reaped colossal profits from politics. It is no surprise, then, that a large part of the population – between one-quarter and half, according to various estimates – operates in the shadow economy: they see leaders prioritising private wealth over public good and follow suit. Kyiv has made large strides since Maidan, with a new anti-corruption bureau, a new police force, and momentum toward regional decentralisation – yet Ukrainians remain largely convinced that their leaders systematically obstruct or derail reforms to protect personal fiefdoms and corporate bottom lines. Ukraine must get serious about fighting corruption, or risk becoming a state that people on the margins choose to abandon.'³⁸

- 4.2.3 OCCRP reported in February 2019:

'Ukrainian lawmakers have launched the process to impeach [former] President Petro Poroshenko following an eruptive media report linking him to a corruption scandal involving the President's friends who have allegedly stolen from the country's defense industry. The declaration came a day after BIHUS.info, a Kiev-based investigative journalism project focused on anti-corruption, released the first two parts of a four-part report implicating Poroshenko in the embezzlement and money laundering scandal.'³⁹

- 4.2.4 OCCRP further reported in November 2017:

'Every time there is a major leak of offshore documents, [former] Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko seems to get caught in another discrepancy regarding his plans for Roshen, his candy company. In May 2016, OCCRP published a report indicating that nearly €4 million had been moved out of Ukraine to a Poroshenko company in Cyprus in a combination of cash and in-kind payments.

'The transaction, made on March 25, 2016 by Prime Assets Capital, a Ukrainian fund owned by Poroshenko, was for the purchase of 18,000

³⁶ Freedom House, 'Nations in Transit 2018,' Ukraine, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

³⁷ USSD HR Report 2018, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

³⁸ ICG, 'Ukraine: Will the Centre Hold?,' 21 December 2017, [url](#)

³⁹ OCCRP, 'Impeachment process begun against Ukraine's Poroshenko,' 28 February 2019, [url](#)

shares of his Cyprus-registered company, CEE Confectionary Investments Limited, at €218 per share – far above the share’s face value of €1. There are few reasons to change the share price between two related companies unless someone wants to legally move assets between them. The transaction had a total value of €3,926,160.⁴⁰

4.2.5 In May 2018, the website Inside World Football stated:

‘Ukraine’s under-fire Interior Minister, Arsen Avakov, has accused 35 of the nation’s top football clubs of involvement in massive match-fixing operations which involved five criminal gangs, at least 320 people and up to \$5 million a year in illegal earnings.

[...]

‘Avakov, probably Ukraine’s most powerful figure after President Poroshenko, has been under fire for alleged corruption and was discovered to have purchased a \$900,000, 26-room villa on the Mediterranean Sea coast in Italy using an Italian company, whilst declaring income to Ukrainian tax authorities of just \$39,000 in 2017.’⁴¹

4.2.6 OCCRP reported in April 2017:

‘Ukrainian authorities detained an ex-MP and a state energy firm deputy chief for the embezzlement of US\$ 17.3 million from selling uranium concentrate at inflated prices, the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine [NABU] said Friday. Mykola Martynenko, the former head of the Ukrainian parliament’s energy committee, is suspected of personally benefiting from the scheme through an Austria-registered company he allegedly controlled, Reuters reported. According to the bureau, the Steuermann Investitions und Handelsgesellschaft sold Kazakh uranium ore at hiked prices to Ukraines’ Eastern Ore Dressing Plant for three years.’⁴²

4.2.7 The ‘Freedom in the World 2019’ report, published by Freedom House in February 2019, noted that, ‘Ukraine’s oligarchs exert significant influence over politics through their financial support for various political parties.’⁴³

4.2.8 The same report stated, ‘The media landscape features considerable pluralism and open criticism of the government. However, business magnates with varying political interests own and influence many outlets, using them as tools to advance their agendas. Poroshenko owns the television network Fifth Channel and has rebuffed press freedom groups’ demands that he honor his earlier promise to sell it.’⁴⁴

4.2.9 The USSD HR Report 2018 noted, ‘Some judges and prosecutors reportedly took bribes in exchange for legal determinations.’⁴⁵

4.2.10 OCCRP reported in February 2018:

⁴⁰ OCCRP, ‘Candy company plans haunt Ukrainian President,’ 5 November 2017, [url](#)

⁴¹ Inside World Football, ‘Ukrainian minister says 66% of top clubs involved [...],’ 23 May 2018, [url](#)

⁴² OCCRP, ‘Ukraine detains two top officials in Uranium corruption probe,’ 24 April 2017, [url](#)

⁴³ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2019,’ Ukraine, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2019,’ Ukraine, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁵ USSD HR Report 2018, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

'The mayor of Odessa and his deputy were arrested on Wednesday morning at the Boryspil international airport near Kyiv on suspicion of embezzling state property, the National Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine, NABU, announced. The bureau had been investigating four officials of the city hall of Odessa, including mayor Hennadiy Trukhanov, on suspicion of "Acquisition of property by abuse of office," the statement said.'⁴⁶

- 4.2.11 See [Links with politics](#) and [Illegal mining](#) for further examples of state corruption.

[Back to Contents](#)

4.3 Corruption amongst the police

- 4.3.1 OCCRP reported in April 2019: 'Ukraine's State Bureau of Investigations in partnership with local law enforcement detained the Deputy Chief of Investigations of the Tysmenytsia Police Department for accepting a bribe of US\$5,000, the Bureau said in a press release on Tuesday.'⁴⁷

- 4.3.2 The USSD HR Report 2018 also noted: 'On May 30 [2018], an indictment against the former heads of the Odesa city police and the city public security department for "abuse of authority or office" was submitted to the Prymorsky district court in Odesa. The trial against the head of the Odesa Oblast police on charges of abuse of authority, forgery, and dereliction of duty in protecting people from danger continued.'⁴⁸

- 4.3.3 ICG reported on the illegal amber trade in northern Ukraine in 2017; the report stated: 'the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) arrested four high-ranking Rivne oblast police officials in 2016 on accusations of sheltering the trade, and in early 2017 a key officer was rumoured to have struck a deal with "amber mafia" elements.'⁴⁹

- 4.3.4 See [Illegal amber mining](#) for further information on this subject. See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine: Actors of protection](#) for further information about the police.

