



Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine

**THE UN IS NOT ONLY A PLACE
FOR DISCUSSIONS,
BUT ALSO FOR MAKING
CONCRETE DECISIONS!**

— Ombudsman of Ukraine —



78th session of the UN General Assembly



On September 19, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets, together with the Ukrainian delegation led by the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, arrived in New York for the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, where he took part in the high-level event «Battle for future: Ukrainian children at war» of the UN General Assembly.

He said that under the guise of evacuation, Russians have been deporting or forcibly relocating Ukrainian children since 2014.

In Russia, camps were created for the re-education of deported children with the aim of destroying their identity. Their national documents are taken away and Russian passports are issued. It is forbidden for them to learn Ukrainian, communicate with relatives.

Neither the Ukrainian authorities, nor representatives of international organizations have access to places where Ukrainian children are resettled.

For boys, it is an obligation to join paramilitary organizations, and then to serve in the Russian army and fight against Ukraine. And death for «great Russia» is considered the greatest heroism!

A rhetorical question arises: isn't this a crime of genocide?

Ukraine and the world face difficult tasks:

1. Recognizing Russia's actions as a crime of genocide.
2. Access to lists of all deported and displaced children for Ukraine and international organizations.
3. Opening humanitarian corridors for the evacuation of the civilian population.
4. Using OSINT measures to identify the movement and whereabouts of children who have been deported or displaced.
5. Verification and updating of data on deported or displaced children.



In Ukraine, 19,546 Ukrainian children are considered officially deported and/or forcibly displaced. It was possible to return 386 children.



“Ukraine is doing everything to ensure that no one in the world dares to attack any country after the Russian aggression. Weaponization must be restrained. War crimes must be punished. Deported people must return home. And the occupier must return to his own territory.»

President of Ukraine **Volodymyr Zelenskyy**

“When children return from captivity or come to their senses after being injured or losing loved ones, they often ask: «Why did this happen to me? How can this be?» No one knows what to answer. Because this is a question of trust in the world, which they have lost. Therefore, it is very important to return this trust to them after everything our children have experienced and are going through, so that they believe in us, adults, and in this world again.»

First Lady of Ukraine **Olena Zelenska**



“Children become not only witnesses of crimes, but also their victims. However, I am proud of every Ukrainian family, every Ukrainian child who continues to show resilience in the face of war. You and I are obliged to show no less courage in our decisions than Ukrainian children. Then democracy will have a future.»

Ombudsman of Ukraine **Dmytro Lubinets**

“We all know and we all share the belief that there can be no peace without justice for all victims of this war. Children are the most vulnerable among them, and restoring justice for them is our first priority.»

Prosecutor General of Ukraine **Andriy Kostin**



“It will stay with me forever, when in that silence, in that terrible silence, I saw the empty cots, the clothes piled up, the pictures of children enjoying Christmas, the pictures that decorated the walls.»

International Criminal Court Prosecutor
Karim Khan
on visiting an orphanage near the front line





Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine



DIFENSORE
CIVICO della
REGIONE LAZIO

MARIUPOL (Un)lost hope

The Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets in Rome during the event with this name using the example of one city showed European partners the entire tragedy of the Ukrainian people! The event was organized by the Office of the Ombudsman together with the Ombudsman of Italy and the Lazio Region, **Marino Fardelli**.

The Ukrainian Ombudsman emphasized that cold, hunger, fear, destroyed houses and near death – all this became a reality for the residents of Mariupol after the beginning of the blockade. This is a life divided into «before» and «after»...

Those present were told about the crimes committed by the Russians in the city: murders and maiming of the civilian population, destruction of cultural objects, obstruction of evacuation and attempts to deliver humanitarian goods to the people of Mariupol, deportations and filtering.

According to local authorities, the number of dead civilians in Mariupol is about **25,000 people**, including children! The infrastructure of the city was destroyed **by 90%**. And the Russian army is deporting the civilian population from the occupied territories to Russia, including children.



A resident of Mariupol, **Kateryna Sukhomlynova**, reported to the media that after March 5, the streets of the city were simply littered with corpses. It was impossible to bury the dead, or even drag them somewhere due to the heavy shelling. Bodies lay in the open for months.

