

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Name
2025		114	Ukraine	Marta Havryshko

### *Announcement*

Ukrainian historian Marta Havryshko, working as a war refugee at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University (United States), has been the target of death and rape threats in Ukraine for her scholarly work. This month, she was unfairly dismissed from her post in Lviv.

*Please sign an open letter in her support [here](#).*

Below you will find:

- Our summary of the case.
- An Open Letter in Defense of Academic Freedom and the Ukrainian Historian Marta Havryshko.

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### **NCH Summary (23 July 2025)**

In [July] 2025, historian Marta Havryshko (1984–), a war refugee and visiting assistant professor in Holocaust Pedagogy and Antisemitism Studies at Clark University, United States, was dismissed from her post at the I. Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) in Lviv for “absence from the workplace.” The dismissal occurred notwithstanding the fact that many NASU employees, including Havryshko, had been placed on “unpaid leave” after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine in order to allow them to take up temporary academic positions abroad. An expert in the history of the Holocaust, World War II, Ukrainian nationalism, war crimes committed by the Russian military since 2014, and sexual violence in war, Havryshko had been the target of online harassment campaigns, including antisemitic abuse and death and rape threats, especially by far-right Russian and Ukrainian groups. She was also accused of spreading “pro-Russian propaganda” and labeled a “Russian asset.” Her book *Overcoming Silence: Women’s War Stories* (Kharkiv 2018), exploring the experiences of women in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Ukrainian Insurgent Army during and after World War II, had been banned in the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine as “extremist literature” and removed from libraries. Her research into

Ukrainian ethnonationalism and the historical and contemporary far-right led her to be added, in January 2025, to the controversial Myrotvorets database listing individuals allegedly endangering Ukraine's national security. In addition to online hate campaigns directed to her and her son, her family in Ukraine faced harassment, and foreign colleagues with whom she had communicated were detained at the border and interrogated about their relationship with her.

*Sources:* “[An Open Letter in Defense of Academic Freedom and the Ukrainian Historian Marta Havryshko](#),” *New Global Politics* (22 July 2025); “[UN Calls for Investigation of Ukrainian Digital Blacklist](#),” *Medium* (20 September 2017); Marta Havryshko, “[The Waffen-SS “Galicia” Division: The Dead End of Glorification](#),” *Спільне/Commons* (12 October 2023); Ondřej Bělíček, “[How Ukraine’s Far Right Pushed Its Myths About World War II: An Interview with Marta Havryshko](#),” *Jacobin* (31 December 2024); Marta Havryshko, “[Rechtsextreme in der Ukraine? Nicht nur Kreml-Propaganda, sondern auch ein echtes Problem](#),” *Der Freitag* (19 May 2025).

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<https://www.newglobalpolitics.org/an-open-letter/>

## **An Open Letter in Defense of Academic Freedom and the Ukrainian Historian Marta Havryshko**

July 22, 2025

We, the undersigned, express deep concern about the mounting restrictions on academic freedom in Ukraine in relation to the complex issues of Ukrainian politics and history. The Russian invasion and the ongoing war have already severely affected Ukraine's academic and educational sectors, destroying universities, displacing scholars, and restricting mobility (especially for Ukrainian male researchers).

In addition to these tragedies, we are witnessing an alarming rise in harassment, threats, and persecution—often stemming from nationalist activism and public campaigns — targeting scholars who continue their research under these exceptionally difficult wartime conditions. Particularly vulnerable are those working on sensitive, underexamined, and often politically inconvenient topics such as the far right, ethnonationalism, and democratic backsliding in Ukraine.

One such scholar is Ukrainian historian and war refugee Dr. Marta Havryshko, currently [Visiting Assistant Professor in Holocaust Pedagogy and Antisemitism Studies](#) at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University in the United States.

In recent years, she has also served as the Director of the Institute at the Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial Center (Kyiv, Ukraine). She has been a visiting fellow at numerous institutions, including the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, the Hamburg Institute for Social Research, Monash University, Yahad-In Unum, the University of Basel, the German Historical Institute Warsaw, and the University of Rzeszow.