[Back to Contents](#)

4.4 Anti-corruption activists

- 4.4.1 In the Annual Report 2018, Transparency International noted: 'During the past two years, attacks on activists and public figures have escalated – there have been over 50 attacks across the entire country. The attack on Kherson activists and local council member Kateryna Handziuk [a senior staff member of the Kherson city council who campaigned against corruption and was attacked with acid] was fatal.'⁵⁰

- 4.4.2 See [Justice in action](#) for information about the investigation into the murder of Kateryna Handziuk.

⁴⁶ OCCRP, 'Ukraine: Mayor arrested in US\$7m embezzlement probe,' 14 February 2018, [url](#)

⁴⁷ OCCRP, 'Ukrainian police chief arrested for taking bribe,' 4 April 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁸ USSD HR Report 2018, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁹ ICG, 'Ukraine: Will the Centre Hold?,' 21 December 2017, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Transparency International, Annual Report 2018, Ukraine, 25 April 2019, [url](#)

4.4.3 Amnesty International's annual report covering 2017, published in February 2018, noted:

'Civil society activists and members of NGOs, particularly those working on corruption, were regularly harassed and subjected to violence. These incidents were often not effectively investigated, and members of the authorities, including security services in some instances, were widely suspected to have instigated them.

'A law adopted in March [2017] obliged anti-corruption activists, including members of NGOs and journalists, to file annual income declarations – something that state officials have to do – or face criminal charges and imprisonment.'⁵¹

4.4.4 In March 2019:

'OHCHR observed an increase in violent attacks against civil society activists in 2018. On 27 September 2018, approximately 70 civil society organizations and political parties participated in an all-Ukrainian rally calling the attention of the public and authorities to attacks against various civil society activists, some of whom worked to expose corruption. Attacks documented by OHCHR in 2018 ranged from spraying acid on victims to gun injuries and caused the death of two activists. Despite the creation of the Special Parliamentary Investigation Commission, investigations into several attacks are not progressing.'⁵²

4.4.5 See [Organised crime prosecutions](#) for further information about civil society activists.

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 5 updated: 29 May 2019

5. Legal position

5.1 Law on organised crime

5.1.1 The Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine stated:

'Article 255. Creation of a criminal organization

'1. Creation of a criminal organization for the purpose of committing a grave or special grave offense, and also leadership or participation in such organization, or participation of offenses committed by such organization, and also the organizing, running or facilitating a meeting (convention) of members of criminal organizations or organized groups for the purpose of development of plans and conditions for joint commission of criminal offenses, providing logistical support of criminal activities or coordination of activities of so associated criminal organizations or organized groups, - shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of five to twelve years.

'2. A person, other than an organizer or leader of a criminal organization, shall be discharged from criminal liability for the offense created by this Article, if he/she has voluntarily reported the creation of the criminal

⁵¹ Amnesty International, 'Annual Report 2017/18,' Ukraine, 22 February 2018, [url](#)

⁵² OHCHR, 'Civic space and fundamental freedoms ahead [...],' 12 March 2019, [url](#)

organization or his/her participation in it, and effectively assisted in uncovering this organization.⁵³

5.1.2 It further stated:

‘Article 256. Assistance to members of criminal organizations and covering up of their criminal activity

‘1. Assistance, which was not promised in advance, to members of criminal organizations and covering up of their criminal activities by providing premises, shelters, vehicles, information, documents, equipment, money, or securities, and also taking other actions, which were not promised in advance, to create conditions facilitating their criminal activities, - shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to five years.

‘2. The same actions committed by an official or repeated, - shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of five to ten years with the deprivation of the right to occupy certain positions or engage in certain activities for a term up to three years.⁵⁴

5.1.3 See the [Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine](#) for more information.

[Back to Contents](#)

5.2 Implementation of the law

5.2.1 The USSD HR Report 2018 noted, ‘The law provides criminal penalties for corruption. Authorities did not effectively implement the law, and many officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.⁵⁵

5.2.2 The same report noted:

‘While the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, courts were inefficient and remained vulnerable to political pressure and corruption. Confidence in the judiciary remained low.

‘Despite efforts to reform the judiciary and the Prosecutor General’s Office, corruption among judges and prosecutors remained endemic. Civil society groups continued to complain about weak separation of powers between the executive and judicial branches of government. Some judges claimed that high-ranking politicians pressured them to decide cases in their favor, regardless of the merits. Some judges and prosecutors reportedly took bribes in exchange for legal determinations. Other factors impeded the right to a fair trial, such as lengthy court proceedings, particularly in administrative courts, inadequate funding, and the inability of courts to enforce rulings.⁵⁶

5.2.3 For further information about the effectiveness of the judiciary, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Ukraine: Actors of protection](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

⁵³ UNODC, Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine, 1 September 2001, [url](#)

⁵⁴ UNODC, Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine, 1 September 2001, [url](#)

⁵⁵ USSD HR Report 2018, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁶ USSD HR Report 2018, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

5.3 Organised crime prosecutions

5.3.1 Hromadske reported in March 2019: ‘The Constitutional Court ruled that [Article 368-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine] was unconstitutional, and therefore null and void. As a direct consequence of this decision, 65 cases against MPs, judges, prosecutors and other officials, who were all suspected of illegal enrichment to the combined amount of almost \$19 million, have been closed.’⁵⁷

5.3.2 See [Legal position](#) and [Corruption](#) for further information on these subjects.

5.3.3 In March 2019, OHCHR reported on how attacks on civil society activists, including activists protesting about corruption, are treated by the authorities:

