

OLENIVKA

28-29 JULY 2022

THE NIGHT THAT BECAME A SYMBOL OF A WAR CRIME AGAINST UKRAINIAN POWS





THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN OLENIVKA:

4 Years of Remembrance and Struggle

Those whom international humanitarian law was supposed to protect were deprived of the most fundamental right of all – the right to life.

50+

deceased
Ukrainian POWs

130+

wounded

2

international
guarantors
(the UN and the ICRC)

0

international experts
Russia allowed
access to the scene
of the tragedy

On the night of 28–29 July 2022, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported that the Russian army had attacked the prison in Olenivka. A group of Ukrainian servicemen, who had been taken prisoner from the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol, were being held there.

Immediately after the explosion, Russia accused Ukraine of carrying out the attack, allegedly using American HIMARS multiple launch rocket systems.

Ukraine appealed to the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross as guarantors of the agreements concerning the 'Azovstal' defenders who were being held in Olenivka. The agreements stipulated that their lives would be spared and that they would subsequently be exchanged. The UN and the ICRC expressed their readiness to investigate the mass killing of the captives.

3 August 2022 UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated that the organisation was preparing a team of experts to investigate the deaths of the captives in Olenivka.

5 months later, UN Secretary-General António Guterres disbanded the fact-finding mission into the strike on the prison colony in Olenivka due to a lack of security guarantees.

July 2023 The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights officially refuted Russia's version of events, confirming that the trajectory and nature of the damage were inconsistent with a HIMARS missile strike.

Between 2023 and 2026, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies, in collaboration with international human rights organisations, compiled a body of evidence for the International Criminal Court. Investigators from the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and the Office of the Prosecutor General also served notices of suspicion on the former "management" of the Olenivka prison colony. Throughout this time, Ukraine has insisted on the establishment of a special international tribunal, the prosecution of those responsible, and the release of all defenders who remain in Russian captivity.

THE THIRD GENEVA CONVENTION

Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War: What Guarantees Do Prisoners of War Have?



Article **The main provisions of the Convention and the violations that occurred**

- 12** The state holding prisoners of war is responsible for their treatment.
In Olenivka, these provisions were not observed.
- 13** Prisoners of war must always be treated humanely.
These provisions were not observed.
- 15** The detaining State is obliged to provide for their upkeep free of charge and to provide them with the medical care required by their state of health, free of charge.
The wounded did not receive time-ly and adequate medical care.
- 23** Prisoners of war must be afforded protection from aerial bombardment and other dangers of war to the same extent as the local civilian population.
The safety of prisoners of war was not ensured.
- 121** In every case of death from unknown causes, the detaining state immediately launches an official investigation.
A full, independ-ent international investigation into the tragedy has not yet been carried out.

Issue No4, 2026



Photo: BBC

When a soldier lays down his arms in the name of peace, international law becomes his main weapon. In Olenivka, that law was shattered along with those it was meant to protect.



JUNE WAS

THE DEADLIEST MONTH

SINCE APRIL 2022:

July Saw the Toll of Human Tragedies Continue

16 431

Ukrainian men and women have been killed by Russia
since the start of the full-scale invasion

*These are only the confirmed figures
(information from the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission)*

48 613

Ukrainian men and women have been injured
since the start of the full-scale invasion

*These are only the confirmed figures
(information from the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission)*

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CHILDREN TARGETED:

Russia Has Destroyed a UNICEF Warehouse in the Kyiv Region



On 19 July, a Russian attack reduced \$3.9 million worth of humanitarian aid for children to ashes – generators, water and hygiene kits intended for families living near the front line.

The aggressor state is deliberately flouting international humanitarian law, even targeting organisations that save the lives of the youngest children.



2 July — Kyiv. One of the deadliest attacks. **31 killed, 103 injured.** A strike on a house claimed the lives of an entire family — 22-year-old Yevhen, his parents and his fiancée.

3 July — Sumy. 4 people were killed, including a five-year-old girl and her mother.



6 July — Kyiv, Kyiv region. Another of the deadliest attacks. **19 people were killed, including 1 child,** and a further 76 were injured.

16 July — Odesa. 2 people were killed. Among them was a mother who was out walking with her children in the park at the time of the attack.



These are just a few stories out of thousands of lives shattered. May all those killed by Russia rest in peace!



160 LIVES SAVED

The process of returning our people from captivity is ongoing. During the **76th POW exchange**, which took place on **26 June 2026**, **160 Ukrainian defenders** returned home.

