



# **Environmental organizations and initiatives under (re)pressure. Strategies for adaptation**

# Main problems of environmental movement in region EECCA (Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia):

- Unprecedented pressure on civil society (repressions, war, liquidation of organizations);
- Stigmatization of environmental organizations with the “foreign agents” label;
- As a result, Inability to work with local communities to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change;
- Lack of government support for independent monitoring and politicization of environmental and climate agendas. Difficulties in obtaining international assistance;
- Unfortunately, this region is underrepresented in global environmental media.

# Main challenges for environmental organizations in Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia:

- Political crisis and war. Total repressions in Belarus. War in Ukraine. Repressions in Georgia;
- Burning out of activists and experts. Transition to other activities (military or political);
- Global reduction in funding for environmental and climate programs;
- Migration of activists and experts

## Opportunities

Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia are candidate countries for EU membership. This also implies bringing the countries' environmental and climate policies in line with EU standards. In particular, achieving climate neutrality, complying with the principles of the Green Deal etc



## **Belarus. 2020 - 2025**

- Civil protests. August 2020 - Spring 2021
- Liquidation of environmental organizations. Summer 2021. More than 1000 NGOs were liquidated. More than 100 liquidated NGOs worked with environmental issues
- Repressions against environmental activists. 2021 - ...
- Recognition of environmental organizations as extremists. 2022 - ...

Environmental NGOs and activists supported the civil protests, and it prompted a response from the authorities.

# 1510 Current political prisoners

*they include environmental activists, NGO representatives, and community leaders*



Among political prisoners, there are clearly a greater number of people who support environmental activism. The infographic shows those who have openly declared their environmental activism.

Information based on data 2023

Environmental organizations and initiatives declared as extremists.

Cooperation with independent media also can be declared as an extremist activities.



NGO Ecohome declared extremist formation by Belarusian KGB

*Creation, participation, assistance, financing, training of extremists can result in 2-10 criminal sentences*



Ecohome, Green Portal publications declared extremist materials



*Storage or distribution - administrative responsibility*

Repression and persecution continue even after five years. Green Network was declared as an extremist organization in August 2025

## **Belarus' isolation at the international level. Environmental and climate perspective**

“On July 18, 2022, Belarus announced its decision to withdraw from the Aarhus Convention, citing biased and discriminatory treatment by the convention’s governing bodies and pressure on the sovereign state. This decision followed the liquidation of «Ecohome» and the imposition of restrictive measures on the country for non-compliance with the convention’s obligations”. [“Belarus and the Aarhus Convention: from accession to withdrawal”](#)

In global climate movement, Belarus is mostly presented by environmental organizations in exile, such as Green Network (for example, in CAN EECCA) or Ecohome



