

UDC 343.9.02:314.1(477)"2014/2024"

DOI: 10.63341/naia-herald/4.2025.43

Gender and age characteristics of persons who committed criminal offences in Ukraine in 2014-2024

Oleksandr Kulyk*

Doctor of Law, Professor

National Academy of Internal Affairs

03035, 1 Solomianska Sq., Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5172-8996>

Iryna Lubenets

PhD in Law, Senior Researcher

National Academy of Internal Affairs

03035, 1 Solomianska Sq., Kyiv, Ukraine

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2597-0356>

■ **Abstract.** Identifying trends in the gender and age characteristics of criminal offenders is necessary for developing effective state policy in the field of crime prevention and reintegration of offenders in the post-war period. The aim of the study was to examine the dynamics and structure of crime by gender and age, and to determine the impact of socio-economic, political and psychological factors on the behaviour of offenders. The methodological basis consisted of statistical, comparative-analytical, criminological and systemic-structural methods. The empirical base was formed on the basis of official data from the Office of the Prosecutor General and the results of scientific research. The results of the study showed that during the period under review, the structure of crime in Ukraine underwent significant changes: men consistently predominate among offenders (about 88%), while women account for an average of 12%. The highest level of criminal activity was recorded among persons aged 29-39, while the proportion of minors is steadily declining. A gradual “maturing” of crime and an increase in the proportion of middle-aged and older offenders has been observed, which is associated with a decline in living standards, unemployment, psychological exhaustion and military factors. The scientific novelty of the work lies in the combination of quantitative statistical analysis with a qualitative criminological interpretation of the social processes that influence the formation of criminal behaviour in conditions of martial law. This made it possible to identify new trends in the structure of criminal activity among the population. The practical significance of the study lies in the possibility of using its results to improve criminological forecasting, formulate state strategies for crime prevention, increase the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies, and develop targeted programmes for the social rehabilitation of individuals prone to deviant behaviour

■ **Keywords:** criminal offender; criminological characteristics; age groups of criminal offenders; criminal activity; criminal activity coefficient; martial law

■ Introduction

In the context of the transformation of Ukrainian society, as a result of prolonged socio-economic crises, armed aggression and changes in the system of public administration, research into the criminological char-

acteristics of persons who commit criminal offences is becoming particularly relevant. The gender and age characteristics of crime are key indicators that reflect not only the level of criminal activity among

■ Suggested Citation:

Kulyk, O., & Lubenets, I. (2025). Gender and age characteristics of persons who committed criminal offences in Ukraine in 2014-2024. *Scientific Journal of the National Academy of Internal Affairs*, 30(4), 43-52. doi: 10.63341/naia-herald/4.2025.43.

■ *Corresponding author

■ Received: 21.06.2025; Revised: 28.09.2025; Accepted: 25.11.2025



Copyright © The Author(s). This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

the population, but also deeper social processes – the destruction of traditional moral values, the impact of war on behavioural patterns and the adaptation of individuals to crisis conditions. During 2014-2024, Ukraine underwent major changes in the legal, economic and demographic spheres, which significantly affected the nature and dynamics of crime. Martial law, internal migration, social inequality and psychological trauma have become factors shaping new trends in the criminal behaviour of the population. The analysis of these changes is important both for the development of criminological theory and for the improvement of state policy in the field of crime prevention.

An analysis of scientific research allows to trace the development of criminological ideas about persons who committed criminal offences in Ukraine in 2014-2024 and to assess the impact of socio-political and military factors on the structure of crime. T.V. Prodan (2020) studies violent crime committed by women, revealing the mechanisms of criminal behaviour formation and emphasising the role of social and psychological factors and the public in crime prevention.

A.V. Movchan & T.I. Sozanskyi (2023), based on the results of the SOCTA survey, identify the characteristic features of organised crime in Ukraine: corrupt ties, the use of legal businesses to legalise profits, money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, fraud and other property crimes. I. Bohatyrov & A. Bohatyrov (2024) also confirm the active use of economic instruments by organised groups in the current conditions of martial law, including raiding, fraudulent schemes and the legalisation of capital through fictitious enterprises.

The issue of mercenary and war crimes has repeatedly been the focus of attention of scholars. Particularly noteworthy are the studies by H.I. Pishchenko & A.O. Lysenko (2025) and Yu.Iu Tsaruk (2024), devoted to the analysis of the structure of mercenary offences, their latest forms (in particular, looting) and ways to prevent fraud using modern technologies. Also noteworthy are studies devoted to the impact of war on the crime situation in the country, presented by S.S. Shramko & A.V. Kalinina (2022), Yu.V. Orlov (2023), and Ye.O. Pysmenskyi (2024). Transformational changes in the structure of crime caused by military factors have been identified. M.I. Khavroniuk (2025) justifies the need to adapt criminal law policy to modern conditions and use a criminological approach for a more in-depth analysis of statistical indicators. The problems of the reliability of statistics and the methodology of their processing are highlighted by O.V. BAHANETS (2021) and M.V. Karchevskyi (2024), emphasising the need to improve data collection and integrate alternative assessments of the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies.

Thus, research on the topic demonstrates a multidimensional approach to the study of criminal behaviour and the structure of crime in Ukraine, taking into account the specifics of female violent crime, organised and mercenary offences, the impact of martial law and the need for comprehensive counteraction to crime. At the same time, issues of statistical data reliability, improvement of criminological forecasting, and adaptation of criminal law policy to the conditions of the war and post-war periods remain relevant.