9,613 UKRAINIANS,

of them **464 civilians**,
have returned home since the beginning of the full-scale invasion!
(as of 23 July 2026)

They include servicemen and servicewomen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, including the Territorial Defence Forces, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine, the State Special Transport Service, and the Ukrainian Military Medical Academy. Among those released are fighters of Azov, including officers. **Nearly 99% of them had been held in Russian captivity since 2022.**



We sincerely welcome our fellow citizens on their return to their homeland. We will continue our efforts until every Ukrainian man and woman returns home from Russian captivity.





Also, **on 27 June**, it was possible to secure the return of **7 more Ukrainian civilians**, whom Russia had been unlawfully holding in captivity for years. This became possible owing to the humanitarian efforts of **the Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets** within the framework of cooperation with the Russian Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the joint work of **the Security Service of Ukraine, the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, and other authorities within the framework of the Coordination Headquarters.**



Separately, **on 26 June**, the **Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets** held a working meeting with the Russian Commissioner for Human Rights, **Yana Lantratova.**

They discussed issues related to **POW exchanges, the release of civilians unlawfully detained, the search for persons missing under special circumstances, the conditions of detention of Ukrainian prisoners, and humanitarian cooperation.**

They also raised the issue of the servicemen who had been held in Olenivka. The Ukrainian Ombudsman handed over a letter from the mothers and families of the defenders who were affected by the terrorist attack in Olenivka.

WE CONTINUE BRINGING Ukrainian Children Back to Their Homeland



In July, the Ombudsman's Office succeeded in returning to Ukraine a girl who had been left alone following the sudden death of her mother in the Czech Republic at the end of 2025.

For more than 6 months, the Ombudsman's Office, the National Social Service of Ukraine, the social services of the Czech Republic, and Save the Children went through complex legal procedures in order to reunite the family. Thanks to international cooperation, the child is now home with her family.

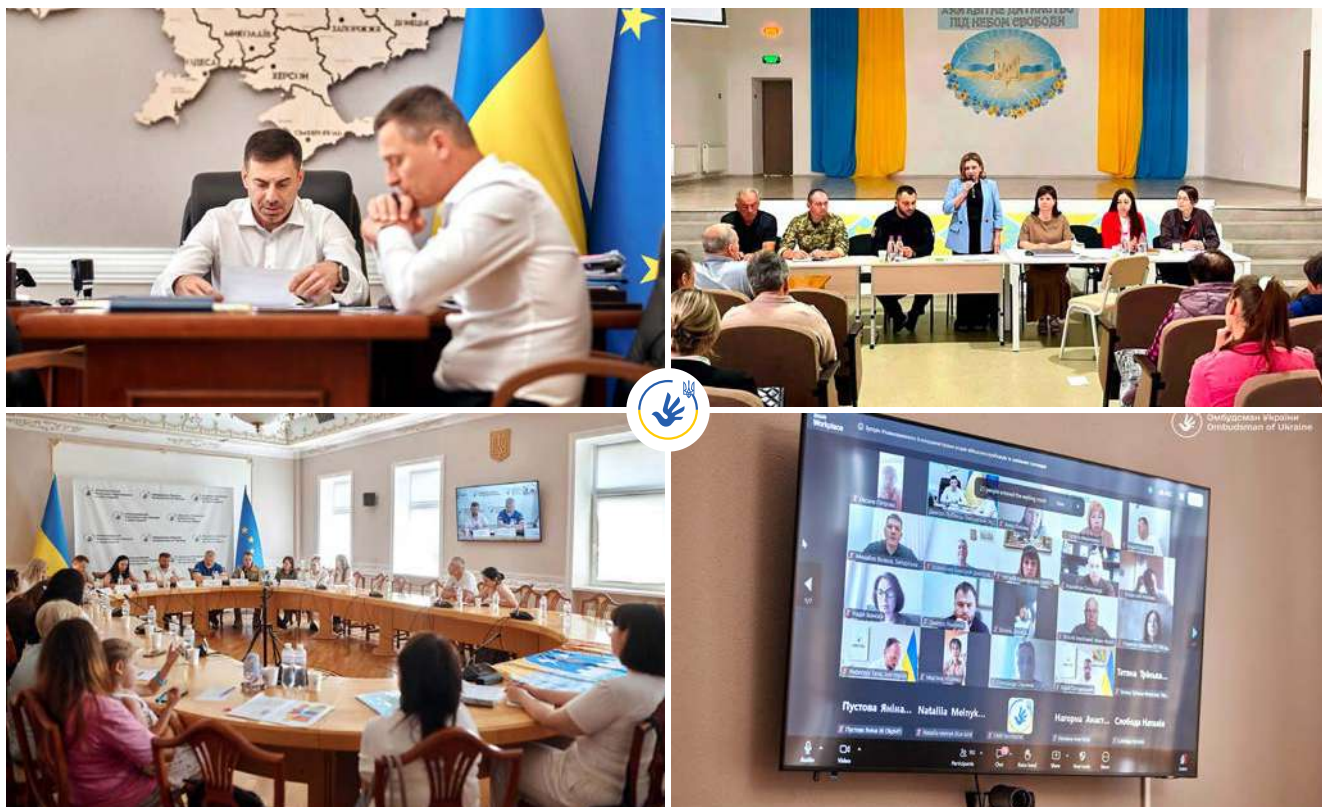
HEARING EVERY FAMILY:

Continuing the Dialogue with the Families of Prisoners of War and Missing Persons



While efforts to bring Ukrainians home continue, supporting their families remains no less important. For this reason, the Ombudsman's Office regularly holds meetings with the families of prisoners of war, missing persons, unlawfully detained civilians, and fallen defenders.

In particular, such meetings were held in **Poltava region and Khmelnytskyi region**, where families had the opportunity to ask important questions and receive up-to-date information.



Issue No4, 2026

Separately, the Ukrainian Ombudsman held an online meeting with **170 coordinators of associations of the families of servicemen and civilians.**



“Direct contact with hostile structures is not assistance but a trap set by the Russian special services. Protect your loved ones. Trust only official channels,” the Ukrainian Ombudsman **Dmytro Lubinets** urges.

How can you identify fraudsters who exploit the issue of prisoners of war and missing persons?

Scan the QR code.





'MADE IN RUSSIA. DELIVERED TO CAPTIVITY'

A project that **highlights the scale of Russia's war crimes** against Ukrainian prisoners of war. It details the main 'products' of Russian production: torture, death, terror, unlawful convictions and propaganda.



Materials of the project
'Made in Russia.
Delivered to Captivity'

#RussiasATerroristState

- **695** forms of torture and **860** cases of inadequate conditions of detention in captivity;
- human rights organisations have verified **186** locations where Ukrainians are being held in the Russian Federation and in the temporarily occupied territories;
- **2,112** captives (civilians and military personnel) are on trial for participating in hostilities – in contravention of the rules of international humanitarian law;
- **406** Ukrainians have been killed while in Russian captivity: tortured, or due to malnutrition and poor conditions of detention.





Dmytro Lubinets

Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights

Russia has turned torture into a weapon of war in its own right. What Ukrainians are enduring in captivity is a conveyor belt of cruelty: beatings, humiliation, and psychological terror. The aggressor state is not only committing war crimes — we have been documenting signs of genocide against the Ukrainian people in all five of its forms since 2014. For 13 years, the Russian state apparatus has been operating as a factory of war crimes.



Vladyslav Andrianov

Serviceman of the First Corps 'Azov' of the National Guard of Ukraine, on the explosion in the barracks holding prisoners of war on the night of July 28 to 29, 2022, in Olenivka

It was the most terrifying night. Even compared to the fighting in Mariupol, this was worse. There, at least, you had your own people around you: options, resources, medics. You knew that if something happened, you would receive proper care. Here, you understood that no one would help. We watched as the guys slowly died.

As a direct eyewitness to these events, I am one hundred percent certain that this was planned.

Why did they do it? Because they could not defeat us fairly on the battlefield. They decided to carry out a public execution, to show the entire world that they have no regard for morality, for any human qualities, that such qualities are simply not part of who they are. They can do whatever they want, and no one can do anything to stop them.

As we mark the fourth anniversary of the terrorist attack in Olenivka, this project takes on special significance. It vividly shows the world the true meaning of the 'Made in Russia' label. It is not about geography; it is a mark of cruelty, despicable behaviour and utter disregard for human life.

**Eternal memory to all the fallen Heroes of Olenivka.
We pay tribute to their heroic deeds!**



THE OSCE MOSCOW MECHANISM

Has Recognised the Indoctrination and Militarisation of Ukrainian Children as a Systemic Policy of the Russian Federation

This is stated in the report “On Violations and Abuses of International Humanitarian, Human Rights and Criminal Law Related to Militarisation and Indoctrination of Ukrainian Children by the Russian Federation”.



It is important to note that the experts also conducted an in-depth analysis of two Special Reports by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, “Unbloomed” and “CROSS-POLLINATED”, which provide a detailed and comprehensive account of the indoctrination and militarisation of Ukrainian children in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and in the Russian Federation.

The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights at the presentation of the Special Report “CROSS-POLLINATED”, 16 July 2024.