‘The lack of accountability for attacks on civil society perpetrated by extreme right-wing groups also raises concern. Throughout the reporting period, the number of attacks and acts of intimidation documented by OHCHR, involving members of extreme right-wing groups, reached 34. A few of them are currently being investigated. OHCHR documented cases when, despite sufficient police presence, authorities failed to apprehend perpetrators. OHCHR is concerned that such impunity may fuel further attacks.’⁵⁸

5.3.4 In April 2019, Open Democracy, which describes itself as ‘an independent global media platform covering world affairs, ideas and culture which seeks to challenge power and encourage democratic debate across the world,’ reported on the investigation into the murder of anti-corruption activist, Kateryna Handzyuk:

‘On 25 April, several dozen activists gathered outside the home of Yuri Lutsenko, Ukraine’s General Prosecutor. The demonstrators, part of the “Who killed Katya Handzyuk?” initiative, wanted to ask Lutsenko about the status of the investigation into the murder of Kherson activist Kateryna Handzyuk - and why defendants in this case are now facing lighter charges. Lutsenko did not comment on their questions.

‘Anti-corruption activist Kateryna Handzyuk, 33, died from numerous burns on 4 November 2018. This was the result of injuries received on 31 July, when, as Handzyuk left her home in the southern city of Kherson, an assailant poured a litre of sulfuric acid over her.

‘Ukrainian police have qualified the attack as “premeditated murder for self-seeking motives, carried out with particular cruelty, on order, and according to a pre-existing agreement by a group of individuals”. And the investigation has identified a clear hierarchy of assailants, organisers, middlemen and clients of this crime. The General Prosecutor’s Office has already declared its suspicion to several of them, but in the past week has changed the nature of its suspicions against the suspects.

‘On 17 April, the Prosecutor’s Office changed its suspicion against Ihor Pavlovsky, a former assistant to Ukrainian MP Mykola Palamarchuk. Previously, Pavlovsky had been suspected of organising the murder of Handzyuk, but is he now suspected of “covering up a murder”. Moreover, for a week, the Shevchenko district court in Kyiv was unable to hold a hearing

⁵⁷ Hromadske, ‘You can now get rich illegally in Ukraine. What does this mean?’, 3 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁸ OHCHR, ‘Civic space and fundamental freedoms ahead [...],’ 12 March 2019, [url](#)

on extending Pavlovsky's investigative detention. The hearings were postponed, cancelled, and the stated time of them was changed. At one of the hearings, Pavlovsky's lawyer stated that his client had fallen over and received a concussion, as a result of which he could not attend court.

[...]

'Meanwhile, the General Prosecutor's Office has also changed its suspicion against the men believed to have carried out the attack on Kateryna Handzyuk - Serhiy Torbin, Viktor Gorbunov, Volodymyr Vasyanovych, Vyacheslav Vyshnevsky and Mykyta Grabchuk. All of these men are currently held in pre-trial detention and initially the General Prosecutor's Office suspected them of pre-meditated murder. But on 23 April, it was reported in court that the General Prosecutor's Office had changed its charges to all five suspects to lighter charges. Now these men are charged with inflicting serious bodily harm. The next day, Andriy Lysenko, press spokesperson for the General Prosecutor's Office, stated to the media that the five assailants had struck a deal with the investigation and admitted their guilt.

'But the General Prosecutor's Office hasn't limited itself to reducing the charges against the assailants and organiser. On 24 April, prosecutors presented a new suspicion against Vladyslav Manger, head of the Kherson regional council. Manger was first officially suspected of ordering the murder in February this year, but two months later the charges have been altered. He is now suspected of ordering an attack causing grievous bodily harm against Handzyuk. [...]

'The General Prosecutor is currently in a difficult position. A number of civic activists and reformers are calling for his resignation [...]. Indeed, the team of the president-elect [Volodymyr Zelensky, now President] has stated that Lutsenko should leave his post.'⁵⁹

5.3.5 Organized Crime Observatory published a [Statement of the Anti-Corruption Centre \(Ukraine\) regarding the assassination of Kateryna Handziuk](#)⁶⁰ on 9 November 2018, which was endorsed by 77 NGOs.

5.3.6 The USSD HR Report 2018 noted:

'There were reports of incidents in which observers alleged that the government targeted activists for prosecution in retaliation for their professional activity. For example, several major human rights groups expressed concern about the government's prosecution of Vitaliy Shabunin, head of the anticorruption NGO AntAC, which they alleged was selective and politically motivated. On January 15 [2018], authorities charged Shabunin with allegedly inflicting bodily harm on a journalist, a charge that carries a heavier penalty than the crime of inflicting intentional moderate bodily harm with which he had previously been charged in 2017. Both charges stemmed from an incident in June 2017 in which Shabunin allegedly punched Vsevolod Filimonenko, a supposed journalist who had reportedly harassed one of Shabunin's colleagues. Human rights groups noted that video footage of the events suggested that Filimonenko may have been sent by the

⁵⁹ Open Democracy, 'Are Ukrainian prosecutors disrupting the investigation [...],' 26 April 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Organized Crime Observatory, 'Statement of the Anti-Corruption Centre [...],' 9 November 2018, [url](#)

country's security services to provoke a conflict with Shabunin and that the resources and vigor the government applied to prosecuting Shabunin far exceeded their usual approach to prosecuting attacks on journalists, including attacks where the resultant injuries were much more grave.⁶¹

5.3.7 See [Civil society activists](#) for further information about the murder of Kateryna Handzyuk and the harassment of other activists.