A feminist scholar, Dr. Havryshko is known for her research on the Holocaust, the Second World War, Ukrainian nationalism, sexual violence in war, and memory. In particular, her work has addressed [war crimes committed by the Russian military](#) during the [Russo-Ukrainian war](#). She has [published](#) and [delivered](#) multiple lectures on this topic at leading global universities, including [Harvard](#) and the Sorbonne. Her book, *[Overcoming Silence: Women's War Stories](#)* (Kharkiv, 2018), which explores the experiences of women in the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Ukrainian Insurgent Army during and after World War II, has been banned as “extremist literature” by authorities in the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine and [removed](#) from libraries there.

Despite this record, Dr. Havryshko has been subjected to [sustained antisemitic abuse](#), as well as [death](#) and [rape threats](#) targeting her and her child. For over a year, these threats have come from an international far-right network responding to [her critical stance on Ukrainian ethnonationalism](#) and her work on the [historical](#) and [contemporary far right](#) in [Ukraine](#). Many of the [threats](#) originate from [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#) far-right actors involved in military activities. Given the [network's](#) connections to far-right terrorism, U.S. law enforcement agencies—including the police and the FBI—have been actively investigating these threats with utmost seriousness.

But in Ukraine, the response has been strikingly different. In the domestic media space, some pro-government [bloggers](#), [journalists](#), [public figures](#), [militants](#), and “[concerned citizens](#)” [have attacked](#) and [stigmatized](#) Dr. Havryshko’s research, accusing her of [spreading “pro-Russian propaganda”](#) and labeling her a “[Russian asset](#).”

In January 2025, Dr. Havryshko was added to the [Myrotvorets](#) website: a controversial Ukrainian database that lists individuals it deems threats to Ukraine’s national security and reportedly maintains close ties to the security services. The website has drawn criticism and concern from foreign and

international bodies, including the [U.S. Department of State](#), the [United Nations](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), and members of the [G7](#).

Recently, Dr. Havryshko was [dismissed](#) from the [I. Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies](#) of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) under the pretext of “absence from the workplace.” This, despite the Institute’s leadership being fully aware that Dr. Havryshko was in the United States with her child on “unpaid leave.” According to established practice, this status is supposed to remain in effect until the end of the war for all NASU employees who became academic refugees following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

As a result of public targeting, her family in Ukraine has faced harassment. Foreign colleagues with whom she has communicated via social media (evidently under extralegal surveillance) have been detained at the border and interrogated for hours about their relationship with her. These intimidating measures jeopardize not only her academic freedom, but also her personal safety and her ability to care for her child.

At the core of this case is an effort to silence a critical scholar who dares to speak about the resurgence of far-right movements and historical revisionism in Ukraine, their acceptance by state institutions and civil society, and their increasing legitimization in the Western public sphere. As a Holocaust educator, Dr. Havryshko teaches courses on antisemitism and racism. How can she uphold the ethical imperative of “Never Again”—demonstrating where racism, discrimination, and hatred lead—while being expected to remain silent about Holocaust distortion and World War II revisionism?

This case exemplifies a dangerous political dynamic in which critique of far-right ideologies and ethnonationalism is rebranded as a “national security threat,” thereby legitimizing persecution and censorship.

Academic freedom, freedom of speech, and scholarly integrity must not be subordinated to political or geopolitical loyalties. Their only legitimate standards are intellectual honesty and analytical rigor. We speak out in defense of Marta Havryshko—on behalf of truth, justice, academic freedom, and scholarly independence and in defense of a courageous woman’s right to speak. If such persecution can reach a Ukrainian scholar working in the United States, what does this imply for those still living under direct political supervision in Ukraine?

We stand not only with Marta, but with all scholars, journalists, and researchers whose conscience does not align with official narratives.

In today’s Ukraine, the notion of protecting the nation’s reputation—crucial for maintaining international support during wartime—is increasingly used to justify repression and to curtail

academic freedom and public debate. As a result, the space for open reflection on the country's own internal challenges has dramatically narrowed.

Many scholars and civic actors continue their work with resilience. But the current climate leaves many of them vulnerable to intimidation and marginalization—not only for political expression, but also for independent, critical research. This climate threatens the erosion of fundamental rights and weakens the conditions necessary for solidarity and mutual protection.

We call on Ukrainian authorities and the international scholarly community to uphold and defend academic freedom. Critical inquiry must not be seen as a liability, but as an essential component of democratic resilience.

*Signed (in alphabetical order):*

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*Signatures will be updated regularly. **If you would like to sign, please complete [this form](#).***

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