

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



CivOpsHQ

EUAM Ukraine: Concept Note for the Deployment of a Specialised Team in International Humanitarian and Criminal Law, Battlefield Evidence, and the Protection of Prisoners of War

1. Rationale for the Specialised Team, including relevance to the implementation of the mission’s mandate, lines of operations, tasks, and support functions:

Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has led to widespread and systematic violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL), resulting in the commission of serious international crimes.

The complexity and scale of these violations demand that Ukraine’s broader security sector institutions—including the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG), the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU), the Inter-agency Working Group of Military Experts (IWG), and the Military Law Enforcement Service (MLES)—possess a robust understanding of IHL principles and International Criminal Law (ICL) obligations, as well as the ability to collect, document, and preserve battlefield evidence related to such crimes. Moreover, the effectiveness of Ukraine’s response in the field depends not only on the work of civilian investigators and prosecutors, but also on the ability of military and law-enforcement personnel engaged in legal advisory, civilian-support, and evidence-preservation functions to cooperate efficiently with civilian justice bodies and to apply common legal and operational standards. For the purposes of the present Call for Contributions and the foreseen tasks to be undertaken, the above-mentioned entities are collectively referred to as “justice bodies”, reflecting their roles in justice delivery, accountability processes, and the application of IHL and ICL, and not their possible military operational or combat functions.

To meet the abovementioned needs, the European Union Advisory Mission in (EUAM Ukraine) proposes the deployment of a Specialised Team (ST) with a particular focus on strengthening the role and capacities of legal advisers within Ukraine’s broader security sector institutions—especially within the MoD, the NGU, and the MLES. The ST will consolidate and advance legal advisers’ understanding of European and international best standards and practices and support the OPG, the SSU, the IWG, and the legal advisers of the MoD, the NGU, and the MLES through targeted capacity-building measures, including training, enhancement of curriculum design capabilities, and inter-institutional coordination. The ST will strengthen the ability of the relevant justice bodies to ensure compliance with IHL; improve the handling of battlefield evidence in line with international standards and best practices; enhance coordination and information-sharing between justice bodies; support the application of IHL and ICL by relevant justice bodies; contribute to the review and amendment of MoD doctrine on IHL and battlefield evidence; and promote the development

and use of standardised procedures, curricula, and practical tools for the investigation of international crimes.

The proposed ST adopts a comprehensive approach to the broader security sector. By integrating representatives of the OPG, SSU, MoD, NGU, MLES and the IWG, the planned activities will support a coherent and coordinated civilian–military justice bodies’ approach in the application of IHL and ICL. Military actors are often responsible for the initial collection and preservation of battlefield evidence, while the OPG and SSU play central roles in the investigation and prosecution of international crimes, including the assessment of evidence originating from military operations. Bringing these institutions together in joint training sessions and technical workshops strengthens inter-agency coordination, enhances information-sharing practices, and institutionalizes common standards across justice bodies. This integrated model reinforces Ukraine’s whole-of-government approach to accountability for international crimes and ensures that outputs are operationally aligned across the broader security sector.

Participants from the MoD, NGU, and MLES are expected to include:

- Military legal advisors and operational-level commanders in charge of ensuring awareness raising and respect for IHL and ICL.
- Military investigators involved in battlefield documentation.

Participants from the IWG are expected to include:

- Subject-matter experts on warfare, providing advice to OPG

Participants from the OPG are expected to include:

- Prosecutors from the Department for Counteracting the Crimes Committed in the Context of the Armed Conflict (so-called War Crimes Department).
- Prosecutors from the Specialized Prosecution Office in the field of Defence.

Participants from the SSU are expected to include:

- Investigators of conflict-related crimes (including PoW-related violations).

In line with EUAM Ukraine’s mandate, this activity directly supports the Mission’s strategic objective to assist Ukrainian authorities in aligning their practices with EU and international standards in the broader security sector and to strengthening enhance their accountability framework for conflict-related crimes.

