



Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine



ABSOLUTE EVIL
terrible war crimes of
Russia's military in Ukraine

Russia violates
the Geneva Convention
and still holds Ukrainian
CIVILIANS
hostage

Photo: Oleksandr Oliynyk

Human rights in Ukraine

since the beginning of Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine

2,430

people released from Russian captivity

including →

142

civilians

≈

20,000

people have become civilian hostages of the Russian Federation, are missing or are in the temporary occupied territories*

*According to the information of the state bodies involved in this issue

8,895

killed civilians

15,117

injured civilians

482

dead children

981

injured children

395

missing children

19,392

children forcibly taken to Russia

1.4
млн

people without access to water due to the destruction of the infrastructure

4.6
млн

people have limited access to water

4.8
млн

people became IDPs

8.2
млн

people received the status of refugees abroad

3,172

destroyed educational institutions

909

destroyed kindergartens

1,218

destroyed health care facilities

348

destroyed religious buildings

1,322

destroyed cultural objects

158,017

destroyed houses

117

destroyed railway stations

346

destroyed bridges and bridge crossings

572

destroyed boiler houses

412

destroyed factories and businesses

*As of 25.05.23

Terror against the civilian population: massive attacks on the territory of Ukraine are not abating

Throughout May, the Russian Federation carried out massive strikes on the territory of Ukraine with missiles and Shahed drones, which destroyed and damaged residential buildings and other civilian infrastructure in a number of regions of Ukraine.



On May 3, **21 people died and 48 were injured** in Kherson as a result of Russian shelling. On this day, the Russian army shelled a railway station, a hardware store, a supermarket, a gas station and private houses.

On May 8, as a result of a night attack on the city of Kyiv, **5 people were injured**. Residential building and cars were damaged.

On May 15, the Russians attacked Avdiivka with rockets. The occupiers targeted the hospital. As a result of the strike, **4 civilians were killed**.

On May 16, the Russian Federation launched a massive missile attack on the capital of Ukraine, the city of Kyiv. The invaders attacked Ukraine with 18 air, sea and land-based missiles. Debris of the rocket fell on the territory of the city zoo, several cars also caught fire.

On May 17, due to Russian aggression in the Kherson region, **3 people were killed, and 8 others received injuries** of varying degrees of severity. Among the victims are children – the Russian army **killed a 5-year-old boy, a 16-year-old boy was seriously injured.**

On the night of May 22, the Russian army attacked an emergency rescue unit in the Dnipro. As a result, 3 buildings were destroyed, more than 20 pieces of equipment were destroyed. **One rescuer was injured.**

The destruction of units of the State Emergency Service is a gross violation of the norms of the Geneva Convention and a violation of all norms of International Law.

In addition, during the month, settlements in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa regions came under enemy fire.

We are fighting for the return of every Ukrainian to their home!

On May 6, we managed to return **45 of our "Azovstal" defenders** to their homeland. Among them there are 42 men and 3 women.

Their relatives prayed, believed and waited, and soon they will be able to hug them and realize that their relatives are next to them!

The coordination headquarters for the treatment of prisoners of war, which includes Commissioner Dmytro Lubinets and Representative of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the system of security and defense sector bodies Oleksandr Kononenko, works for the return of every Ukrainian. Despite treachery, deception, and cynicism on the part of the Russian side.

All returned Ukrainians will receive medical assistance, in particular, undergo rehabilitation, and will be able to restore bank cards and documents. Each such return is another small victory for us!

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, 2,430 Ukrainians have already been freed!



Meetings with relatives of Ukrainian military personnel who are in captivity of the enemy or have disappeared under special circumstances

The relatives' questions are answered by representatives of the Main Investigative Department of the National Police, the Security Service of Ukraine, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Coordination Staff for the Treatment of Prisoners of War, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other agencies.

Relatives ask questions about the procedure for finding soldiers who are now considered missing. It was explained to the citizens that the search is ongoing, except for areas where active hostilities are currently taking place. However, after their termination, search groups are sent to the liberated territory of Ukraine.