The aim of this study was to examine the transformation of the gender and age characteristics of persons who committed criminal offences in Ukraine in 2014-2024 in the context of socio-economic and military-political changes in the country. The scientific novelty of the results obtained lies in the combination of quantitative statistical analysis with criminological interpretation of the social processes that determine the dynamics of crime.

■ Literature Review

It is also important to consider global trends in the study of the criminological characteristics of individuals who have committed criminal offences and to identify the key factors (socio-economic, psychological, cultural, etc.) that influence the formation of criminal behaviour. In particular, Y. Gu *et al.* (2023) investigated the mental and psychosocial factors of serious crimes, finding that most offenders with violent behaviour had been diagnosed with schizophrenia and had not received proper treatment. N.K. Tharshini *et al.* (2021) proved that personality traits – psychopathy, impulsivity, narcissism – significantly increase the risk of criminal behaviour, which highlights the importance of psychological prevention in the early stages of socialisation.

The study of socio-economic factors of crime occupies an important place in contemporary research. A. Poama (2025) considers poverty to be a moral and psychological factor that can provoke deviant behaviour through frustration and social alienation. A meta-analysis by M. Lankester *et al.* (2025) and research by R.R. Swisher & C.R. Dennison (2016) confirmed a consistent inverse relationship between the level of education and criminal activity among young people: low academic achievement increases the propensity for delinquent behaviour.

Age and gender aspects of crime are explored in the works of M.V. Van Koppen (2018), R. Traon *et al.* (2022), R. Đoković & M. Kavarić (2025). These studies show that offenders who begin criminal activity in adulthood tend to have shorter criminal “careers” and lower rates of recidivism. The authors also note that a distinctive feature of female criminality is its formation under the influence of violence, patriarchal social relations, and psychological

trauma. Noteworthy is the criminological study by A.J. Vanhee (2025), which demonstrates that previous illegal income is a factor that increases the risk of reoffending, i.e., contributes to recidivism. In turn, T.K. Kenemore & B.S. In (2025) emphasise in their work the importance of social support and spiritual resources in the process of post-penitentiary adaptation aimed at preventing the commission of offences by persons with a criminal past.

Thus, studies indicate the multifactorial nature of criminal behaviour, which is shaped by psychological, socio-economic, educational, gender and cultural factors. Generalising these results is important for improving Ukrainian criminological theory and practice, especially in the context of social transformations and martial law.

■ Materials and Methods

The study was based on an analysis of official statistical data obtained from unified reports on persons who committed criminal offences (form No. 2) for 2014-2024, published by the Office of the Prosecutor General (n.d.). They cover key indicators characterising the number of persons who committed criminal offences, their distribution by gender, age, categories of crimes, and the dynamics of these indicators during the period under review.

The study uses a combination of general scientific and specialised methods. First of all, a statistical method was used to conduct a quantitative analysis of official indicators and identify trends in the level of criminal activity among different demographic groups of the population. Particular attention was paid to the study of the rates of criminal activity among men and women, as well as representatives of different age categories per 100,000 persons of the corresponding sex or age. The rates of criminal activity are calculated using formula (1):

$$\text{C.a.r.} = (\text{N.p.} / \text{P}) * 10,000 \text{ (or } 100,000), \quad (1)$$

where C.a.r. – the criminal activity rate; N.p. – the number of identified persons who committed criminal offences; P – the population of a certain category. This approach made it possible to neutralise the impact of demographic fluctuations and allows for an objective assessment of the intensity of criminal behaviour.

To identify common and distinct trends in crime dynamics, a comparative-analytical method was used, which made it possible to track how indicators changed in different periods – before the start of the active phase of the war, during the years of martial law, and during periods of relative stabilisation. Such a comparison is important for determining the degree of influence of socio-economic, political and military factors on the behaviour of different categories of the

population. The use of a systemic-structural research method helped to establish a relationship between the demographic characteristics of offenders and their level of criminal activity. At the same time, the study of scientific literature made it possible to compare the results of the analysis of the gender and age characteristics of crime with the conclusions of other researchers and to critically evaluate existing scientific approaches to the study of this phenomenon.

■ Results and Discussion

The number of identified persons who committed criminal offences (offenders who were identified by law enforcement agencies in 2024, and who committed criminal offences both in 2024 and in previous years) in Ukraine in 2024 compared to 2023 remained almost unchanged and amounted to 126,732 (+3.0%). This was preceded by a significant decrease in 2022 (91,446; -25.6%) and a significant increase in 2023 (122,985; +34.5%), which was associated with the departure of a large number of Ukrainian citizens from the country with the start of full-scale Russian military aggression and the return of some of them in 2023 (Fig. 1). In previous years, there was a trend of a slight but steady decrease in the number of identified persons who committed criminal offences. In 2015-2016, it decreased from 151,696 to 126,950 (-16.3%), but was interrupted the following year due to an increase to 145,679 (+14.8%), and in 2018-2021 the decline continued, with the number of such persons reaching 122,895 in 2021 (-15.4% compared to 2017). This trend was typical for all categories of identified criminal offenders, so no further attention will be paid to it. During 2014-2022, on average, 81% of identified persons were those who committed criminal offences in that year, and 19% were those who did so in previous years. There was a slight decrease in the proportion of persons in the first category in 2023-2024, when their share among all criminal offenders was 79.6% and 77.1%, respectively.