At the same time: in order to have a nation, Ukraine works tirelessly! This year in May, it was possible to reunite a family from Mariupol – mother, father and their daughter **Anna-Maria**.



Ukraine is doing everything possible to reunite families and return deported children! But the country needs help!

That is why I appealed to international partners:

- to recognize Russia's actions in Mariupol as genocide of the Ukrainian people;
- to recognize the actions of the Russian army as war crimes, and President Putin as a war criminal;
- to continue to support Ukraine, in particular on the way to joining NATO and the EU;
- to participate in documenting the facts of Russia's crimes, as well as the creation of a special international tribunal.

The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights is sincerely grateful to the international partners – the President of the Lazio Regional Council **Antonello Aurigemma**, the representative of the Council of Europe **Lilit Daneghian-Bossler**, the President of the International Ombudsman Institute, the Australian Ombudsman **Chris Field**, the Ambassador of Ukraine to Italy **Yaroslav Melnyk** and **all those present** who joined the of this event!



Only by working together can we defeat an enemy that is a threat to the entire civilized world! And Mariupol will definitely become a prosperous European city again!



Six Ukrainian children, whom we managed to return from Russia to Ukraine, met with European officials in The Hague. The Stolen Voices meeting took place within the BringKidsBackUA program.

The Ukrainian delegation, together with the children returned by the country from the territory of the Russian Federation, met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, **Hanke Bruins Slot**. The purpose of the meeting is to draw attention to the crimes committed by Russia against Ukrainian children and to help create an international coalition for the repatriation of the remaining abductees. These brave Ukrainian children showed an impressive example of resilience and determination, calling on the international community to act and end the suffering of those who were unjustly torn from their homes.

A number of meetings were also held with the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives of the States General (Parliament) of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, **Rudmer Heerema**, with members of the Parliament and the Committee.

Together with the Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets, the children were accompanied by Councilor-enforcer for children's rights and child rehabilitation **Daria Herasymchuk**; Ambassador of Ukraine to the Netherlands **Oleksandr Karasevych**; Orphans Feeding Foundation co-founder **Mariam Lambert**.

In The Hague, where the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Putin and the Russian President's Commissioner for Children's Rights, during a press conference for international and Ukrainian journalists, Dmytro Lubinets also told the stories of children whom Ukraine managed to bring home. **The meeting in The Hague serves as a powerful reminder that children's rights must be protected despite all the challenges facing Ukraine.**



Conference «The Role of the Ombudsman in the World: Between Reality and Possibility»

Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, told his colleagues about his extraordinary experience of working in a country that resists armed aggression, which, unfortunately, Ukraine is now. Namely, about the organization of work during martial law, the opening of 5 consultation centers, a pilot regional center in Poltava, and the Center for the Protection of Children's Rights.



He reported how educational processes are currently organized, how medical assistance is provided to civilians, what is the situation with the energy infrastructure, etc.

He concluded that the ombudsman institution should not be a bureaucratic institution, but a place where people feel respected and protected, where people are heard and helped in solving their problems. After all, the Ombudsman is often the last hope for help, and we have no right to waste this hope!

Important meeting in Italy

While working in Rome, the Ombudsman of Ukraine met with the Head of the Juvenile Justice Department of the Italian Ministry of Justice, **Antonio Sangermano**, and the Deputy Head of the Civil Liberties and Immigration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, **Prefect Rosanna Rabuano**.

They discussed the main problems related to the topic of guardianship by Italian citizens; obstruction of communication between parents and children, legal representatives from Ukraine; separating children and placing them in different families and locations.

Together with the Italian side, they agreed on the participation of the representative of the Ombudsman of Ukraine in the meeting with the aim of explaining to the court the norms of Ukrainian legislation (the laws of Ukraine make it impossible to adopt Ukrainian children outside of Ukraine during the war).

The Head of the Department also proposed to create a joint working group under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, the purpose of which will be to identify, prevent and restore the rights of Ukrainian children who are in the territory of the Italian Republic.