#RussiasATerroristState



3,803 CHILDREN IN LVIV REGION

Have Regained the Right to Discounted Public Transport!

Parents of children with disabilities from the Lviv region approached the Office of the Ombudsman: due to a decision by the city council, they and their carers had lost their right to discounted travel under the “LeoCard” scheme.



This concerned **3,803 children**, who were effectively **deprived of a benefit guaranteed by law**. The Ukrainian Ombudsman responded by **opening an investigation**, sending official enquiries to Lviv City Council and demanding that the violation be rectified. As a result, discounted travel has been reinstated and the “LeoCard” passes have been reactivated.

Every complaint is important, and every violation of rights must be met with an appropriate response. Especially when it comes to children.

4.6 MILLION IDPS:

The Main Challenge to Which the State Has Yet to Respond



825
thousand
children



1.34
million
pensioners



230
thousand
people
with disabilities



**These groups account for almost half of the 4.6 million IDPs officially registered in Ukraine as of 1 July 2026.*

State policy on IDPs requires systemic changes. This is confirmed by numerous violations of IDPs' rights, to which the Office of the Ombudsman has responded. Below are two illustrative cases.



- **Poltava region.** Following an appeal from an IDP, Office of the Ombudsman discovered that **176 IDPs** had been living for years in premises unfit for habitation. **Proceedings were initiated and remedial measures were taken.**
- **Rivne region.** Following the Ombudsman's Office's intervention, **30 IDPs** in a geriatric care home had their entitlement to subsistence allowance reinstated. Similar measures are being taken to protect the rights of **102 IDPs in the Kirovohrad region.**



*The state must move from ad hoc responses to a systematic policy on IDPs, ensuring adequate living conditions, effective protection of rights and comprehensive monitoring of their accommodation,” – Ombudsman of Ukraine **Dmytro Lubinets.***



3.4 MILLION PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: Is Ukraine's Labour Market Ready?

Today, one working Ukrainian effectively supports one pensioner. 3.4 million people with disabilities, veterans and IDPs still face barriers to employment.

For Ukraine, this is no longer just a matter of human rights protection, but also of the state's economic stability.



The Ombudsman of Ukraine took part in the National Forum on Economic Accessibility.

In the first six months of 2026 alone, the Office of the Ombudsman received **over 3,000 appeals** from people with disabilities regarding discrimination, inaccessible infrastructure, delays in payments and bureaucratic obstacles.



“Opening up the labour market to everyone means not only ensuring the right to work, but also strengthening Ukraine's economy,” said the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights **Dmytro Lubinets**.

ELECTRICITY SERVICE RESTORED for Residents of 169 Apartments

169 families in the capital nearly lost their electricity because the developer failed to meet the technical requirements for connecting the building to the power grid. After the head of the homeowners' association reached out, the Ombudsman's Office promptly stepped in to resolve the situation.

As a result, electricity service has been restored, and the residents' right to uninterrupted access to electricity has been reinstated.

This story is not an isolated incident but rather a manifestation of a systemic problem. That is why the Ombudsman's Office monitors such situations and prepares proposals to improve legislation.

SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE — THE FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS



In July, Greece became yet another international venue at which **the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights** spoke on behalf of the millions of Ukrainian men and women whom the war has deprived of their homes, their safety and their settled way of life.

At the 30th Annual Economist Government Roundtable “**Progress in an age of upheaval**” Dmytro Lubinets called on European partners not to scale back support for Ukrainians who have found refuge in EU countries, stressing that **assistance to Ukraine today is an investment in the security of Europe as a whole.**



The working visit also afforded an opportunity to hold meetings with representatives of **the OSCE, the Parliament and the Government of Greece and the Greek Ombudsman**, as well as with European politicians and experts.



*I am grateful to all the countries that support us. This support is incredibly valuable. But as long as the war continues, the security of all of Europe remains under threat. That is precisely why supporting Ukraine means strengthening a Europe where the rule of law is stronger than weapons.” — **Dmytro Lubinets**, Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.*

WORKING TOGETHER TO FIND HUMANITARIAN SOLUTIONS

Kyiv hosted a visit by **the Pope’s Special Envoy for the peace mission in Ukraine, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi**.

His meeting with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights was devoted to the foremost humanitarian issue — **the return of Ukrainian men and women from Russian captivity.**





A NEW FORMAT FOR UKRAINIAN-HUNGARIAN DIALOGUE

on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities (Communities)

The protection of the rights of national minorities (communities) is a matter not only of debate but of concrete action. That was the message delivered in Uzhhorod by the **Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets**, and the **Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary, Imre Juhász**.