The prolonged decline in the number of identified perpetrators of criminal offences gives grounds to hypothesise a gradual decline in the level of work on the detection and investigation of criminal offences, which has been influenced by both a certain decline in the quality of law enforcement personnel, primarily the police, and a deterioration in the economic, organisational and regulatory legal conditions for law enforcement activities, as well as a decline in the importance of law enforcement as a value for society. Based on the growth of this indicator in 2023-2024, it is hoped that this unfavourable trend in Ukraine has been reversed. It should be noted that over the past 15 years, a downward trend in the number of prisoners has been observed in most European countries (Lappi-Seppälä, 2025).

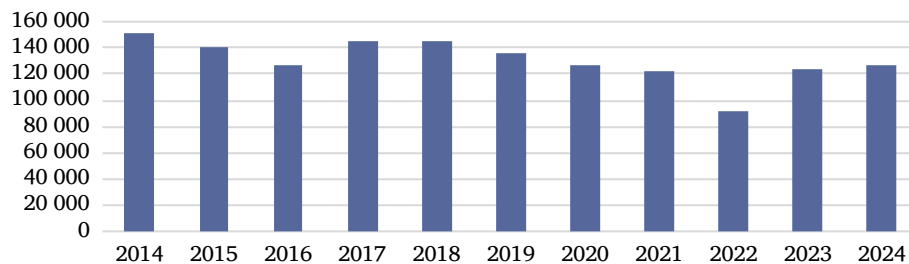


Figure 1. Number of persons who committed criminal offences identified in Ukraine in 2014-2024
Source: developed by the authors based on data from the Office of the Prosecutor General (n.d.)

Among identified criminal offenders, men accounted for an average of 88% each year, and women for 12%, respectively, and the annual deviations from these indicators throughout the entire period under review were insignificant. There is also a significant difference in the rates of criminal activity, i.e. the number of male and female offenders per 100,000 of the population of the respective sex

(Fig. 2). In 2024, these indicators were 585 for men and 71 for women. In 2014-2022, the annual quantitative indicators were naturally different, but their ratio remained quite stable. On average, the criminal activity rate for men was 8.4 times higher than that for women, and the annual deviations from the average were very insignificant (the largest in 2021 – 7.1).

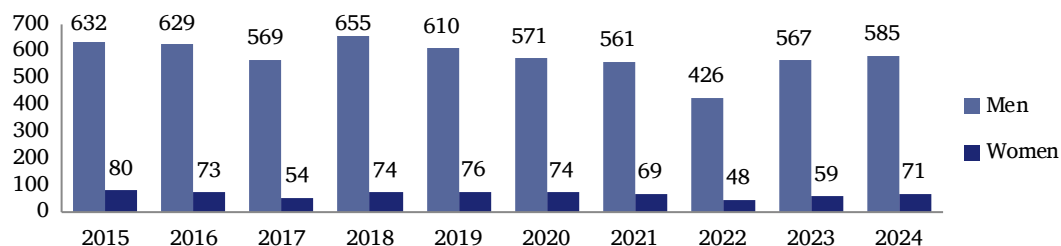


Figure 2. Criminal activity rates of men and women per 100,000 persons of the respective sex in Ukraine in 2014-2024

Source: developed by the authors based on data from the Office of the Prosecutor General (n.d.)

Thus, the process of women's emancipation and their increased participation in many areas of public life has not led to an increase in their criminal activity. Obviously, the difference in the level of criminal activity between men and women is related to deeper physical and psychological differences between the representatives of these sexes. According to a study by P.A. Bourne (2025), traumatic experiences – in particular, sexual abuse in childhood and domestic violence – are a key factor influencing criminal behaviour in women, often mediated through substance abuse and socio-economic instability. A similar statement is found in a study by B.B. Mejía *et al.* (2015), which notes that trauma caused by sexual, physical, and emotional abuse (reported by 77% to 90% of female prisoners) is a key factor contributing to the development of behavioural problems in adolescence and subsequent criminality, substance abuse and criminality in adulthood.

Before moving on to the age characteristics of offenders, it should be noted that age affects the level of an individual's mental development, the degree of their development as a personality, which is characterised by a set of regular interrelated physiological

and psychological changes. In their monograph, V.M. Filonenko & I.S. Nechitailo (2022) note that the age-related characteristics of personality development are reflected in a set of requirements that are imposed on a person at a certain stage of their life, their social position, and their attitude towards their environment. The commission of certain crimes is characteristic of individuals at a particular age, but age is not the cause of crime, and its physiological influence is neutralised by the more powerful action of social factors.

Ranked by number and share among all criminal offenders, the list of age groups of such persons in 2024 looks as follows:

- persons aged 29-39 – 36.3% (45,952; +0.9% compared to the previous year);
- persons aged 40-54 – 31.3% (39,583; +8.3%);
- persons aged 18-28 – 21.5 % (27,233; –0.5 %);
- persons aged 60 and older – 5,1 % (6,468; +4.5 %);
- persons aged 55-59 – 4.3 % (5,482; +4.3 %);
- persons aged 16-17 – 1.0 % (1,309; +1.0 %);
- persons aged 14-15 – 0.5 % (573; –11.4 %).