The Commissioner held the same meetings with relatives in **Dnipro and Poltava** this month. At the end of the meeting, the staff of the Office collected appeals from the relatives and lists of their relatives who are in captivity or have disappeared under special circumstances.



The Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner and the State Duma of the Russian Federation have begun monitoring visits to places of detention of CIVILIAN persons

The Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and representatives of the State Duma of the Russian Federation began joint activities regarding monitoring visits to places of detention of civilians from both sides and handing them sets of basic necessities.

On April 23 of this year, the Russians visited our citizens in places of detention in the Luhansk region, a total of 17 people.

On May 3 this year, representatives of the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights together with the NGO "Nadia" visited 17 people detained in Ukraine and handed them a pre-agreed set of basic necessities.

In order to confirm the validity of these monitoring visits, both parties exchanged lists of authorized persons and those videos that prove the fact of communication. Relatives of detained Ukrainian prisoners were informed about the visit. We hope that the started practice will lead to the unblocking of the procedure for the release of civilian hostages and convicted persons, so that they can be returned home as soon as possible!!

In mid-May, **talks about exchanges of civilians began in Russia**. Currently, they voiced the issue of the need for the exchange/return of civilians and even asked their president, who is "awarded" with an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court, to issue a mandate so that the competent authorities facilitate the exchange of civilians.

Once again, for the Russian side, we emphasize that **Ukraine is ready to hand over Russian citizens to serve a sentence in the Russian Federation**. The fact of whether the country really cares about "its" and is ready to take them away is important.

Ukraine, for its part, provided a list of elderly citizens illegally detained by the Russian side. Therefore, it is expected that the Russian Federation will be interested in the return of its citizens, because Ukraine, for its part, declares on all possible platforms that it wants to return every civilian illegally relocated or abducted by the Russian Federation.

According to the 4th Geneva Convention, civilians cannot be captured! However, Russia violated this rule!

Ukraine calls on the world to pressure Russia to return Ukrainian civilians home!

Oleksandr Kononenko, a representative of the Commissioner in the security and defense sector, met with representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Ukraine to discuss the issue of returning civilian hostages. This problem is complicated, because the Russian Federation refuses to negotiate their return.



"The Russian side does not want to notice that there are citizens of the Russian Federation in Ukraine who are detained and under investigation for committing crimes. We can clearly say that the Russian Federation violates the 4th Geneva Convention, which concerns civilian hostages," Oleksandr Kononenko noted.



He also added that all the fake accusations against Ukrainian civilians made by the Russian Federation are strange from the point of view of an independent state, which is Ukraine. **Citizens of European countries are among those detained** for these or other strange articles.

There are the following categories of citizens who are unjustly detained by the Russian Federation:

- people who were detained and convicted before February 24, 2022;
- convicts who served their sentences in Ukraine on the temporarily occupied territory, whom the Russian Federation did not return to Ukraine after serving their sentence, but deported through Georgia or Latvia;
- civilians who were detained after February 24, 2022 (the Russian Federation defines non-combatants as prisoners of war – fighters of the anti-terrorist operation, former policemen);
- other civilians against whom the Russian Federation is accusing are patriots of Ukraine.



Oleksandr Kononenko

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Children must have a happy future: the Office of the Commissioner helps to return children home

Ukrainian children can be happy only with their family in their native land. And recently, this happened to the girl **Anna-Maria**, who managed to be returned to Ukraine from the territory of the Russian Federation thanks to the efforts of the Ombudsman's Office. A 6-year-old girl returned to her parents, who had been in Russian captivity for a long time. The girl's mother and father are soldiers who were captured in their hometown of Mariupol when they were defending it from Russian soldiers who came to destroy and kill.

After her release from captivity, the girl's mother appealed to the Commissioner's Office with a request to assist in the return of her daughter. Thanks to the cooperation of the Commissioners of Ukraine and the Russian Federation, the employees of the Secretariat of the Ukrainian Ombudsman managed to return the little Ukrainian girl home. **Now the whole family is in Ukraine and happy that they managed to get reunited.**

Despite the speculation, the change of concepts and the loss of cause-effect relations by the Russian side, which every day replenishes the basket of propaganda materials, Ukraine continues to do its work and has a truthful answer to every "sham story"!