In addition, there were meetings with the Italian Senator, Permanent Representative to the UN **Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata**, in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Italy - with the deputy head of the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration **Rosanna Rabuano**, as well as about 20 meetings with ombudsmen and high-ranking officials of various countries.



A year after returning from enemy captivity

In September last year, an event took place that attracted the attention of the whole world. **215 Ukrainians returned to their native land from Russian captivity.**

Defender **Maryana Mamonova**, who was pregnant and gave birth to a daughter a few days after returning home, recalled a year after her release.



«A year ago at this time, I experienced the happiest moment of my life when I crossed the Ukrainian border and became a free person who returned home after a terrible captivity in Russia. I cannot describe in words how happy I was to be back in Ukraine, in the country where I was born and where my daughter will be born. The whole country was waiting for us! I am nine months pregnant, 15 hours on the plane (this is approximately, I do not know the exact numbers, since no one said the time).

I thank God that he heard my prayers and gave me the opportunity to see my family and my loved ones. I thank all the people who fought for my release and did not let me be forgotten. I thank our President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the Office of the President, who dealt with my case and demanded from the Russian side to return me to the Motherland. I thank Dmytro Lubinets and Oleksandr Kononenko, who did not stop putting pressure on the Russian side and showed the world that the aggressor country is holding a pregnant woman. I thank all the girls who came to the rally in my support.

But most of all, I thank my husband, who did not leave me alone and supported me when I could talk. I thank him for loving us and waiting home. He did not break down and did not lose hope...

I thank all the caring people, thanks to whom I am at home, and my child was born in Ukraine.»



So far, 2,598 Ukrainians have returned home

Russia must release all Ukrainian civilian hostages

Oleksandr Kononenko, a representative of the system of security and defense sector bodies, on the sidelines of the international conference «The role of the ombudsman in the world: between reality and possibility», which is taking place in Rome, emphasized the importance of the return of civilian hostages.

Among those detained by Russia are religious figures, journalists, opinion leaders and simply patriotic citizens of Ukraine. None of these categories can be considered combatants. But they continue to be detained, kept in inhumane conditions, deprived of communication with their relatives and demonstrably sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Civilians are detained for «opposing a special military operation» or «assisting the Armed Forces», which completely destroys the concept of the protection of the rights of civilians and violates the fundamental norms of human rights protection. At the same time, they change the status of persons, which the Russian side considers as a reason for non-compliance with the norms of international humanitarian law.

The numbers are impressive. About 25,000 people are considered missing under special circumstances and illegally deprived of their freedom as a result of this aggression. About **2,000 of them are civilian citizens of Ukraine over the age of 70**. Of the 2,598 people who were returned from captivity, **only 144 were civilians**.

Communication with families of prisoners of war and missing persons

In the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, weekly meetings are held with the families of soldiers who were captured by Russia. Relatives ask frank questions that concern them the most, specify the details of negotiations with the enemy side regarding the repatriation of Ukrainian soldiers, and are interested in the fate of those who are currently being held by the Russians near the combat zone.

Representatives of the state bodies of Ukraine tell relatives of the defenders about the electronic personal account of the relative of the prisoner, about why the missing person does not mean that he died.

At the meetings, it was stated that the enemy continues to fight with cynical methods to destroy our nation and does not even provide the opportunity to evacuate the wounded soldiers. Despite everything, the relatives continue to hope and believe that the son, husband, father and brother is alive and will soon return from captivity.



Protecting children's rights is protecting the future of Ukraine

In September, **14 children** were returned from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and Russia. All of them are now in Ukraine with their parents or official representatives.

When returning children, the Office of the Ombudsman works in two directions:

- **the first** is the direct return of the child to Ukraine, taking into account all the risks and the development of specific steps;
- **the second** is psychological, legal, humanitarian assistance to the returned child and its family.



Thanks to everyone who helps return our children to the Motherland.

During the full-scale invasion of Russia on the territory of Ukraine, **the Orphans Feeding Foundation** conducts active volunteer activities, supplying food for civilians on the front line, clothes, generators, medicine for orphans. And now our Office is working with Mariam Lambert on the return of children and drawing the attention of the world community to the subject of the deportation of Ukrainian children.