5.3.8 In the Annual Report 2018, Transparency International noted:

‘Currently, for our organization, the goal of ensuring unavoidable punishment for corruption-related offenses is unattainable. Bringing high-ranking officials to justice still remains something to which we aspire rather than an accomplished fact. None of the major corruption-related cases (those of Nasirov, Martynenko etc.) has yet led to an actual conviction. In many cases, obstacles are conjured up at the pre-trial investigation stage, and proceedings are either closed midway or dragged out at the trial stage. In addition, 2018 was a year marked by several scandals in the anti-corruption sector. Unexpectedly, the integrity of the newly-created anti-corruption agencies themselves came into question. However, the NABU [National Anticorruption Bureau] and the SAPO [Special Anticorruption Prosecution Office] started increasingly numerous cases against high-ranking officials. Simultaneously journalists and activists have continued their work exposing corruption. As a result, anti-corruption agencies are subjected to political and populist pressure, whilst activists, in turn, fear for their own safety.’⁶²

5.3.9 See [Civil society activists](#) for further information on this subject. See [Corruption in government](#) for further information on this subject. See [Money laundering](#) for information about convictions for this crime.

[Back to Contents](#)

5.4 Witness protection

5.4.1 EUAM reported and recommended in April 2017:

‘At the moment in Ukraine, there is no established witness-protection programme in place, but officers from the National Police and Security Service do provide close-protection support. What EUAM would like to see is an independent witness-protection agency or unit in Ukraine, along the lines of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau. This independence would help to avoid competition, or a lack of trust, among law-enforcement agencies. We have already created an inter-agency working group to discuss the idea, and everybody in that group agrees that there should be a national witness-protection body in Ukraine. There was a law on witness protection passed in 1993, but it is outdated and should be either updated or replaced.’⁶³

[Back to Contents](#)

Section 6 updated: 29 May 2019

⁶¹ USSD HR Report 2018, Ukraine, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶² Transparency International, Annual Report 2018, Ukraine, 25 April 2019, [url](#)

⁶³ EUAM, ‘Witness Protection: a valuable tool to combat organised crime,’ 24 April 2017, [url](#)

6. Governmental and other initiatives

6.1 Corruption

6.1.1 EUAM gave one of its priorities for Ukraine as work on corruption, stating:

‘EUAM aims to enhance the anti-corruption capacity of the police, prosecution and judiciary, and assist recently established anti-corruption agencies in Ukraine, namely the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SACPO), and the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC). EUAM focuses, for example, on the provision of training for detectives and prosecutors, interrogation facilities, development of integrity tools and a code of conduct, public-communication capacity, and human resources.’⁶⁴

6.1.2 For further information about the NAPC, see [Corruption: General](#).

6.1.3 The USSD HR Report 2018 stated:

‘The new independent anticorruption bodies faced political pressure that undermined public trust, raised concern about the government’s commitment to fighting corruption, and threatened the viability of the institutions. Anticorruption watchdogs noted that several appointments to NABU’s [National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine’s] audit board during the year were seen as personally loyal to the president and posing a threat to NABU’s independence. Observers alleged that the release of leaked conversations by the head of SAP [Special Anticorruption Prosecution Office] in early 2018 indicated he had engaged in witness tampering and obstruction of justice. He refused to resign, was not disciplined by the Prosecutor General or prosecutorial body, and allegedly proceeded to undermine NABU investigations, weakening efforts to hold high-ranking officials to account.’⁶⁵

6.1.4 The same report noted:

‘The law mandates the filing of income and expenditure declarations by public officials, and a special review process allows for public access to declarations and sets penalties for either not filing or filing a false declaration. By law, the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption (NAPC) is responsible for reviewing financial declarations, monitoring the income and expenditures of high-level officials, and checking party finances. Observers increasingly questioned, however, whether the NAPC had the capacity and independence to fulfill this function, noting that in practice NABU had proven to be more effective for oversight of declarations, even though this was not its core mandate. In July, Transparency International Ukraine noted that the NAPC had fully reviewed only 300 declarations out of 2.5 million that had been submitted and had identified multiple serious holes in its verification procedures. On September 25, the NAPC launched “automated” verification of declarations, which would purportedly allow easier identification of declarations at “high risk” of fraud. Observers noted serious flaws in this automated procedure and doubted it would result in improved verification. Observers noted that the NAPC’s December

⁶⁴ EUAM, Our priorities, Anti-corruption, undated, [url](#)

⁶⁵ USSD HR Report 2018, Ukraine, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

announcement that it would open criminal cases regarding party financing against the lead opposition party Batkivshchyna and several minor parties after years of general inactivity raised concerns that it might be used for political purposes ahead of the 2019 election cycle.⁶⁶

6.1.5 In the 'Nations in Transit 2018' report, Freedom House further noted:

'The second wave of e-declarations was launched at the beginning of 2017, requiring the publication of asset declarations by all public servants, not only higher-level officials. While this is a remarkable move towards transparency and accountability, over 800,000 declarations that became available must be reviewed and investigated for any inconsistencies. The NAPC will play a leading role in this routine process; however, experts have expressed concerns about the independence and effectiveness of this institution.'⁶⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

6.2 Borders

6.2.1 The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported in January 2018:

'Ukraine joined Container Control Programme [CCP] to strengthen coordination and cooperation among institutions involved in border security and trade facilitation. Under the Programme, two port control units will be established in the Odessa Sea port and at Borispol International airport to undertake specialized profiling, targeting and examining of high-risk containers used to transport illicit goods.

'Following the signing ceremony, Miroslav Prodan, acting Head of State Fiscal Service, pointed to a significant increase in the recent flow of goods in the country. Citing an example, he said that Ukraine received 700,000 more containers in 2017 compared to the previous year.

'Effective control over container flows is impossible without cooperation and information exchange, he continued, adding that, with CCP, Ukraine gets access to international databases and can track illegal flows of drugs, weapons and counterfeit goods.

'Also speaking, Petr Tsuhukal, Head of the State Border Guard Service, said that CCP will enable Ukraine to strengthen its border security while protecting the country from illicit traffic and organized crime.'⁶⁸

6.2.2 The USSD Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs published the 'International Narcotics Control Strategy Report' in March 2019 which stated:

'The United States is providing assistance to help Ukraine bring its law enforcement institutions up to European standards, facilitating Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has established good working relationships across the Ukrainian law enforcement sector, and ongoing training programs have

⁶⁶ USSD HR Report 2018, Ukraine, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Freedom House, 'Nations in Transit 2018,' Ukraine, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸ UNODC, 'UNODC and Ukraine sign Memorandum of Understanding [...],' 19 January 2018, [url](#)

deepened these relationships. Through a variety of projects, the United States also assists the NPU in developing its capacities while simultaneously strengthening the Border Guards capability to control Ukraine's 3,490 mile-long border.⁶⁹

- 6.2.3 See [Illicit drugs](#) and [Smuggling](#) for further information on these subjects.