As the data presented indicate, persons aged 29-39 predominated among criminal offenders. Most

of them are young adults, but already possessing a certain degree of life experience, while those aged over 35 (according to paragraph 17 of Article 1 of the Law of Ukraine No. 1414-IX¹ young people are defined as persons aged between 14 and 35) in fact belong to the category of mature adults. This is followed by an almost equally numerous group of persons aged 40-54, that is, individuals of mature, middle age who already have substantial life experience and for whom caution and balanced decision-making are characteristic. Young people aged 18-28 ranked only third in 2024, and their percentage share was significantly lower than that of the two most numerous age groups.

It should be noted that in their study M. Molcho *et al.* (2025) concluded that in most countries of Europe and North America the level of bullying has declined over time. The authors interpret this reduction in aggressive behaviour as part of broader changes in social contexts and behavioural patterns typical of the lives of contemporary young people. By contrast, cyberbullying has shown a significant increase since 2018, which negatively affects the mental health and well-being of young people.

The absolute and relative indicators for criminal offenders belonging to other age groups are considerably lower. As noted by V. S. Batyrhareieva (2007) and V.M. Filonenko & I.S. Nechitailo (2022), after the age of 45 convicted persons tend to adopt a less active life position, with their activity subsequently declining rapidly. It should be emphasised that among them representatives of the two oldest age groups predominate, namely persons aged 60 and over and those aged 55-59. The smallest numerical indicators among all identified persons who committed criminal offences were recorded for juveniles aged 16-17 and 14-15. At the same time, Y. Lu (2024) questions the thesis of an invariant relationship between age and crime, emphasising that this relationship is significantly influenced by national characteristics, historical development, and cultural context.

The indicated age structure of criminal offenders emerged as a result of prolonged and multidirectional dynamic processes affecting offenders in the specified age groups, which should be briefly characterised. The number of criminal offenders aged 29-39 has always been substantial, and accordingly its dynamics generally coincided with the dynamics of the overall number of criminal offenders in the country. Initially, their number decreased from 50,536 in 2014 to 44,899 (–11.2% over two years) in 2016. Over the following two years it increased to 54,012 (+ 20.3%) and 54,857 (+ 1.6%), after which it steadily declined, reaching 46,695 in 2021 (–14.9% compared to the

2018 figure). In 2022-2023, a well-known sharp fluctuation in the number of such persons occurred: first a decrease to 34,272 (–26.3%), followed by a significant increase to 45,531 (+ 32.9%). The share of representatives of this age group among all criminal offenders increased during the first three years of the analysed period from 33.3% in 2014 to 35.4% in 2016, and from that year onwards persons aged 29-39 became the most numerous age group among all individuals who committed criminal offences. In subsequent years, their percentage share remained very stable, averaging 37.3%.

Similar dynamic changes were characteristic of the number of criminal offenders aged 40-54. In 2015-2016, their number declined from 32,054 to 26,668 (–16.8%); in 2017–2018 it increased to 33,332 (+ 25.0% compared to the 2016 figure); in 2019-2021 there was a slight decrease to 31,888 (–4.3% compared to the 2018 figure); in 2022 the number fell to 25,092 (–21.3%), followed by growth in 2023 to 36,542 (+ 45.6%). The share of persons in this category among all criminal offenders remained at 21–22% in 2014-2016, but increased steadily in subsequent years and exceeded 30% in 2024. During 2014-2021, persons aged 40-54 constituted the third largest group of criminal offenders, while from 2022 onwards they became the second largest.

The number of offenders aged 18-28 predominantly declined over the analysed period. In 2015–2021, it decreased from 52,690 to 31,714 (–39.8%); in 2022 it fell significantly to 22,245 (–29.9%), and in 2023 it increased to 27,375 (+ 23.1%). In line with this dynamic, the percentage share of this age group among all criminal offenders decreased noticeably. In 2014-2015, it amounted to 34.7% and 35.0%, respectively, which was the highest among all age groups. From 2016, the proportion of persons in this age group declined, as a result of which they initially ranked second in terms of numbers, and from 2021 ranked third. Representatives of the three analysed age groups accounted, on average, for 89.5% of all identified persons who committed criminal offences during the analysed period, while in 2024 this figure amounted to 89%.

The dynamics of the number of criminal offenders aged 60 and over differed from those observed in other age groups. In 2015–2016, their number also declined and amounted to 3,552 (–15.7% compared to 2014). Over the subsequent five years, it predominantly increased, reaching 4,754 in 2021 (+ 35.0%), after which there was a slight decrease in 2022 to 4,334 (–8.8%), followed by a significant increase in 2023 to 6,190 (+ 42.8%). The share of persons in this age group among all criminal offenders, after

¹ Law of Ukraine No. 1414-IX “On the Basic Principles of Youth Policy in Ukraine”. (2021, May). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1414-20#Text>.

declining to 2.5% in 2015, increased steadily and reached 5.0% in 2023.

The number of criminal offenders aged 55-59 fluctuated throughout the analysed period. In 2015-2016, there was a decrease from 4,843 to 4,011 (–17.2% compared to 2014); in 2017-2018, the number increased to 5,117 (+27.6% compared to the 2016 figure); in 2019–2021, it declined to 4,715 (–7.9%). Subsequently, in 2022, a significant decrease occurred to 3,659 (–22.4%), followed by a substantial increase in 2023 to 5,257 (+43.7%). The percentage share of persons in this age group among all criminal offenders remained at approximately 3.2% in 2014-2017, after which it began to increase, reaching 4.3% in 2023.