2. Added value vis-à-vis other instruments (VEs etc):

The added value of deploying the proposed ST lies primarily in the multiplicity of complementary skills and the capacity for coordinated, multi-expert delivery, which cannot be replicated by individual Visiting Experts (VE), even if deployed for several months. The planned activities require the simultaneous engagement of senior specialists in military-operational IHL, battlefield forensics and evidence handling under combat conditions, military investigations, and the treatment of Prisoners of War (POW), including sexual violence committed against POWs — profiles that are not available within the Mission and cannot be covered by VEs.

The ST provides an integrated team capable of jointly designing and delivering complex,

interlinked training cycles, developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), scenario-based exercises, enhancing curriculum design capabilities and working with six different institutions in parallel (OPG, SSU, MoD, NGU, MLES, IWG) in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner. This coordinated, multi-disciplinary structure is essential to ensure consistency, standardisation, and institutionalisation of practices across the broader security sector, while allowing EUAM Ukraine's International Crimes Component to retain oversight and ensure sustainability through continued follow-up after the ST's deployment.

3. Objectives and tasks to be performed, including expected results, duration and timelines:

- **Overall Objective**
 - To strengthen the capacity of Ukraine's broader security institutions involved in the delivery of justice for atrocity crimes, namely the OPG, the SSU, the IWG, the MoD, the NGU and the MLES, to address issues surrounding the investigation and prosecution of international crimes through enhanced understanding and application of IHL and ICL and strengthened coordination between all justice bodies.

- **Specific Objectives**
 - Strengthen the knowledge and operational capacity of legal advisers, prosecutors, and investigators on IHL and ICL, and related accountability frameworks.
 - Improve the collection, assessment, handling and preservation of battlefield evidence in accordance with international standards and best practices.
 - Promote effective coordination and information exchange between all justice bodies for the investigation and prosecution of international crimes.
 - Institutionalise knowledge and tools through the development of SOPs and practical operational tools (including checklists and templates) for sustainable integration within the justice system.
 - Enhance the capacity of military legal advisors and investigators to identify, document, and respond to conflict-related sexual violence against POW in accordance with IHL and ICL.
 - Support the MoD and other relevant institutions contributing to the review and updating of the doctrine related to IHL compliance and battlefield evidence handling.

- **Tasks to be Performed by the ST**
 - The ST will deliver a structured series of interlinked workshops and training sessions in Kyiv, Ukraine, organised as a Training of Trainers programme. The programme will equip the beneficiaries with a solid combination of theoretical foundations and practical skills, enabling them to effectively and independently cascade the training to end users, including unit commanders, military personnel, and other first responders involved in the identification, collection, documentation, and preservation of battlefield evidence. Additionally, the programme will support the future development of a dedicated curricula on these topics for integration into the Ministry of Defence's education and training system to ensure the long-term institutionalisation of these capacities. Activities will include the design of training materials, scenario-based exercises, and the development of practical operational

tools (such as SOPs and checklists) as well as facilitation of interactive sessions.

- EUAM Ukraine is responsible for finding a training facility, which should be an external conference venue. The exact location is to be determined.

- **Proposed Activities**

Each workshop is designed for max 45 participants, depending on availability and operational constraints. This size allows for effective interaction in the practical components, such as scenario-based exercises, mock documentation, SOP development.

- 2 weeks of induction and needs assessment activities together with the OPG, the SSU, the IWG, the MoD, the NGU and the MLES (14-26 April 2026).

- These induction and needs-assessment activities will build on and complement the scoping and assessment work already undertaken by the Ministry of Defence, ensuring continuity and coherence:
 - Review and build upon existing scoping work already undertaken by the MoD to understand current institutional capacities, roles, and coordination mechanisms related to IHL and battlefield evidence.
 - Identify knowledge and practice gaps among key personnel
 - Map and consolidate the existing training materials, procedures, and policies relevant to IHL compliance and evidence handling in conflict situations.
 - Engage with stakeholders to prioritize areas for capacity building and inform the design of the targeted training and technical assistance.