[Back to Contents](#)

6.3 Police

- 6.3.1 The National News Agency of Ukraine (Ukrinform) reported on a joint partnership between the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and Arsen Avakov (Interior Minister of Ukraine) in April 2018:

'Today, criminal groups operate not only within the borders of one country. They actively use innovative technologies, digital payment platforms and virtual crypto currency. In order to collect electronic evidence, it is necessary to organize interaction between bodies, including at the international "level," Avakov said. The parties agreed on a Memorandum of Cooperation between the National Police of Ukraine and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) of the United States Department of Justice.'⁷⁰

- 6.3.2 See [Illicit drugs](#) for further information on these subjects.

- 6.3.3 EUAM stated that one of its priorities for its work in Ukraine was criminal investigation, stating:

'EUAM supports pre-trial criminal investigation agencies such as the National Police, National Anti-Corruption Bureau, Security Service of Ukraine, and the State Fiscal Service tackle serious organised crime such as forensic, cyber crime, drug crime, financial and economic crime, and corruption.

'The objectives of criminal-investigation reform include increasing the efficiency of the above agencies and the General Prosecutor's Office, strengthening criminal investigations, and eliminating corruption. Together with the National Police and other international partners, EUAM has also established a working group on criminal investigation, which is focusing on issues such as delineation of investigative powers, intelligence-based criminal policing, training in criminal policing, the creation of an Electronic Criminal Case Management System, and creation of a witness protection programme.'⁷¹

- 6.3.4 EUAM released a report in February 2018 which stated:

'The Head of the European Union Advisory Mission [EUAM], Kestutis Lanciskas, was at the headquarters of the National Police of Ukraine [NPU] in Kyiv yesterday to congratulate the NPU on the creation of an Organised Crime Fighting Department, and to pledge EUAM's continued support to ensure the Department is in place as soon as possible.

'The new Department, official title of which is the Department of Strategic Development and Analysis, – is a major part of NPU reform, and will result in

⁶⁹ USSD, BINLEA, 'International [...] Report,' Volume I, Drug & Chemical Control, March 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁰ The National News Agency of Ukraine, 'Ukraine, U.S. to cooperate in fight [...],' 17 April 2019, [url](#)

⁷¹ EUAM, Our priorities, Criminal investigation, undated, [url](#)

a more efficient, streamlined, approach to combatting serious and organised crime in Ukraine.

'The Head of the NPU, Serhei Kniazev, has already given an order to create a working group in which EUAM experts will participate, and whose task will be to define an action plan that will lead to the establishment of the Organised Crime Fighting Department.'⁷²

6.3.5 In September 2018, EUAM further reported on an EU-funded project, Support for Rule of Law Reforms in Ukraine in the areas of Police, Public Prosecution and Good Governance (PRAVO-II): 'It is part of a comprehensive multi-million euro support programme aimed at supporting Ukrainian law enforcement institutions in a number of areas, including the fight against organised crime. [...] It is funded by the European Union and has a total budget of 36 million euros.'⁷³

6.3.6 The USSD Bureau on International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs stated the following in an undated summary on Ukraine 'INL has supported the Government of Ukraine to meet the aspirations of the 2014 Revolution of Dignity by standing up new institutions, agencies, and units designed to fight corruption, improve security, and increase access to justice. INL supported the Ukrainian government to replace the notoriously corrupt traffic police with a 16,000 strong Patrol Police nationwide and has helped establish the country's first Patrol Police Academy.'⁷⁴

[Back to Contents](#)

6.4 Justice

6.4.1 In the Annual Report 2018 for Ukraine, Transparency International stated:

'Despite insurmountable resistance, another step has been taken towards building the anti-corruption infrastructure. After over two years of struggle for the Anti-Corruption Court, the legislation was finally adopted. This was an important step in the anti-corruption fight in Ukraine. It is a signal to our partners that Ukraine is capable of fulfilling the undertaken commitments and willing to take action to improve the judiciary system. This court will complete the framework of anti-corruption agencies. As a result, we can expect independent, objective judicial review and decisions in cases concerning high-ranking corrupt officials.'⁷⁵

6.4.2 Freedom House further stated:

'Ukraine has long suffered from corrupt and politicized courts, and recent reform initiatives aimed at addressing the issue have stalled or fallen short of expectations. A competitive selection process for new Supreme Court judges was initiated in 2016, but it has since come under heavy criticism from civil society and other observers for a perceived lack of transparency and proper consultation, and for failing to weed out flawed candidates. The process will continue into 2019.

⁷² EUAM, 'Fight against organised crime takes big step forward with creation [...]', 7 February 2018, [url](#)

⁷³ EUAM, 'EU supports Ukraine to fight organised crime,' 18 September 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁴ USSD, BINLEA, Ukraine summary, undated, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Transparency International, Annual Report 2018, Ukraine, 25 April 2019, [url](#)

‘Poroshenko signed legislation in June 2018 to create a long-awaited anticorruption court. Following criticism from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United States, the law was soon amended so that existing corruption cases would fall under its purview. Thirty-nine judges still had to be selected to serve on the new body. As with the Supreme Court appointments, concerns remain that provisions meant to ensure fair competition and screening of judges will not be followed.

