



Ukraine Ukraine Crisis

DAWN, children of Ukraine

What will the dawn of a new life be like for these Ukrainian children whose homes, villages and towns have suffered under Russian bombardment and, for many, occupation? An exhibition at the Council of Europe by photographer Youry Bilak shows the roots of hope of the next generation of Ukrainians in the ruins of the war

"In February 2022, after a conflict that began in April 2014, Russia started a massive invasion of Ukraine. The whole world witnessed images we thought belonged to the past century" writes Youry Bilak whose [exhibition at the Council of Europe](#) drew attention to the heavy consequences of the war in Ukraine.

At the end of March 2022, the Russian army withdrew from northern Ukraine, leaving behind a sea of devastation. It was then that Youry Bilak decided to go to Ukraine to do the project on childhood in a war zone.

What will the dawn of a new life be like for these Ukrainian children whose homes, villages and towns have suffered under Russian bombardment and, for many, occupation? These are the thoughts that filter through this series of some thirty photographs of children from Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel, Borodyanka, Chernihiv, Novoselivka, Yahidne, Lukashivka, Mariupol and Vinnytsia.

Each photograph tells the story of an abrupt break, a shift in the ordinary and often happy destiny that was theirs. The lens focuses on a daily life shattered by lightning, of those who throw

themselves into squalid basements crowded with frightened beings, or onto the roads of exodus.

The exhibition evokes the unspeakable events that have scarred their early years, and speaks for those absent, the others, by the hundreds of thousands, who have been exiled, deported, wounded, dead. These images capture this dawn while avoiding the iconography of misery.

The exhibition contains 23 photographs of Ukrainian children (with parental authorisation and transfer of image rights), format 58 x 78 cm. Some information about the child accompanies each photograph. A QR code provides a more detailed history of each family.

Born in Villeurbanne, France, in 1961, Youry Bilak inherited Ukrainian culture from his parents, refugees in France. Having photographed Madagascar, Kazakhstan and Georgia, it's only natural that he turned his attention to the land of his ancestors. He documented traditions in various Ukraine regions, including the Donbas miners. He then covered the Maïdan Revolution and the war in 2014-2015. He has donated all profits from the sale of his book recounting these events to a foundation to support Ukrainian orphans of this war.

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You can see the images
at <https://yourybilak.photodeck.com/-/galleries/dawn-europe>
and <https://www.icloud.com/sharedalbum/#B0QJtdOXmGj8cR1>
Text from www.yourybilak.com