14-year-old **Veronika**, who ended up in the Russian Federation after a terrorist country invaded Ukraine, is now at home. With horror and tears in her eyes, her grandmother remembers what she had to go through to return her granddaughter to her native land.

The Commissioner for Human Rights knows what a difficult path the woman overcame in order to transport her granddaughter to the territory of Ukraine. Fortunately, everything worked out this time. The child will undergo rehabilitation and receive the necessary medical and humanitarian assistance. And a pleasant surprise after returning to the native land was a useful gift to facilitate education in the native language.

The Commissioner's office works to bring home every Ukrainian child and punish those who take them away and hold them hostage on foreign territory!



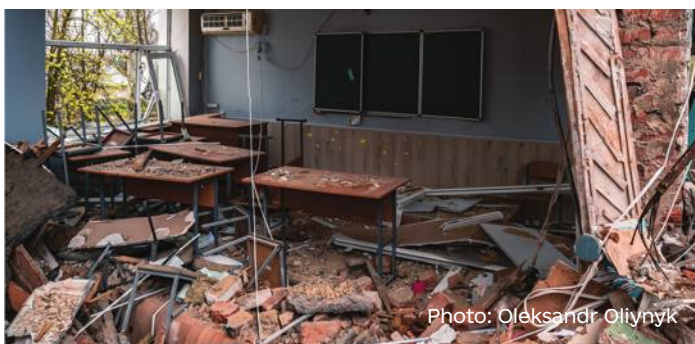
Russia violates the right of Ukrainian children to education

As of May, more than 1 million children are registered as internally displaced persons in Ukraine.

In all places of compact settlements of IDPs children have a problem with access to education. The vast majority of them study remotely in schools at their previous place of residence. At the same time, the children do not have the necessary electronic devices.

Ukrainian children need technical devices to get an education. We invite organizations to join us in order to restore children's right to education.

The photo shows the destroyed educational institutions in the city of Orihiv, Zaporizhzhia region.



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The Minimum Standards for the administration and management of places of compact settlement of internally displaced persons in Ukraine were developed

Commissioner for Human Rights Dmytro Lubinets took part in the conference "Right to Dignity in Places of Compact Settlement". In his speech, he emphasized that the specialized department constantly conducts monitoring visits to places of compact residence of internally displaced persons. 10% of such places have already been visited, and this activity is ongoing. After each visit, the Ombudsman has all the information about the visit, especially about those places where inhumane conditions have been recorded. For example, fungus and mold, especially in rooms where children sleep, improper conditions in bathrooms, low temperature in rooms.

Unfortunately, at the moment, no body has up-to-date information on the total number of existing compact living spaces, living conditions in such spaces, their actual address, the number of people living in them, as well as the needs of internally displaced persons. In response to the recommendations of the Commissioner, the authorities are engaged in the transfer of responsibility, focusing on information countermeasures, trying to refute the facts discovered during the visits. **But the real problems are not going away.**

Therefore, simple, quick real actions are needed, which will be aimed at positive changes. First of all, it is necessary to analyze the situation, to determine the exact number of citizens who are in places of compact living with inadequate conditions. In addition, Ukraine has international partners who are ready to help.

Now there is an urgent need for regulatory regulation of the functioning of places of compact living: it is necessary to determine the period of their functioning, because some of them have existed since 2014 with an unchanged composition of residents. It is precisely because of these challenges that the **Minimum Standards for the management and administration of places of compact living** should be approved.

The Commissioner is grateful to the partners from the Cluster on Management and Coordination of Places of Compact Living for IDPs in Ukraine (PCLCM Cluster) for their partnership in preparing the Minimum Standards for Management and Administration of places of compact living.



Olga Altunina

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Fighting in the international arena

A charity event, the theme of which was the protection of children's rights during the war in Ukraine, was held at the Embassy of Ukraine in Austria.

Commissioner Dmytro Lubinets told the audience about the activities of the Office of the Ombudsman in Ukraine for the protection of children. He emphasized that **482 children** have already died due to the Russian invasion, **981 children** have been injured, and **19,392 children** have been deported by Russia.