‘In March, Ukraine’s Public Integrity Council (PIC)—a body composed of civil society representatives that is tasked with advising the High Qualification Commission of Judges (HQCJ) about the ethics and integrity of judicial candidates—announced that it would withdraw from a wide-ranging judicial review process. The PIC said the HQCJ was ignoring its findings and that it had been “used to legitimize the needed result in the eyes of society and the international community.”⁷⁶

6.4.3 In the report covering November 2018 to February 2019, ‘[...] OHCHR notes that the State Bureau of Investigations (SBI) became operational on 27 November 2018. This body took over the investigative jurisdiction over the crimes involving senior public officials, judges, officers of law enforcement or national anti-corruption bodies, and the crimes related to military service.’⁷⁷

6.4.4 In the ‘Nations in Transit 2018’ report, Freedom House noted, ‘The recently established National Anticorruption Bureau (NABU) actively investigated high-level corruption, but poor case management and court procedures undermined the effectiveness of its work. [...] Civil society, anticorruption investigation agencies, and international donors demanded the creation of an anticorruption court.’⁷⁸

6.4.5 The same report noted:

‘The effectiveness of newly established corruption investigative bodies, such as NABU and the Special Anticorruption Prosecution Office (SAPO), was undermined by the absence of fair justice. By the end of the year [2018], the agency had 489 matters under investigation, 165 people accused of graft offenses, and 107 cases before the courts. Current investigations have uncovered over UAH 2.25 billion (\$85.8 million) in fraud, but court decisions have resulted in only UAH 253 million (\$9.65 million) in recovered damages. The head of NABU reported that only a quarter of corruption cases in the trial stage have been processed, and more than 15 percent have been delayed for longer than 6 months. Notable high-level corruption cases included the prosecution of former MP Mykola Martynenko, who allegedly misused over \$17 million in funds from a uranium-extraction state enterprise.

‘Law enforcement agencies have challenged NABU’s capacity to work effectively. In November, the SBU arrested a NABU detective, accusing him of offering a bribe as part of his investigation. The General Prosecutor has accused NABU of using detectives who were appointed without transparent procedures and relied on illegal tools in their investigations.’⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2019,’ Ukraine, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁷ OHCHR, ‘Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, [...],’ paragraph 52, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Freedom House, ‘Nations in Transit 2018,’ Ukraine, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Freedom House, ‘Nations in Transit 2018,’ Ukraine, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

6.4.6 The 'Nations in Transit' report, which covered 2017 and was published by Freedom House in April 2018, stated:

'Persistent political capture of the country's judicial system continued to pose a threat to the implementation of other reforms in Ukraine, including anticorruption efforts, throughout 2017.

'In 2015, Ukraine approved the Strategy for Reform of the Judicial System. This outlined the main priorities for 2015–20, including ensuring judicial independence, improving judicial governance, increasing the judiciary's transparency and professionalism, and building public trust in the justice system. [...] On 30 September 2016, the laws that launched Ukraine's judicial reform came into force. For 2017, the reform prescribed the selection of new Supreme Court judges, introduction of judge qualifications at different levels, formation of an anticorruption court, introduction of electronic tools in the judicial system, and improvement of the legal framework for further reform. On 3 October [2017], the parliament passed amendments to various procedural codes that further advanced judicial reform.

'As part of the reform, the High Qualification Commission of Judges of Ukraine conducted an open competition for new justices to the Supreme Court, in which 1,436 applicants competed for positions. On 29 September [2017], the commission submitted candidates for presidential approval. However, on 3 October [2017], the Public Council on Integrity called on President Poroshenko not to approve the proposed candidates, as 25 of them had not passed the integrity qualifications. The Public Integrity Council alleged that these candidates had previously engaged in politically motivated decisions, bans of public assemblies, violations of human rights, or had not fulfilled their income-declaration requirements with sufficient transparency. In addition, the council criticized some of the selection procedures and appealed to the president to conduct an independent audit of the process.

'The vetting of judge qualifications for different positions continued throughout the year. The overall number of judges continued to decline, and more than 3,000 judges have resigned, while 172 were fired due to disciplinary actions. As a result of the requirement for more transparent income declarations, over 1,000 judges voluntarily resigned from their positions.'⁸⁰

6.4.7 Freedom House further stated:

'[...] the ineffectiveness of the judicial system threatens achievements in anticorruption reform. Newly created bodies like the National Anticorruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) and the Special Anticorruption Prosecutor's Office face significant impediments in bringing cases to court. Only 27 convictions arose from 107 criminal proceedings that went to trial. The Law on the Judiciary and Status of Judges, adopted together with the package of constitutional amendments in 2016 as part of the wider judicial reform, recommended the establishment of the High Anticorruption Court under a separate law. Despite the president's publicly declared interest in creating an anticorruption court, civil society organizations (CSOs) have accused

⁸⁰ Freedom House, 'Nations in Transit 2018,' Ukraine, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

Poroshenko of trying to postpone the legislative approval process. As a result of pressure from CSOs and international donors, and following a Venice Commission recommendation, the president introduced draft legislation at the end of the year, which international institutions criticized for its envisaged selection procedure for judges, proposed jurisdiction of the court, and possible further delays in implementing the legislation. By year's end, five alternative drafts were registered by the president and MPs.

'In April, the parliament voted against the Law on the Constitutional Court, which tried to bring legislation governing the Constitutional Court in line with the 2016 constitutional amendments, thereby stemming attempts to make this institution more independent. The parliament reviewed and approved another draft law on the Constitutional Court in July. Experts criticized this draft law for not establishing clear procedures for the competitive selection of judges.'⁸¹

[Back to Contents](#)

⁸¹ Freedom House, 'Nations in Transit 2018,' Ukraine, 11 April 2018, [url](#)

Terms of reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Legal position
 - Law on organised crime
 - Government initiatives
- Organised crime
 - Nature of organised crime
 - Contract killing
 - Links with politics
 - Illicit drugs
 - Human trafficking
 - Smuggling of products
- Law Enforcement
 - Police
 - Organised crime prosecutions
 - Trends in organised crime
- Witness protection
 - Capability of Ukraine Government
- Corruption
 - Justice
 - Former President Yanukovich and oligarchic rule