A declining trend was characteristic of the two youngest groups of persons who committed criminal offences. The number of criminal offenders aged 16-17 steadily decreased during 2015-2022, falling overall from 4,655 to 1,227 (a 3.8-fold decrease), and increased only slightly in 2023 to 1,296 (+5.6%). The percentage share of such persons among all criminal offenders stood at 1.5% in 2014-2015, after which it declined continuously and amounted to 0.5% in 2023 and 2024. The number of identified persons who committed criminal offences at the age of 14-15 decreased over the analysed period from 2,265 in 2014 to 951 in 2021 (a 2.4-fold reduction compared to 2014). In 2022, their number declined sharply to 519 (–45.4%), followed by an increase of 24.7% in 2023 to 647. The share of juveniles in this age group among all offenders declined over the analysed period from 0.3% to 0.1%.

Among the identified persons who committed criminal offences, there is another category of juveniles that is mentioned less frequently – those who committed criminal offences under the age of 14. Data on their number are included in official state statistical reporting because, in accordance with Article 97 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine¹, courts may apply compulsory educational measures to such persons. This group includes children aged 11-14, since, pursuant to Article 498 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine², criminal proceedings concerning the application of compulsory educational measures provided for by Ukrainian criminal law are conducted in respect of persons who committed a criminal offence after reaching the age of eleven. The number of such persons was small and, over the analysed period, showed an almost continuous decline. In 2014, 433 such persons were recorded; in subsequent years, their number decreased 2.1 times, reaching 208 in 2021. This was followed by a significant reduction to 98 in 2022, which then changed to an increase

in 2023 to 147. In 2024, 132 such persons were identified. Their share among all criminal offenders remained at approximately 0.2% until 2021, after which it declined to 0.1%. It should be noted that the reduction in the number of such children in recent years represents a positive trend.

The statistical data examined are informative and useful; however, they also have certain limitations. They are based on a classification of offenders' age groups that dates back to the period of the former Soviet Union, in which the identified age groups cover differing numbers of years and, accordingly, the size of the populations within these groups varies considerably. This makes it impossible to accurately determine the level of criminal activity of representatives of the respective age groups. To assess their criminal activity more correctly, it is advisable to use indicators such as specialised criminal activity rates for each age group calculated per 100,000 population of the corresponding age in the country. These indicators eliminate differences in the number of years covered by each age group and, consequently, differences in the size of those groups.

In 2024, these age groups were distributed according to the criminal activity rate as follows:

- persons aged 29-39 – 628;
- persons aged 18-28 – 597;
- persons aged 40-54 – 448;
- persons aged 55-59 – 197;
- persons aged 16-17 – 164;
- persons aged 14-15 – 66;
- persons aged 60 and older – 64.

As can be seen, the distribution of age groups of criminal offenders by the level of the criminal activity coefficient differs somewhat from their distribution by absolute numbers. First place in this ranking is again occupied by persons aged 29-39, whose criminal activity is the highest, followed by those aged 18-28, and then by persons aged 40-54. Individuals aged 55-59 occupy the next position, with a criminal activity coefficient 2.3 times lower than that of persons aged 40-54, followed by 16-17-year-olds, whose indicator is slightly lower still. The lowest criminal activity coefficients are observed among representatives of the youngest age group (14-15 years) and the oldest age group (60 years and over). The distribution of age groups of criminal offenders by the value of this indicator more accurately reflects the level of their criminal activity in accordance with their physical and social condition at a certain age.

It was also necessary to establish the nature of the dynamics over the analysed period, which made it possible to identify long-term trends in changes in the level of criminal activity (Fig. 3). The criminal

¹ Criminal Code of Ukraine. (2001, April). Retrieved from <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14>.

² Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine. (2012, April). Retrieved from <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/4651-17>.

activity coefficient of persons aged 18-28 was the highest during the first nine years of the period under review and became the second highest only in 2023-2024. In 2015, this indicator increased to 770; in 2017-2018 it amounted to 785 and 781, respectively; over the subsequent three years it declined to 672 (-14.0% compared to the 2018 level); in 2022 it fell sharply to 488 (-27.4%); and in the following year it increased to 600 (+23.0%). The significant decline in the criminal activity coefficient for this age group occurred in 2022-2024, which allows the assumption that this reduction was influenced by the factor

of mass mobilisation of men into the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The corresponding indicator for persons aged 29-39 ranked second in magnitude throughout 2014-2022, but from 2023 onwards became the highest. In 2015-2016, it decreased from 659 to 602 (-8.6%); over the following two years it increased to 725 (+20.4% compared to the 2016 figure); and in 2019-2021 it declined again to 626 (-13.7% compared to the 2018 figure). Subsequently, as is typical during wartime, a significant reduction occurred in 2022, to 469 (-25.1%), followed by a noticeable increase in 2023 to 622 (+32.6%).