From the first days of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine, reports about help in collecting funds from children for the Armed Forces began to appear in the media. They can be called the youngest volunteers.

The Ombudsman said that Ukrainian children have also their own front. They weave bracelets, make toys, draw pictures, prepare goodies and sell them. They play musical instruments, sing and dance in the streets, because they have a big goal – to collect as much money as possible and help Ukrainian defenders. And the main goal of adults is to help children!



In addition, Dmytro Lubinets **held a meeting with OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmidt.**

They discussed two extremely important topics – the return of Ukrainian children deported by Russia, as well as the return of civilian hostages.

The Ombudsman of Ukraine emphasized that these issues should constantly be in the focus of the international community, as they are in the focus of the work of the Ombudsman's Office, for the return home of everyone forcibly deported by the aggressor country and protection of the rights of these persons.

Together with the Secretary General, they also reviewed OSCE projects to support Ukraine.



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Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Crimean Tatar Genocide

On May 18, on the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Genocide of the Crimean Tatar People, a large event was held "Remembering history – returning the territory", dedicated to the history, return and future of the Crimean peninsula.

During the discussion panels, together with other participants, aspects of the crime of deportation, which was committed by the Soviet authorities in 1944, and its consequences - the total change of the population of the Crimean peninsula – were covered. Separately, the subject of the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and systematic violations of human rights and freedoms was discussed.

In his speech, Commissioner for Human Rights Dmytro Lubinets emphasized that today we can draw a clear parallel between what the Soviet Union did and what the Russian Federation is doing now: deportation, closing schools, suppression of language, destruction of religious buildings.

The following speakers also addressed the audience at the event:

- Tamila Tasheva – Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea;
- Refat Chubarov – Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people;
- Iryna Vereshchuk – Deputy Prime Minister – Minister for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine;
- Rustem Umyerov – Head of the State Property Fund of Ukraine;
- Emine Japarova – First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine;
- Eskender Bariev – member of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, chairman of the board of the Crimean Tatar Resource Center;
- representatives of the public sector, historians, analysts, experts.

At the event, all those interested had the opportunity to write letters to political prisoners and view two thematic photo projects – "Crimes speaking through eyewitnesses" and "Stories from occupied Crimea".



Another illegal search in the homes of Crimean Tatars!

On April 27, armed and masked Russian security forces broke into the residence of Crimean Tatar activists **Bari Bariyev** and **Edem Ismailov** in Sudak. The occupiers did not state the reasons for the searches. Computers and phones were seized, search protocols were not left to relatives. Both men were taken to the "FSB headquarters" in Simferopol.



In addition, the Russian occupation authorities of Crimea violate the rights of two Crimean political prisoners to life, health and medical care!

Citizen journalist **Iryna Danylovych**, who is illegally detained in the Simferopol pre-trial detention center, still has not received medical help, despite the promise to do so after she ends her dry hunger strike.

The life of another Crimean political prisoner, also a citizen journalist – **Amet Suleymanov** – is in danger. He has a serious heart disease and needs an urgent heart operation.

Instead, he is kept in a small basement room – the quarantine department of the pre-trial detention center with 11 other people. Staying in such conditions for two weeks led to cough and suffocation.



Kateryna, the wife of political prisoner **Vladyslav Yesypenko**, also told how in the Kerch Correctional Colony No. 2 the staff monitors her husband's behavior and words. In the best case, Vladyslav communicates with his family once a month through the prison communication, which is also tapped by the colony administration.



A political prisoner is forced not to call the war a war during conversations and to avoid this topic altogether, because this could lead to stricter conditions of detention or the initiation of an administrative case against him.

The Russian Southern District Military Court of Rostov-on-Don announced an illegal sentence to the Crimean Tatars – **Oleksandr Sizikov** (17 years old), **Alim Sufyanov and Seyran Hayredinov** (12 years old each). All three were found guilty of involvement in the Hizb ut-Tahrir religious organization, which is considered a terrorist organization in Russia, but operates without restrictions at the level of national legislation in many countries of the world, in particular, in Ukraine.