- 3 days of post-training and reporting with EUAM International Crimes Component after first deployment (25-27 May 2026)

- Conduct an internal evaluation with EUAM International Crimes Component to capture lessons learned, assess participant engagement, and identify gaps or follow-up needs for the workshops and training cycle.

- 2 weeks of workshops and training sessions in Kyiv on Advanced IHL for the NGU, IWG and the OPG (27 April – 03 May 2026; 06-12 July 2026).

- This activity aims to raise awareness among NGU, IWG and OPG of IHL standards applicable during armed conflict, with a focus on the obligations and responsibilities of state armed actors under IHL and ICL. Special focus will be placed on the protection of POW, including the prohibition of sexual violence and other outrages upon personal dignity. The workshops and training will inform the development of training materials, practical exercises, and/ or guidance notes. Topics include, among others:
 - Advanced training on IHL principles — distinction, proportionality, military necessity, and precautions in attack.
 - Status of persons (combatants, PoW, civilians, irregulars).
 - Protection and treatment of PoW, including the prohibition of sexual violence and other outrages upon personal dignity.
 - Prohibited conduct under Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols.
 - Command responsibility and modes of liability (drawing on military doctrine and ICC jurisprudence).

- Rules on weapons, targeting, and detention.
- IHL regulations governing the use of artificial intelligence in weapons systems, IHL and Hybrid Warfare (information warfare, cyberattacks, and other non-traditional methods).
- Application of IHL in the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in warfare.
- Investigation of violations of IHL and war crimes by own forces.
- Comparative approaches in EU Member States for civilian–military cooperation in war crimes investigations.
- Curriculum design for IHL and Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) training - modular approach, blending legal and operational content.
- **Expected Results** – Upon completion of the two-week workshop and training sessions, participants are expected to have gained increased capacity to:
 - Apply core IHL principles - distinction, proportionality, military necessity, and precautions in attack - to operational contexts.
 - Determine the status and protection of persons in armed conflict, including combatants, POW, civilians, and irregular forces.
 - Ensure humane treatment of POW, upholding prohibitions against sexual violence and other outrages on personal dignity.
 - Identify and assess prohibited conduct under the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols.
 - Understand command responsibility and modes of liability, informed by military doctrine and ICC jurisprudence.
 - Interpret IHL rules on weapons, targeting, and detention in compliance with international standards.
 - Evaluate IHL’s application to new domains, including AI in weapons systems, hybrid warfare, cyber operations, and UAVs.
 - Compare EU Member State practices in civil–military cooperation for war crimes investigations.

- 5 weeks of workshops and Training Sessions in Kyiv on the Handling of Battlefield Evidence Relevant to International Crimes and Advanced IHL (04-24 May 2026; 13-26 July 2026)

- Building on the assessment phase, these workshops will provide hands-on training to MoD, NGU, MLES, OPG, IWG and SSU. Participants will learn to apply practical methods for documenting and securing evidence in battlefield conditions, ensuring admissibility and reliability in judicial processes. The training will include scenario-based exercises and mock documentation tasks, resulting in standardised field protocols and evidence-handling checklists. Participants will examine case-based scenarios illustrating the documentation of sexual violence against detained combatants, ensuring compliance with evidentiary and ethical standards. Topics include, among others:
 - Rules of evidence in IHL/ICL contexts - ensuring admissibility, reliability, and authenticity.
 - Preservation of the crime scene (what actions should be taken by the military command to preserve it, what recommendations and standards should be included in regulatory documents, including handling of bodies and mass graves);