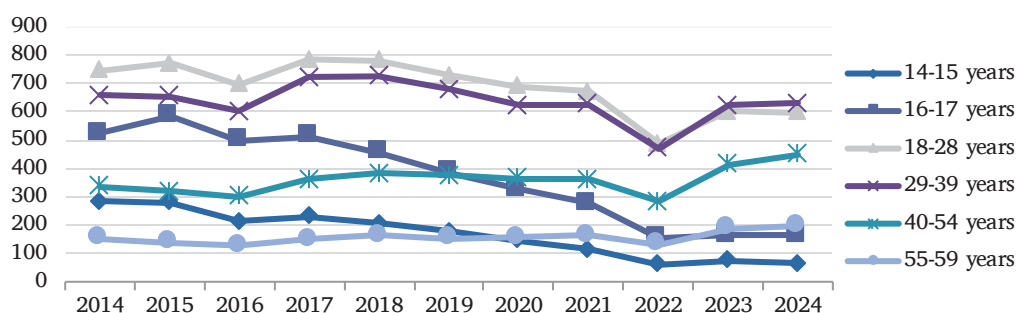


Figure 3. Criminal activity rates of persons who committed criminal offences at a certain age, detected in Ukraine in 2014-2024, per 100,000 population of the country in the corresponding age group
Source: developed by the authors based on data from the Office of the Prosecutor General (n.d.)

The dynamics of the criminal activity coefficient for persons aged 40-54 differed from those observed in the two age groups of offenders discussed above. Throughout most of the analysed period, this indicator remained relatively stable, and fluctuations in the direction of either decrease or increase were moderate. In 2015-2016, the criminal activity coefficient for this age group declined from 335 to 300 (-10.4%); over the following two years it increased to 381 (+27.0%); and in 2019-2021 it decreased annually, albeit very slightly, reaching 262 by the end of this three-year period (-5.0% compared to the 2018 figure). Subsequently, in 2022, it declined to 284 (-21.5%), while in 2023 it increased sharply by 45.4% to 413, with this growth continuing in 2024. As a result of these dynamics, persons in this age group ranked fourth in terms of criminal activity during 2014-2019, and from 2020 moved to third place, where they remained in subsequent years.

Throughout the analysed period, there was a consistent and substantial decline in the level of criminal activity among representatives of both juvenile age groups. Thus, the criminal activity coefficient for 16-17-year-olds increased in 2015 from 523 to 584 (+11.7%), but in subsequent years declined steadily (with the exception of 2017) and in 2021 amounted to 278, representing a 2.1-fold decrease compared to the 2015 figure. In 2022, this indicator declined sharply to 154 (-44.6%); however, in 2023, unlike many other criminal statistics, it did

not increase significantly and remained at approximately the 2022 level (162), with the same situation observed in 2024.

As a result of this substantial decline in the criminal activity coefficient, the position of representatives of this age group among offenders of other age groups also changed. In 2014-2019, they ranked third in terms of this indicator; in 2020-2022, fourth; in 2023, they moved to fifth place, where they remained in 2024. A similar dynamic was observed for the youngest age group, namely 14-15-year-olds. During 2015-2021, their criminal activity coefficient decreased 2.5 times, from 285 to 115. In 2022, it declined almost twofold to 60, and in the subsequent two years remained at approximately the same level, amounting to 74 and 66, respectively.

During 2014-2019, persons in this age group ranked fifth in terms of this indicator, and from 2020 moved to sixth place, where they remained for the rest of the period. Naturally, the least criminally active were the oldest offenders – persons aged 60 and over. In 2015-2016, their criminal activity coefficient declined from 43 to 37, after which it began to increase slightly in subsequent years, reaching 47 in 2021. In 2022, this indicator declined to 43, while in 2023 it increased significantly to 61, remaining at the same level in 2024.

Thus, the number of identified offenders in Ukraine in 2024 remained at the level of the previous year, although sharp fluctuations had been

observed earlier, associated with wartime events and changes in migration processes. The long-term trend indicated a gradual decrease in the number of identified offenders, which may point to a decline in the quality of law enforcement performance and their operational conditions. In terms of gender structure, men predominated, and the gap in the level of criminal activity between men and women remained consistently significant – a fact explained not by social changes, but by deeper bio-psychological factors. The age structure of offenders was characterised by the dominance of young and middle-aged people, while the participation of juveniles and older persons was minimal. Overall, the observed trends and their interpretations align with international studies that emphasise the influence of social, psychological, and cultural factors on crime.

■ Conclusions

The study showed that crime in Ukraine underwent significant transformations between 2014 and 2024, caused by a combination of socio-economic, political, psychological and military factors. The structure of criminal offences shows clear gender and age patterns that reflect the underlying processes of social change in the country.

First of all, men consistently dominate among those who have committed criminal offences, accounting for an average of 88% of the total number of offenders. This disproportion persists throughout the entire period under study and is explained by both biosocial differences between the sexes and gender stereotypes and traditional roles in society. An age analysis showed that the most criminally active group is people aged 29-39 (on average, more than a third of all criminal offenders), who combine life experience with social mobility and professional activity. In second place are people aged 40-54, whose share has grown steadily during the period under review. Young people aged 18-28 are gradually losing their leadership in terms of criminal activity, which is partly due to mass mobilisation, a decline in the number of men in this category, and changing social norms.

At the same time, there has been a decline in crime among minors, especially among those aged 14-17, which may indicate both the strengthening of preventive measures and the forced displacement of a significant number of children abroad since 2022. On the other hand, the proportion of middle-aged and older offenders (aged 55 and over) is increasing, indicating a worsening socio-economic situation and the psychological consequences of the war, which are pushing people towards deviant behaviour.

It has been established that during the period under review, there has been a fluctuation in the total number of offenders, which could hypothetically be linked to a temporary decline in the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. At the same time, recent years have shown a trend towards partial stabilisation of indicators, indicating that the law enforcement system is adapting to the crisis conditions. Thus, contemporary crime in Ukraine is characterised by a gradual decline in the role of young people, an increase in criminal activity among mature individuals, and a stable gender imbalance. These trends reflect the profound social changes caused by the war and require a rethinking of state policy in the field of crime prevention in the context of post-war reconstruction of society.