[Back to Contents](#)

Bibliography

Sources cited

Amnesty International, 'Annual Report 2017/18,' Ukraine, 22 February 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/ukraine/report-ukraine/>, last accessed: 20 May 2019

BBC, 'Paradise Papers: Ukraine crime gang hid proceeds in luxury London flats,' 23 April 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43823962>, last accessed: 30 May 2019

European Union Advisory Mission - Ukraine (EUAM),

Our priorities, Anti-corruption, undated, <http://www.euam-ukraine.eu/our-mission/our-priorities/anti-corruption/>, last accessed: 22 May 2019

Our priorities, Criminal investigation, undated, <http://www.euam-ukraine.eu/our-mission/our-priorities/criminal-investigation/>, last accessed: 22 May 2019

'Fight against organised crime takes big step forward with creation of dedicated unit within police', 7 February 2018, <http://www.euam-ukraine.eu/news/fight-against-organised-crime-takes-big-step-forward-with-creation-of-dedicated-unit-within-police/>, last accessed: 3 April 2019

'Witness Protection: a valuable tool to combat organised crime', 24 April 2017, <http://www.euam-ukraine.eu/news/opinion/witness-protection-a-valuable-tool-to-combat-serious-organised-crime/>, last accessed: 10 April 2019

'EU supports Ukraine to fight organised crime,' 18 September 2018, <http://www.euam-ukraine.eu/news/eu-supports-ukraine-to-fight-organised-crime/>, last accessed: 22 May 2019

Financial Times, 'Too much is at stake to give up on Ukraine', 19 December 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/e5251ec4-e3e5-11e7-97e2-916d4fbac0da>, last accessed: 3 April 2019

Freedom House,

'Freedom in the World 2019,' Ukraine, 4 February 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/ukraine>, last accessed: 2 April 2019

'Nations in Transit 2018,' Ukraine, 11 April 2018, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1429174.html>, last accessed: 4 April 2019

'Freedom on the Net 2018,' Ukraine, 1 November 2018, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2000981.html>, last accessed: 4 April 2019

Global Initiative, 'Dialogue on Organised Crime and Development', 4 February 2016, <https://globalinitiative.net/the-new-criminal-powers-tackling-illicit-links-between-crime-and-politics/>, last accessed: 2 April 2019

Hromadske,

'Ukraine Border Guards uncover illegal booze-smuggling pipe', 25 August 2017, <https://en.hromadske.ua/posts/ukraine-border-guards-uncover-illegal-booze-smuggling-pipe>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'You can now get rich illegally in Ukraine. What does this mean?', 3 March 2019, <https://en.hromadske.ua/posts/ukraine-legalizes-illegal-enrichment>, last

accessed: 8 April 2019

Inside World Football, 'Ukrainian minister says 66% of top clubs involved in criminal match-fixing gangs,' 23 May 2018, <http://www.insideworldfootball.com/2018/05/23/ukranian-minister-says-66-top-clubs-involved-criminal-match-fixing-gangs/>, last accessed: 30 May 2019

Interfax-Ukraine, 'Ukraine, U.S. to cooperate in fight against intl drug trafficking – Avakov,' 17 April 2018, <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/499441.html>, last accessed: 24 May 2019

International Crisis Group, 'Ukraine: Will the centre Hold?,' 21 December 2017, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a3cf70c4.html>, last accessed: 3 April 2019

National Geographic, 'The Dramatic Impact of Illegal Amber Mining in Ukraine's wild west', 31 January 2017, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2017/01/illegal-amber-mining-ukraine/>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),

'Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 16 November 2018 to 15 February 2019,' <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/ReportUkraine16Nov2018-15Feb2019.pdf>, last accessed: 20 May 2019

'Civic space and fundamental freedoms ahead of the presidential, parliamentary and local elections in Ukraine in 2019-2020,' 12 March 2019 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/CivicSpaceFundamentalFreedoms2019-2020.pdf>, last accessed: 20 May 2019

Open Democracy, 'Are Ukrainian prosecutors disrupting the investigation into the murder of Kateryna Handzyuk?' 26 April 2019, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/are-ukrainian-prosecutors-disrupting-investigation-murder-kateryna-handzyuk/>, last accessed: 21 May 2019

Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP),

'Ukraine detains two top officials in Uranium corruption probe', 24 April 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/27-ccwatch/cc-watch-briefs/6367-ukraine-detains-two-top-officials-in-uranium-corruption-probe>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Candy Company Plans Haunt Ukrainian President', 5 November 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/paradisepapers/candy-company-plans-haunt-ukrainian-president>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Ukraine: Mayor arrested in US\$7m embezzlement probe', 14 February 2018, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/7643-ukraine-mayor-arrested-in-us-7m-embezzlement-probe>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Drone Smuggling, Customs fraud highlight Ukraine's corruption woes', 9 August 2018, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/8443-drone-smuggling-customs-fraud-highlight-ukraine-s-corruption-woes>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Ukraine sees jump in illegal weapons sales', 23 October 2018, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/8785-ukraine-sees-jump-in-illegal-weapons-sales>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Impeachment process begun against Ukraine's Poroshenko', 28 February 2019, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/9296-impeachment-process-begun-against-ukraine-s-poroshenko>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Ukrainian police chief arrested for taking bribe', 4 April 2019, <https://www.occrp.org/en/27-ccwatch/cc-watch-briefs/9503-ukrainian-police-chief-arrested-for-taking-bribe>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

Organized Crime Observatory,

'Ukraine and the EU: Overcoming criminal exploitation toward a modern democracy?' April 2015, <http://www.o-c-o.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Ukraine-and-the-EU-Overcoming-criminal-exploitation-toward-a-modern-democracy.pdf>, last accessed: 10 April 2019

'Statement of the Anti-Corruption Centre (Ukraine) regarding the assassination of Kateryna Handziuk,' 9 November 2018, <http://www.o-c-o.net/statement-of-the-anti-corruption-action-centre-ukraine-regarding-the-assassination-of-kateryna-handziuk/>, last accessed: 22 May 2019