# Ukraine. Russian full scale invasion. February 2022 - ...

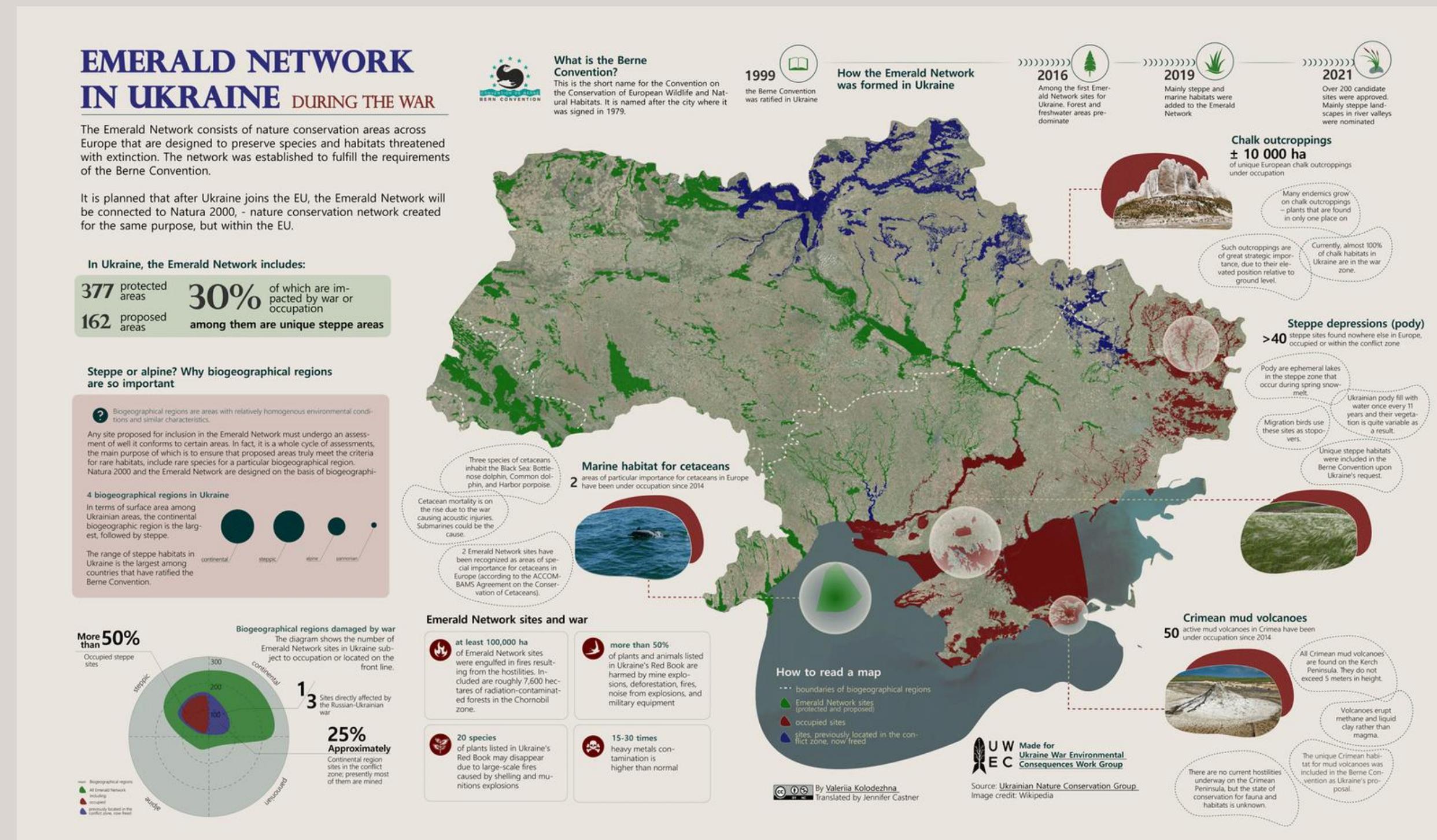
- Many environmental activists went voluntarily to serve in the army, some of them died (e.g. Semyon Oblomey, Roman Ratushny, Roman Zhuk);
- Mobilization of environmental activists for army service (f.e. coordinator of Greenpeace Germany in Ukraine).



- Transition to other volunteer and civilian activity associated with a full-scale invasion;
- Occupation and de-occupation of territories. Some environmental projects and initiatives have not been able to recover from the occupation;
- Emigration (including internal migration) of activists



Environmental and conservation organizations also lack both workers and funding. Their activities are hampered by the occupation. Reserves and national parks not only suffer from occupation, but also lack funding (in particular due to the decrease in tourists).



# **Impact of the war on environmental and civic activism in other countries in the EECCA region**

Pressure on environmental and civic activists in other countries in the EECCA region has increased since the outbreak of the war, although not to the level we see in authoritarian countries. For example, a law on "foreign agents" was passed in Kyrgyzstan and in Georgia. Such legislative initiatives, as the experience of Russia and Belarus has shown, can lead to the liquidation of NGOs, including environmental ones, and increase pressure on environmental initiatives and activists.

# Climate agenda becomes a part of political propaganda

At the last BRICS meeting in Kazan, russian president putin again used the term “global south” as a part of russian anti-western propaganda. The climate agenda is increasingly becoming part of the political confrontation.