NGO Heroiam Slava, a charitable organization founded in Estonia, which directs its activities to help Ukraine. And Jaanika Merilo has been helping Ukrainian refugees, children and youth through various social initiatives since 2015.

The «PosmishkaUA» Foundation works in various regions of Ukraine and implements comprehensive programs to support adults and children, protect the population, and provide humanitarian aid to people affected by the war.



Oleksandr Kononenko

Representative of the Commissioner in the System of Bodies in Security and Defense Sector

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Ukrainian-German breakfast

Iryna Suslova, the representative of the Commissioner for Children's Rights, joined the Ukrainian-German parliamentary breakfast held in the **Bundestag in Berlin** online.

She told the participants of the event about examples of the most terrible war crimes committed by representatives of the aggressor country against Ukrainian children, unacceptable for the civilized world, but common for the Russian Federation. She emphasized that murders, mutilations, rapes and other forms of sexual violence, denial of access to humanitarian aid, recruitment of young Ukrainian citizens to the enemy's armed forces, and kidnappings have been a planned and consistent policy of the Russian Federation since 2014.



She also added that the devastating consequences of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine are continuously documented and investigated by national law enforcement agencies and recorded by state institutions.

Finally, the representative of the Ombudsman of Ukraine expressed her gratitude to the German people and government for all the help.

The story of a boy who received severe burns after a massive Russian missile attack

On July 14, 2022, Russia launched a massive missile attack on the center of Vinnytsia, as a result of which 25 people were killed and more than 50 were injured. Among them is 7-year-old **Roma Oleksiv**. The boy received 45% burns on the surface of his body.

The doctors did not give any guarantees that the child would survive. Roma's mother died during the attack. In order for the child to have a chance at life, doctors had to stabilize his condition and prepare him for transportation abroad, because there is no burn center in Ukraine that would be able to treat the boy.



After several weeks of efforts by doctors and the child's struggle, he was stabilized and transported to Dresden. After a series of operations, the boy opened his eyes and took the first steps after the tragedy.

Roma and his father recently returned to Ukraine, where he will undergo rehabilitation.



How the family managed to leave the temporarily occupied territory: the story



A mother with two daughters, aged 14 and 16, told in our Child Rights Protection Center how she managed to leave the temporarily occupied territory of Kherson region. From the very first days of the occupation, she realized that she would never be able to live under Russian control and would not cooperate with the so-called «liberators» like some of her former friends and neighbors.

Despite Russian coercion and intimidation, the girls spoke only Ukrainian, did not rise to their feet at school when other children sang the Russian anthem, and showed contempt for everything hostile that the occupiers so diligently wrap in colorful wrappers of «aid to Russia's new territories.»

Two attempts to leave, shelling, and filtration are behind them. After returning to the territory of Ukraine, they turned to the Child Rights Protection Center for help, where they are currently being assisted in obtaining lost documents and getting the status of internally displaced persons.

In order to protect the rights of children under martial law and to record the facts of violations of girls' rights in the temporarily occupied territory of Kherson region, the Child Rights Protection Center organized a interview of them by law enforcement agencies with the involvement of a psychologist.



Iryna Suslova

Representative of the Commissioner
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The united family was helped to find housing

Two brothers, **Kyrylo and Serhii**, whom our Office helped to return from TOT, were provided with temporary housing and social benefits.

After the children return, we work to make sure they have the things they need and are safe. Now, together with their mother, the little ones will live in a comfortable modular town in the Kyiv region.

In addition, with our assistance, the family was provided with prompt processing of certificates on registration of IDPs and assignment of housing allowance. We are currently working on placing children in kindergarten and school.



We are doing our best to help those affected by the war! Especially when it comes to the most valuable thing – children!

Regulation of the functioning of places of compact settlement for IDPs

On the initiative of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Government adopted a resolution regulating the creation and functioning of compact settlements for internally displaced persons and defined the minimum standards for living in them.