On December 4, 2022, Russian security forces also detained **Lenia Umerova** after crossing the Georgian-Russian border, when she tried to return to the temporarily occupied Crimea to care for her father, who was suffering from cancer. Now the girl is in the temporary detention center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia in Vladikavkaz.



The Commissioner calls on the international community to strongly condemn such illegal actions, to increase pressure on Russia to stop its gross violations of human rights in the temporarily occupied Crimea and to immediately and unconditionally release all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens.



Mykhailo Spasov

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Protection of information rights

The 31st spring conference of European bodies on data protection was held in Budapest. The Office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine joined it. Yuliia Derkachenko, representative of the Information Rights Commissioner, took part in the event.

This year, the conference was organized by the Hungarian Data Protection Authority. The main issues of the conference: assessment of the social impact of the use of technologies on different platforms, issues of interaction between data protection and competition law. During the conference, the best practices of countries of cooperation with law enforcement agencies between countries of the European Economic Area and countries that are not part of this area were also highlighted.



The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights conducted proceedings on the appeal of citizen S. regarding the implementation of information campaigns at her place of residence on issues of preventing and combating domestic violence. In her appeal, she said that she considers the information and educational activities of local authorities and the National Police to be insufficient to raise citizens' awareness of domestic violence. The employees of the Secretariat sent requests to the National Police, the regional military administration, the central executive body and the local self-government body.

Thanks to the response of the Commissioner, an unscheduled informational street action on the prevention and counteraction of domestic violence and/or gender-based violence was organized at the applicant's place of residence. The participants of the action were informed about the forms, manifestations and consequences of domestic violence, methods of preventing domestic violence, services that the victim can receive, the work of a day center for social and psychological assistance to persons who have suffered from domestic violence and/or gender-based violence (with a crisis room), mobile teams of social and psychological assistance to persons who have suffered from domestic violence and/or gender-based violence, as well as about the functioning of the "helpline".

According to the results of the Commissioner's response, the right of citizen S. was renewed.



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Rights of people in places of detention

In order to eliminate the violations of human rights discovered by the group of the national preventive mechanism during the visit to the state institution "Lviv Penitentiary Institution (No. 19), the Commissioner sent a corresponding submission.

In order to study the circumstances of the committed violations, eliminate the causes and conditions that contribute to them, the institution organized an official investigation, as a result of which the officials of the institution, due to whose fault the violations occurred, were brought to justice.

Taking into account the proposals indicated in the report, a plan of measures to eliminate the shortcomings identified as a result of the visit to the institution was developed. Work is being carried out in the institution to ensure compliance with the established norm of space per person. Cell No. 88 was repaired and overhaul of cell No. 160, the bathhouse, and the promenade began.



Measures are being taken to create a separate library fund at the infectious disease ward for people with tuberculosis. In the cells, work is being carried out on the separation of paired sleeping places in order to respect the right to privacy, as well as separation of sanitary units.



The administration of the institution partially dismantled the window bars of cell No. 73. The cell will be equipped with working (day) and alternate (night) lighting. In addition, wooden window blocks are replaced with metal-plastic ones. By the end of 2023, the management of the institution planned to replace the power grids of regime posts. Disinfection was carried out in April 2023.

Compliance with the rights of convicts and prisoners in penal institutions and pretrial detention centers of the State Criminal Enforcement Service of Ukraine is constantly under the control of the Commissioner.



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Threat to the environment

The meeting with the **Director General of the IAEA Mr. Rafael Grossi** was also important. A number of security issues related to the operation of nuclear power plants during the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, which is conducting targeted attacks on energy facilities in Ukraine, were discussed.



In particular, during the bilateral meeting, the topic of the safety of Zaporizhzhia NPP employees, deportation of employees and their families, as well as the global issue of world nuclear safety was raised.

Dmytro Lubinets thanked Mr. Grossi that, despite the deliberate threats of the Russian military and shelling, he not only created a mission at the ZNNP, but headed it, repeatedly visiting the nuclear power plant in the temporarily occupied territory. This should be an example for all those who are "concerned" - not just to support Ukraine in words, but to solve such complex problems with real actions.

