



## Ukraine Blocks Trans Women Refugees: “They Are Men, Must Go Back & Fight”

### Description

The Ukrainian government is refusing to allow transgender women to leave the country along with the millions of women and children refugees who have been streaming into Poland and other European nations. Instead, Ukrainian border guards are turning them back and forcing them to return home to join the fight.



Their reasoning might sour some trans activists in the West: Ukraine’s martial law requires all biological males between the ages of 18 and 60 to remain in the country and fight. And it makes no exceptions for trans women.

Even trans women who have been widely accepted by their communities as woman still carry passports identifying them as males, which is what border guards see when they try to cross the border. In many cases, trans women who have tried to flee have been turned back, according to the Italian newspaper [La Corriere della Sera](#), Italy’s largest-circulation newspaper.

The paper quoted a trans woman who shared her experience at the hands of the guards: **“They are men...they must turn back and fight.”**

The story has been picked up by a handful of European newspapers, including the UK-based Guardian. Trans women who spoke with the two newspapers described “humiliating” searches by border guards, and other perceived depredations, before being denied further passage.

As strange hands searched her body and pulled back her hair to check if it was a wig, Judis looked at the faces of the Ukrainian border guards and felt fear and despair.

**“Ukrainian border guards undress you and touch you everywhere,”** Judis says. **“You can see on their faces they’re wondering ‘what are you?’ like you’re some kind of animal or something.”**

Judis is a transgender woman whose birth certificate defines her as female.

Legally, there is no reason why she should not be allowed to pass with the thousands of women who are crossing Ukrainian borders to safety every day.

Yet, on 12 March at about 4am, after a long and humiliating search, border guards determined she was a man and prevented her passage into Poland.

Since Ukraine enacted martial law on Feb. 24, it’s estimated that hundreds of trans women have tried to cross the border. Many have been turned back. The trans activists who spoke with both papers have said that trans people have reason to flee, since they would likely face persecution if Russia seizes control of the country. The Guardian went as far as to

The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association said Ukraine ranks 39th out of 49 European countries for its overall treatment of LGBTQ+ people. Gay marriage is not allowed in the country, and the Christian Orthodox Church considers homosexuality a sin. There are also no anti-discrimination laws to protect LGBTQ+ people.

Legally speaking, Ukraine started recognizing trans women as women in 2017, with one important catch: they must undergo extensive psychiatric observation and a lengthy bureaucratic process before their assumed gender can be reflected on formal documents.

**“Martial law says all males are obliged to serve in the military, so they can’t leave the country,”** says Olena Shevchenko, 39, a human rights defender and the chair of Insight, a Ukrainian LGBTQ+ organization and one of the few public organisations in the country that works with trans people. “Technically, the law applies to trans people as well, including both certified trans men and trans women who had not changed their documents. But it sounds like Ukrainian border guards are preventing even trans people with a valid certificate reflecting their new gender from leaving Ukraine, and nobody knows why.”

Two trans women interviewed by the Guardian shared similar stories about border guards telling them to turn back and join the fight.

“‘Go to the war’, they replied, adding that more than 3 million people had already fled the country and they weren’t going to let me out.”

Alice, 24, a trans woman from Brovary, a town near Kyiv, recounted a similar experience. She and her wife, Helen, a 21-year-old who identifies as non-binary, were stopped by border guards during an attempt to cross into Poland.

“They took us to a building near the border crossing,” recounts Alice. “There were three officers in the room. They told us to take off our jackets. They checked our hands, arms, checked my neck to see if I had an Adam’s apple. They touched my breasts. After examining us, border guards told us we were men. We tried to explain our situation but they didn’t care.”

**Interestingly, the American press didn’t pick up the story.** Could this be because it might undermine the bright shiny (definitely not nazi-ish) new heroic image of the Ukrainian government, which has been the subject of almost unanimously positive coverage in the American press?

by Tyler Durden

### Category

1. Army-Wars-Conflict Zones-Military Tech.
2. Freedom-Free speech-Resistance & H-rights
3. Main
4. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

### Date Created

03/25/2022