24 октября, 14:57

## Путин: глобальный Юг и БРИКС одинаково смотрят на многие проблемы

Президент РФ подчеркнул, что "объединяя усилия, мы, безусловно, будем идти вперед"

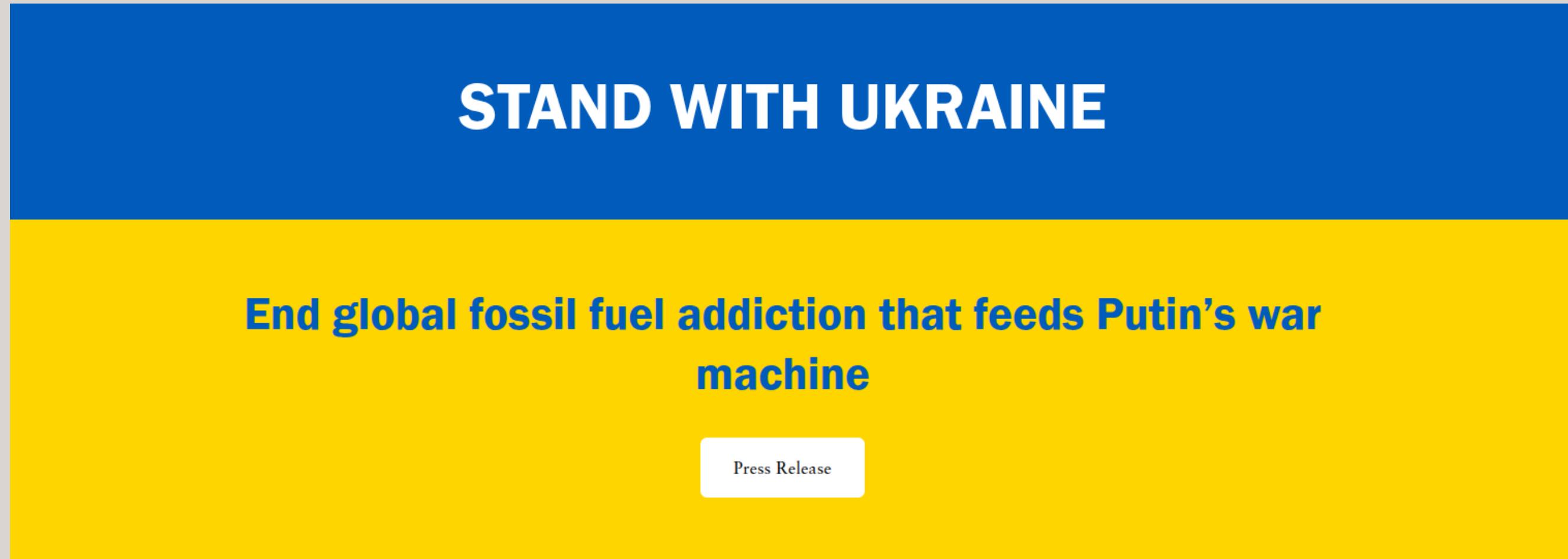
КАЗАНЬ, 24 октября. /ТАСС/. Страны БРИКС и глобального Юга могут успешно выстраивать совместную работу благодаря схожим взглядам на многие проблемы, заявил президент РФ Владимир Путин на заседании в формате "аутрич" / "БРИКС плюс".



"Вы отметили, что страны глобального Юга разделяют чаяния стран - членов БРИКС. И это общее видение очень многих сложных проблем нас действительно настраивает на совместную работу. А объединяя усилия, мы, безусловно, будем идти вперед", - отметил российский лидер после выступления президента Республики Конго Дени Сассу-Нгессо.

# **Solutions for environmental organizations and initiatives in the time of pressure and war**

# Make the work more visible, creating and organizing campaigns



- Cooperation with journalists and campaigners. Active work in social media
- Ukrainian organizations received huge support also because they made their work more visible. Belarusian organizations suffered because of non-representatives. On the other hand, Ukrainian organizations have not faced repression.