Based on ten years of data, patterns of the “age shift” of crime and its gender stability during the period of martial law have been traced. In further research on this topic, it would be appropriate to specify and deepen the analysis by comparing the types of criminal offences committed by representatives of different gender and age groups.

■ Acknowledgements

None.

■ Funding

The study was not funded.

■ Conflict of Interest

None.

■ References

- [1] Bahanets, O.V. (2021). *The overall state of crime and measures to counter it in the territory of Ukraine in 2020 (compared with statistical data for 2013-2019)*. Retrieved from <https://naspravdi.today/uk/2021/04/02/zahalnyy-stan-zlochynnosti>.
- [2] Batyrhareieva, V.S. (2007). Recidivist offenders: On the issue of crime among persons with mental anomalies. In V.Ya. Tatsii (Ed.), *Problems of legality: Republican interdepartmental scientific collection* (pp. 525-571). Kharkiv: National Law Academy of Ukraine.
- [3] Bohatyrov, I., & Bohatyrov, A. (2024). Organized crime under martial law: Problems and ways to overcome them. *Law and Border*, 1(3), 5-26. doi: 10.32453/law_border.v3i1.1637.
- [4] Bourne, A.B. (2025). [Women's involvement in crime: A meta-analytical study](#). *Global Journal of Transformation in Law, Human Rights and Social Justice*, 9(1), 40-51.
- [5] Đoković, R., & Kavarić, M. (2025). Homicides committed by women in Montenegrin past and present. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 112, article number 103163. doi: 10.1016/j.wsif.2025.103163.

- [6] Filonenko, V.M., & Nechitailo, I.S. (2022). *Recidivist offenders: A psychological profile*. Ivano-Frankivsk: Foliant.
- [7] Gu, Y., Guo, H., Zhou, J., & Wang, X. (2023). Socio-demographic, clinical and offense-related characteristics of forensic psychiatric inpatients in Hunan, China: A cross-sectional survey. *BMC Psychiatry*, 23, article number 48. doi: [10.1186/s12888-022-04508-8](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-022-04508-8).
- [8] Karchevskiy, M.V. (2024). Counteracting crime in wartime conditions: Analysis of statistical data (2013-2023). *Scientific Bulletin of Lviv State University of Internal Affairs. Law Series*, 2, 80-90. doi: [10.32782/2311-8040/2024-2-12](https://doi.org/10.32782/2311-8040/2024-2-12).
- [9] Kenemore, T.K., & In, B.S. (2025). Navigating the carceral state: The experience of citizens with criminal backgrounds after finding stable housing. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 10-11, 1351-1369. doi: [10.1177/0306624X231165422](https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X231165422).
- [10] Khavroniuk, M.I. (2025). Crime in Ukraine in 2019-2024: Level, structure, dynamics, forecasts. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod National University. Law Series*, 89(3), 295-303. doi: [10.24144/2307-3322.2025.89.3.44](https://doi.org/10.24144/2307-3322.2025.89.3.44).
- [11] Lankester, M., Coles, C., Trotter, A., Scott, S., Downs, J., Dickson, H., & Wickersham, A. (2025). The association between academic achievement and subsequent youth offending: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology*, 10(4), 477-500. doi: [10.1007/s40865-025-00266-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40865-025-00266-9).
- [12] Lappi-Seppälä, T. (2025). Incarceration and crime trends: Assessing the impact of crime on the use of imprisonment. *Criminal Law Forum*, 36, 269-305. doi: [10.1007/s10609-025-09503-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10609-025-09503-8).
- [13] Lu, Y. (2024). Examining the stability and change in age-crime relation in South Korea, 1980-2019: An age-period-cohort analysis. *PLoS One*, 19(3), article number e0299852. doi: [10.1371/journal.pone.0299852](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0299852).
- [14] Mejía, B.B., Zea, P.P., Romero, M.M., & Saldívar, G.G. (2015). Traumatic experiences and re-victimization of female inmates undergoing treatment for substance abuse. *Substance Abuse: Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*, 10, article number 5. doi: [10.1186/1747-597X-10-5](https://doi.org/10.1186/1747-597X-10-5).
- [15] Molcho, M., Walsh, S.D., King, N., Pickett, W., Donnelly, P.D., Cosma, A., Elgar, F.J., Ng, K., Augustine, L., Malinowska-Cieślik, M., Bjereld, Y., & Craig, W. (2025). Trends in indicators of violence among adolescents in Europe and North America 1994-2022. *International Journal of Public Health*, 70, article number 1607654. doi: [10.3389/ijph.2025.1607654](https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2025.1607654).
- [16] Movchan, A.V., & Sozanskyi, T.I. (2023). Characteristic features of modern organized crime based on SOCTA survey results. *Scientific Bulletin of Lviv State University of Internal Affairs*, 1, 49-56. doi: [10.32782/2311-8040/2023-1-7](https://doi.org/10.32782/2311-8040/2023-1-7).
- [17] Office of the Prosecutor General. (n.d.). *Statistics. Unified report on persons who committed criminal offenses (Form No. 2, monthly) for 2014-2024*. Retrieved from <https://sal0.li/95f36ea>.
- [18] Orlov, Yu.V. (2023). *Crime and counteraction in wartime conditions: Criminal law and criminological dimensions*. Kharkiv: Pravo.
- [19] Pishchenko, H.I., & Lysenko, A.O. (2025). State, structure and trends of profit-motivated crimes under martial law in Ukraine. *Electronic Scientific Publication Analytical and Comparative Law*, 1, 645-650. doi: [10.24144/2788-6018.2025.01.107](https://doi.org/10.24144/2788-6018.2025.01.107).
- [20] Poama, A. (2025). Poverty, provocation, and punishment. *Criminal Law, Philosophy*, 19, 359-379. doi: [10.1007/s11572-024-09747-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11572-024-09747-2).
- [21] Prodan, T.V. (2020). *Criminological characteristics of female violent crime in Ukraine*. Chernivtsi: Tekhnodruk.
- [22] Pysmenskyi, Ye.O. (2024). Development of Ukraine's criminal-law policy under martial law: Interim analysis of expert assessment. *Central Ukrainian Journal of Law and Public Administration*, 3(7), 150-160. doi: [10.32782/cuj-2024-3-17](https://doi.org/10.32782/cuj-2024-3-17).
- [23] Shramko, S.S., & Kalinina, A.V. (2022). Crime in Ukraine: What it is during the war and what it may become in the post-war period? *Issues of Combating Crime*, 44, 98-106. doi: [10.31359/2079-6242-2022-44-98](https://doi.org/10.31359/2079-6242-2022-44-98).
- [24] Swisher, R.R., & Dennison, C.R. (2016). Educational pathways and change in crime between adolescence and early adulthood. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 53(6), 840-871. doi: [10.1177/0022427816645380](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022427816645380).
- [25] Tharshini, N.K., Ibrahim, F., Kamaluddin, M.R., Rathakrishnan, B., & Che Mohd Nasir, N. (2021). The link between individual personality traits and criminality: A systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(16), article number 8663. doi: [10.3390/ijerph18168663](https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18168663).

