Ukraine is at war with Russia. Its territory has been aggressively occupied, millions of people have been forcefully relocated or deported. It has lost significant share of its economy through physical destruction of assets and vital infrastructure. It relies extensively on international military, economic, social and fiscal support. For the second largest country of Europe (by territory) with 41 million population, security and safety became a key determinant of wellbeing and growth.

Yet, Ukraine is persevering. People and companies remain active, taxes and pensions are being paid, healthcare and education services are being delivered, administrative and business services are being provided, houses are being rebuilt. Many of those are delivered by cities and communities, which became stronger thanks to recently completed decentralisation reform. A new system of governance and economic development is emerging, integrating the strongest features of Ukrainian society demonstrated during the war, within the limits of precarious geographical location next to aggressive neighbour that poses a long-term existential threat.

This presentation outlines key challenges faced by cities and territories during large-scale war, the opportunities fundamental reconstruction of physical space and economy might bring, and principles on which it should be based.

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