In addition, the IAEA expanded its presence in Ukraine to help prevent a nuclear accident during a Russian military invasion.

He also took the initiative to have the IAEA, together with the Office of the Ombudsman, make a special report on the observance of the rights of ZNPP employees and their families, deportation and security in general. Rafael Grossi thanked for the idea and said that he would work on the matter. They agreed to discuss it further during Mr. Grossi's next trip to Ukraine.

The island of Dzharylgach was connected with the mainland of Ukraine

Russian occupying troops connected the island of Dzharylgach with the mainland of the Kherson region near the village of Lazurne, covering the crossing to the island with sand. The entire territory of this island and part of the adjacent water area is part of the Dzharylgach National Nature Park. Unique animals live in it. According to ecologists, such actions of the Russian Federation will lead to desalination and certain species of plants and animals, accustomed to a certain level of salinity, will disappear.

The occupying forces of Russia are connecting the island of Dzharylgach with the mainland of the Kherson region in order to more intensively use the nature conservation area of the national park for military purposes. **It is a crime against the environment!**



In order to draw attention to this crime in European cities, UAnimals activists went on individual pickets. Actions within the #StopEcocideUkraine campaign took place in Great Britain, Germany, Spain, Norway and the Czech Republic.



In April 2023, following appeals to the Commissioner, the social and economic rights of **4 citizens were renewed**, **6 monitorings were carried out** in relation to observance of the rights of citizens to the timely appointment and receipt of benefits and housing subsidies, persons with disabilities to employment, incapacitated persons and persons whose civil capacity is limited in the conditions of martial law.



Olena Kolobrodova

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In Ukraine, it is planned to make changes to the normative legal acts to implement the right of those sentenced to life imprisonment to replace the punishment with a lighter term of imprisonment from 15 to 20 years

In April 2023, the Commissioner sent a submission to the Minister of Justice of Ukraine regarding the need to urgently bring the departmental regulations of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine into compliance with the requirements of the Criminal Executive Code of Ukraine in order to settle the issue of the participation of the authorized body on probation issues in drawing up a conclusion on the degree of correction of a person sentenced to life imprisonment imprisonment.

The Ministry of Justice has developed a draft order "On approval of ammendments to some normative legal acts of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine". The draft order proposes to ammend the Instruction on the work of departments for monitoring the execution of court decisions of institutions for the execution of punishments and pretrial detention centers. The ammendments propose to provide for the participation of a representative of the authorized body on probation matters in the commission for consideration of the submission of materials to the court regarding the possibility of presenting those sentenced to life imprisonment before replacing life imprisonment with imprisonment for a certain period. Currently, the issuance of this order and its state registration are expected.

After 16.5 years in prison, Volodymyr Panasenko is free

The man pleaded not guilty. Human rights defenders believe that Volodymyr Panasenko is innocent and spent almost 17 years in prison illegally and unjustified. Thus, he was finally released!

Immediately from the moment of appointment to the position, Dmytro Lubinets took personal control over the case of the Lviv native. At the request of his daughter (lawyer) Tetiana Panasenko, he took all possible measures to release V. Panasenko due to his illness and supported the petition for his release from punishment.

He also forwarded the Commissioner's submission to the Prosecutor General and held several working meetings with him regarding the Panasenko issue. He sincerely thanks the Prosecutor General for his position.

The main result of the actions - a person is free!



Olena Frolova

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Press conference of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Dmytro Lubinets

On May 4, Dmytro Lubinets held a big press-conference, during which the film **"Absolute Evil"** by military journalist **Andrii Tsaplienko** was presented.



The diplomatic corps, international and Ukrainian journalists had the opportunity to listen to answers to the most pressing questions of today, as well as to view the footage of the atrocities committed by the Russian Federation on the territory of our country.



The film contains footage of recorded war crimes – killings of civilians, deportation of children, rocket attacks on hospitals, maternity homes, private homes where peaceful Ukrainians lived.



The videos in Ukrainian, English and Russian can be viewed by scanning these QR codes



Dmytro LUBINETS

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(from July 1, 2022)

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