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), 'Ukraine 2018 Crime and Safety Report', 15 June 2018, <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/ContentReportDetails.aspx?cid=24286>, last accessed: 3 April 2019

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL),

'Ukraine's Amber Mining outlaws', 23 August 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-amber-illegal-mining/28692994.html>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Ukrainian Official Charged with Ordering Anticorruption Activist Killing', 15 February 2019, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukrainian-official-charged-with-ordering-anticorruption-activists-killing/29772010.html>, last accessed: 5 April 2019

The Guardian, 'Arkady Babchenko tells media he was taken to morgue for staged "murder"', 31 May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/31/arkady-babchenko-details-staged-murder-plot-russia-ukraine>, last accessed: 5 April 2019

The National News Agency of Ukraine (Ukrinform),

'Crime rate in Ukraine declines', 13 February 2019, <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-crime/2639703-crime-rate-in-ukraine-declines.html>, last accessed: 9 April 2019

'U.S. to cooperate in fight against international drug trafficking- Avakov', 17 April 2019, <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-society/2443213-ukraine-us-to-cooperate-in-fight-against-international-drug-trafficking-avakov.html>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

The World Economic Forum,

'The Global Competitiveness Index 2017-2018 edition', undated, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GCR2017-2018/03CountryProfiles/Standalone2-pagerprofiles/WEF_GCI_2017_2018_Profile_Ukraine.pdf, last accessed: 2 April 2019

'Instagram is filling up with fake goods. And organized crime's the winner', 2 June 2016, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/06/instagram-is-filling-up-with-fake-goods-and-organized-crime-s-the-winner/>, last accessed: 2 April 2019

'Hackers are causing blackouts. It's time to boost our cyber resilience', 27 March 2019, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/hackers-are-causing->

[blackouts-it-s-time-to-boost-our-cyber-resilience/](#), last accessed: 2 April 2019

Transparency.org,

The Corruption Perceptions Index 2018, Ukraine, 29 January 2019, <https://www.transparency.org/country/UKR>, last accessed: 5 April 2019

Annual Report 2018, Ukraine, 25 April 2019, <https://ti-ukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Annual-report-TI-Ukraine-2018.pdf>, last accessed: 20 May 2019

Ukrainian Independent Information Agency of News (UNIAN),

'Ukraine's drug enforcement police bust cocaine traffickers in Borussia Airport with batch worth over US\$1m', 3 July 2018, <https://www.unian.info/society/10174184-ukraine-s-drug-enforcement-police-bust-cocaine-traffickers-in-boryspil-airport-with-batch-worth-over-us-1-mln-photo.html>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

'Leader of one of the world's largest drug syndicates arrested in Kyiv', 12 March 2019, <https://www.unian.info/kyiv/10476936-leader-of-one-of-world-s-largest-drug-syndicates-arrested-in-kyiv-photo.html>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

Ukrinform,

'Ukraine, Argentina to cooperate in countering drug trafficking,' 20 November 2018, <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/2583559-ukraine-argentina-to-cooperate-in-countering-drug-trafficking.html>, last accessed: 24 May 2019

'Crime rate in Ukraine declines,' 13 February 2019, <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-crime/2639703-crime-rate-in-ukraine-declines.html>, last accessed: 9 April 2019

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),

'Ukraine, Criminal Code of the Republic of Ukraine', 1 September 2001, https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/document/ukr/2001/criminal_code_of_the_republic_of_ukraine_en.html, last accessed: 2 May 2019

'UNODC and Ukraine sign Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen port control, facilitate trade', 19 January 2018, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2018/January/unodc-and-ukraine-sign-memorandum-of-understanding-to-strengthen-port-control--facilitate-trade.html>, last accessed: 3 April 2019

United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, Ukraine, Transnational issues, Illicit drugs, last updated 22 May 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html>, last accessed: 24 May 2019

United States Department of State, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2018', Ukraine, 13 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2018/eur/289193.htm>, last accessed: 2 April 2019

United States Department of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (BINLEA),

'Ukraine summary', undated, <https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-international->

[narcotics-and-law-enforcement-affairs-work-by-country/ukraine-summary/](#), last accessed: 5 April 2019

'International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,' Volume I, Drug and Chemical Control, March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/INCSR-Vol-INCSR-Vol.-I-1.pdf>, last accessed: 28 May 2019

'International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,' Volume II, Money Laundering, March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/INCSR-Vol-INCSR-Vol.-2-pdf.pdf>, last accessed: 28 May 2019

112.International, 'New drugs gaining popularity via online stores in Ukraine', 5 July 2018, <https://112.international/interview/new-drugs-gaining-popularity-via-online-stores-in-ukraine-29953.html>, last accessed: 8 April 2019

[Back to Contents](#)

Sources consulted but not cited

EU Action against Drugs and Organised Crime, Ukraine, <https://eu-act.info/en/region/country/ukraine>, last accessed: 24 May 2019

Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2019,' Ukraine, 17 January 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/ukraine>, last accessed: 17 May 2019

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, <https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine>, last accessed: 21 May 2019

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Weeks Ahead Of Ukraine Vote, Poroshenko Under Fire Over Smuggling Claim,' 26 February 2019, <https://www.rferl.org/a/weeks-ahead-of-ukraine-vote-poroshenko-under-fire-over-smuggling-claim/29791859.html>, last accessed: 21 May 2019

Ukraine Human Rights Foundation, <http://uhrf.org/>, last accessed: 21 May 2019

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 'World Drug Report 2018,' 26 June 2018, <https://www.unodc.org/wdr2018/index.html>, last accessed: 24 May 2019

United States Department of State, 'Trafficking in Persons Report 2018,' 28 June 2018, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1437437.html>, last accessed: 4 April 2019

[Back to Contents](#)

Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
 - valid from **9 September 2019**
-

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment.

[Back to Contents](#)