**Talk about local environmental and climate issues on the global level (for example, CAN EECCA)**



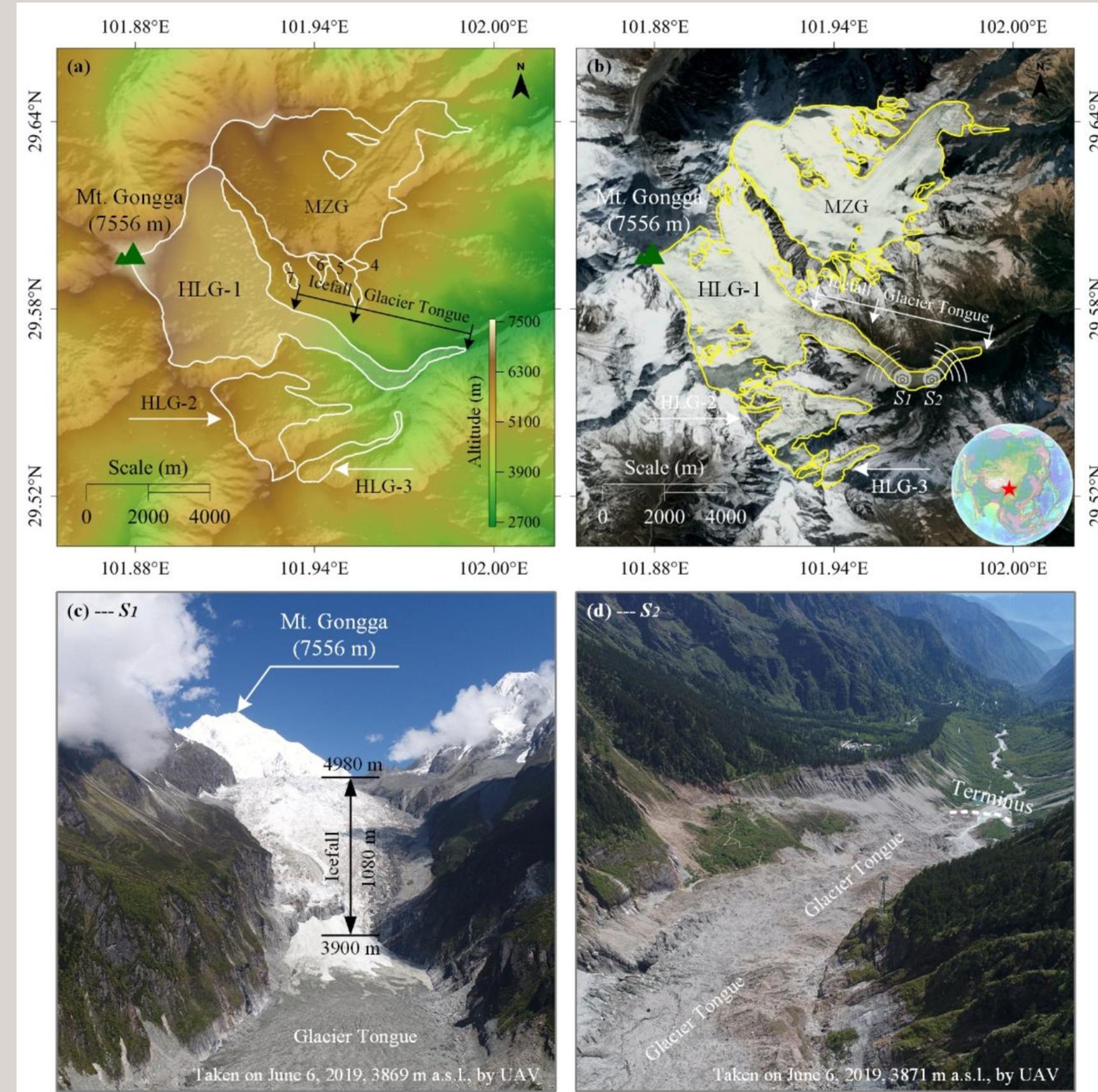
# **Work on the strategies :**

The creation of strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation is possible even in exile, during a political crisis, and during wartime.

## **Examples:**

- Green Belarus (<https://belarusgreen.vision/>)
- Ukrainian organizations using EU integration principles and requirements to resolve domestic political issues and promote the climate and environmental agenda (for example, Green recovery of Ukraine)

# Develop OSINT analysis



# Develop of non-political instruments for interaction with environmental activists



**ПАДПІСАЦЬ ЦІ НЕ ПАДПІСАЦЬ:  
ТОП ЭКАПЕТЫЦЫЙ-2023**



Далучайся да размовы з інфаслужбай  
па вырашэнні экапраблем “Зялёны  
тэлефон” і юрысткай Petitions.by  
Вольгай Працкевіч!

 Zoom  
 15 студзеня (панядзелак)  
 19:00 па мінскім часе  
 Удзел па рэгістрацыі

Develop socially significant and relevant topics



# Creating environmental and climate network with activists from other countries



**Thank you for your  
attention**