- Understanding the use of technology and field tools - cameras, GPS, data preservation, and secure transfer of material to prosecutors; use of 3D drones for crime scene investigation.
- Enemy property and documents (from seizure to transfer to law enforcement agencies).
- Experience (regulatory and legal documents and doctrines) of NATO countries in the field of battlefield evidence taking into account the Ukraine context.
- Digital evidence — recommendations on preserving enemy devices, as well as video footage from drones (integrity of evidence and preservation of the chain of custody).
- Development of SOPs for evidence documentation in mission environments.
- Inter-agency cooperation models - mechanisms linking armed forces, military police, and civilian prosecution services.
- Information-sharing protocols - classification handling, confidentiality, and disclosure standards.
- **Expected Results** – Upon completion of the five-week workshop and training sessions, participants are expected to have gained:
 - Enhanced operational and legal capacity to comply with IHL and ICL obligations.
 - Improved handling and preservation of battlefield evidence relevant to international crimes.
 - For the MoD, the results of the training cycle will serve as technical input for ongoing and future MoD-led processes to review and update doctrine and internal guidance related to IHL and battlefield evidence.
 - Strengthened inter-agency coordination between justice bodies in the investigation of international crimes.
 - Sustainable knowledge transfer through the capacity development of internal trainers and training-of-trainers modules.

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- Final weeks to produce reports and handout materials in Kyiv, Ukraine (27 July-02 August 2026)
 - Production of booklet handouts by the ST for the beneficiaries' personnel to retain for daily use. The booklet will include the educational materials developed by the trainers, such as Power Point Presentations and case studies and will support internal training and knowledge retention across the MoD, NGU, MLES, OPG, SSU, and the IWG.
 - Development and consolidation of operational tools, including SOPs, practical checklists, and templates to support the collection, documentation, preservation, and transfer of battlefield evidence relevant to international crimes, in line with IHL and ICL standards.
 - These outputs will also contribute to the development of curriculum design skills for integration into the internal training and operational systems of the MoD, NGU, MLES, OPG, SSU and the IWG.

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- **Sustainability**

- To ensure sustainability beyond the training-of-trainers modules, the ST will adopt a system-wide approach that embeds knowledge, tools, and practices within the participating justice bodies. The project foresees the development of SOPs, practical evidence-handling tools as well as the curriculum capacity-building designed for integration into the internal training and operational systems of the MoD, NGU, MLES, OPG, SSU and the IWG.
- By equipping selected personnel to serve as internal trainers and knowledge multipliers, the ST will support the establishment of a permanent in-house training capacity within those bodies. All training materials — including presentations, case scenarios, SOPs, and checklists — will be transferred to the justice bodies for continued use and adaptation.
- **The ST activities form part of EUAM Ukraine’s capacity-building support to criminal justice bodies in the broader security sector by developing and implementing sustainable training programmes and by enhancing civil-military cooperation. EUAM Ukraine’s International Crimes Component will continue supporting IHL/ICL implementation, the institutionalisation of SOPs and curricula, the planned review and amendment of MoD doctrine on IHL, and the integration of lessons learned from the ST deployment into EUAM Ukraine’s regular advisory and training activities, ensuring that the results are maintained, expanded, and embedded across the broader security sector.**

4. Size and functional composition of the Specialised Team:

The Specialised Team will consist of **five (5) international experts** with complementary profiles ensuring a balanced mix of legal, operational, and institutional expertise. The team will include: (1) **two senior IHL experts** (one acting as the Team Leader), responsible for designing and delivering core training content and ensuring alignment with EU and international standards; (2) **two battlefield evidence and military investigations experts**, to provide practical guidance on evidence collection, documentation, and preservation under combat conditions; 3) (1) **one senior adviser/expert on the prevention, investigation and documentation of sexual violence against POW** to provide training and advisory support on the protection of PoW, focusing on the prevention, identification, and documentation of sexual violence and related violations.

5. Relevant financial aspects and equipment needs:

Basic equipment needs include standard presentation and audiovisual tools (projector, flipcharts, laptops) and, where relevant, **practical demonstration materials** to facilitate realistic, hands-on learning as well as **sample “battlefield evidence kits”** (mock physical and digital evidence). These materials will be used exclusively for training and simulation purposes to replicate evidence collection and documentation processes under field conditions.

The total cost of deployment of the required Specialised Team of five experts in line with the concept of planned activities is estimated at **289,871.60 EUR (excl. VAT)**. This estimate includes hotel accommodation in the area of operations, per diem, international health and high-risk insurance, ENG<>UKR interpreting, rent of conference facilities and equipment,

and catering.