4 key steps for cooperation:

- establishing a **joint working group** for the prompt handling of matters concerning the protection of the rights of the citizens of both countries;
- conducting **mutual monitoring visits** on observance of the rights of national minorities (communities);
- drawing up a **Memorandum of Cooperation** between the two institutions;
- strengthening international engagement, in particular **in support of Ukraine acquiring observer status with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**.



Separately, Dmytro Lubinets presented the Commissioner's Special Report on observance of the rights of national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples in the context of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine for the period from 24 February 2022 to 31 December 2023. **Of the 75 recommendations, more than 80% have already been implemented or are being implemented.**



BEYOND STATE OVERSIGHT: The Problem of Protecting the Rights of Persons in Private Geriatric Facilities



The absence of effective State control over the operation of private residential care homes creates risks for the very persons most in need of protection.

It was an appeal from relatives searching for a family member that made it possible to uncover one such case in Zaporizhzhia region.

The inspection revealed inadequate conditions of residence for **8 older persons and persons with disabilities.**



Following the intervention of the Office of the Ombudsman, they were evacuated and provided with the assistance they required. In response to the violations identified, **criminal proceedings have been opened.**

I This case has once again demonstrated the need for the immediate **legislative regulation** of privately owned geriatric institutions and for **the introduction of effective oversight** of respect for the rights of their residents.

WHY SHOULD A QUALIFIED ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE NOT BE AN OBSTACLE TO THE RIGHT TO PETITION?

Civil society organisations are often the first to alert the State to human rights violations.

They gather the facts and prepare appeals, yet at times these are refused registration solely because a **QES – a qualified electronic signature – is absent.**



A technical requirement cannot restrict the constitutional right to appeal. *Under Article 40 of the Constitution of Ukraine, everyone has the right to address the public authorities, and an appeal must be considered on its merits.*

I Following the intervention by the Office of the Ombudsman, such appeals **began to be registered and considered.**

At the same time, a person's right to be heard should not depend on any additional intervention – it must be secured by the State.



4 YEARS OF DMYTRO LUBINET'S AS UKRAINE'S OMBUDSMAN: Key Achievements

1 July marked four years since **Dmytro Lubinets** was appointed as the **Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights**.

The institution reviewed the key results of its work during the conference **"Ombudsman Office 4.0: New Walls – Unchanged Values"**. As is customary to mark this anniversary, the Commissioner also held a major press conference attended by **34 Ukrainian and international journalists**.



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Over the past four years, the Ombudsman's Office has:

- processed **496,451** appeals submitted by members of the public;
- opened **22,457** proceedings;
- conducted **15,953** monitoring visits;
- reviewed **15,101** draft laws and other normative legal acts;
- facilitated the return of **9,613** Ukrainians, including **464** civilians (as of 23 July 2026);
- contributed to the return of **2,404** children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and the Russian Federation (as of 23 July 2026).

The conference set out the priorities for the next stage of work, while the opening of the Human Rights Center in Kyiv marked a significant milestone in the institution's development. **Looking ahead, the Ombudsman's Office remains committed to strengthening the protection of the rights of every person in Ukraine.**



**BROCHURES
PORTAL**

PEOPLE ARE THE GREATEST VALUE!

Russia systematically violates human rights in Ukraine!



9,613

people released
from Russian
captivity

including
→

464

civilians

≈ 100,000

people missing under
special circumstances

16,431

civilians
killed

48,613

civilians
wounded

*According to the UN Human Rights
Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

720

children killed

2,732

children wounded

2,367

missing children

*According to the Children of War information portal

2,404

children returned by Ukraine

*including from TOT

**4.6
million**

people
became IDPs

**5.7
million**

people sought
refuge abroad

Issue No4, 2026

SHELLING OF CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Russia is destroying residential buildings, educational and medical facilities!

4,607

destroyed
and damaged
educational facilities

including
→

1,552

destroyed
and damaged
kindergartens

*According to saveschools.in.ua

2,617

destroyed
and damaged
destroyed
healthcare facilities

including
→

428

hospitals

352

ambulatories

742

destroyed
and damaged
religious buildings

2,524

destroyed
and damaged
cultural objects

≈ 300 000

destroyed or damaged houses

*According to the Register
of Damaged and Destroyed Property

**≈ 133 thousand
square kilometers**

of Ukraine's territory are
considered potentially mined

*According to SESU

*Data as
of late July 2026



Омбудсман України Ombudsman of Ukraine

The strength of international law is measured by its ability to stop evil.
We are working to ensure that every crime committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine is properly documented and prosecuted, and that those responsible are held accountable under the law.

Justice is the foundation of future peace.

#StandWithUkraine



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