- [26] Traon, R., Nabhan-Abou, N., & Gabriel, R. (2022). Study of the experiences of violence against criminal women. *Annales Medico-Psychologiques*, 180(8), 731-735. doi: [10.1016/j.amp.2021.04.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amp.2021.04.009).
- [27] Tsaruk, Yu.Iu. (2024). The concept and essence of counteracting fraud committed under martial law. *Scientific Bulletin of Lviv State University of Internal Affairs. Law Series*, 3, 106-115. doi: [10.32782/2311-8040/2024-3-13](https://doi.org/10.32782/2311-8040/2024-3-13).
- [28] Van Koppen, M.V. (2018). Criminal career dimensions of juvenile- and adult-onset offenders. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology*, 4, 92-119. doi: [10.1007/s40865-017-0074-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40865-017-0074-5).
- [29] Vanhee, A.J. (2025). Does crime pay more than punishment hurts? Prior illegal income, incarceration, and return to income-generating crime. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, 50, 664-685 doi: [10.1007/s12103-025-09801-2](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-025-09801-2).

Статеві-вікова характеристика осіб, які вчинили кримінальні правопорушення в Україні у 2014-2024 роках

Олександр Кулик

Доктор юридичних наук, професор
Національна академія внутрішніх справ
03035, пл. Солом'янська, 1, м. Київ, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5172-8996>

Ірина Лубенець

Кандидат юридичних наук, старший дослідник
Національна академія внутрішніх справ
03035, пл. Солом'янська, 1, м. Київ, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2597-0356>

■ **Анотація.** Виявлення тенденцій у гендерно-вікових характеристиках злочинців є необхідним для розроблення ефективної державної політики у сфері запобігання злочинності та реінтеграції правопорушників у післявоєнний період. Метою дослідження було вивчення динаміки та структури злочинності за статеві та вікові ознаками, визначення впливу соціально-економічних, політичних і психологічних факторів на поведінку правопорушників. Методологічну основу становили статистичний, порівняльно-аналітичний, кримінологічний, системно-структурний методи. Емпіричну базу сформовано на основі офіційних даних Офісу Генерального прокурора та результатів наукових досліджень. Результати дослідження засвідчили, що впродовж аналізованого періоду структура злочинності в Україні зазнала суттєвих змін: серед правопорушників стабільно переважають чоловіки (близько 88 %), натомість жінки становлять у середньому 12 %. Найвищий рівень кримінальної активності зафіксовано серед осіб віком 29-39 років, водночас частка неповнолітніх постійно знижується. Виявлено поступове «дорослішання» злочинності та зростання питомої ваги правопорушників середнього й старшого віку, що пов'язано зі зниженням рівня життя, безробіттям, психологічним виснаженням і воєнними чинниками. Наукова новизна роботи полягає в поєднанні кількісного статистичного аналізу з якісним кримінологічним тлумаченням соціальних процесів, що впливають на формування злочинної поведінки в умовах воєнного стану. Це дало змогу окреслити нові тенденції в структурі кримінальної активності населення. Практичне значення дослідження полягає в можливості використання його результатів для вдосконалення кримінологічного прогнозування, формування державних стратегій запобігання злочинності, підвищення ефективності діяльності правоохоронних органів і розроблення цільових програм соціальної реабілітації осіб, схильних до девіантної поведінки.

■ **Ключові слова:** кримінальний правопорушник; кримінологічна характеристика; вікові групи кримінальних правопорушників; кримінальна активність; коефіцієнт кримінальної активності; воєнний стан