The issue of places of compact settlement **has not been settled for more than 9 years**. During these years, the Office of the Ombudsman recorded violations in compact settlements: improper conditions in bathrooms, unsanitary conditions in kitchens, mold, even in those rooms where children sleep.

At the beginning of May, the Office of the Ombudsman held a conference entitled «The right to decent conditions in places of compact settlement», where the issue of indecent living conditions for IDPs was raised. And in order to ensure the right of people affected by the war to decent living conditions, the Office of the Ombudsman initiated the development of an order that provides for minimum standards for living in places of temporary residence.

On September 1, 2023, the Government of Ukraine adopted the relevant resolution.

In addition, the resolution regulates the issue of distribution of responsibility between various bodies, in particular regional military administrations, local self-government bodies and other relevant structures. Now each compact settlement will be approved by the Regional Military Administration. **This is a guarantee for international partners and donors who want to provide people with financial or humanitarian assistance.**



Large-scale monitoring of the living conditions of IDPs in Zakarpattia Region

The employees of the Department for monitoring the observance of the rights of citizens who suffered as a result of armed aggression against Ukraine began monitoring visits to the places of temporary residence of internally displaced persons in Zakarpattia.

It was possible to visit more than **34 places of temporary residence of IDPs.**

It is worth noting that the majority of places of compact settlements are located in old buildings and require repair, arrangement of shower rooms and partial replacement of sanitary ware, providing residents with furniture.



Olga Altunina

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for the Rights of Citizens, who are Victims
of Armed Aggression Against Ukraine

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Work in the international arena

In Krakow (Poland), the Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets spoke at the Forum «Supporting the implementation of European anti-discrimination standards and the rights of national minorities.»

He said that Russia is waging a genocidal war, destroying not only ethnic Ukrainians, but also representatives of other nationalities living on the territory of Ukraine. He emphasized that the observance of the rights of national communities is always in the focus of his attention as the Ombudsman of Ukraine.

Ukraine acquired the status of a candidate for joining the EU and continued to actively implement pro-European reforms in the face of Russia's armed aggression. Currently, Ukraine is strengthening legislative regulation and state policy on the protection of national minorities.

Recently, the parliament supported the law of Ukraine «On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine «On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine» regarding some issues of the realization of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to national minorities (communities) of Ukraine». The provisions of the adopted legislative act take into account most of the remarks of the Venice Commission. The Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the development of the Law «On National Minorities (Communities)» as part of the working group.

Ukraine is a multinational family that has chosen the path to integration into the European community!



Visit of the EQUINET delegation to Kyiv

A delegation of EQUINET, a network of equality bodies fighting discrimination at the national level in 36 countries, came to Kyiv for a short but important visit.

Our institution plans for Ukraine to also become a full member of this professional organization. So the members of the delegation headed by the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia **Tena Šimonovych** got to know the employees of the Office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine.

Meetings were also held with the First Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, **Oleksandr Kornienko**, and the Deputy Head of the Office of the President, **Igor Zhovkva**. They discussed the Peace Formula of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the issue of changes in legislation that will be aimed at additional protection and countering discrimination, the issue of the rights of national minorities, the fight against hate speech, etc.



During the visit to the premises of the specialized Department for monitoring the observance of equal rights and freedoms, the rights of national minorities, political and religious views, the challenges, methods of struggle and results of work in the field of ensuring equal rights in Ukraine were discussed in more detail.

We hope that we managed to prove that Ukraine is worthy of being a member of the EQUINET network. After all, despite the armed Russian aggression and other troubles, human rights for Ukrainians are above all!



Important meetings for the protection of human rights in wartime

In September, Dmytro Lubinets also met a delegation of members and employees of the German parliament, a member of the German delegation to the OSCE and the special representative for Eastern European affairs, **Dr. Daniela De Ridder** and the public organization «Center for Transatlantic Dialogue».

They discussed a number of important topics: the situation with civilian hostages, Russia's violation of the rights of prisoners of war, the return of deported children to Ukraine. In addition, Mr. Lubinets spoke about the activities of our Office. He also noted that today about 8 million people are forced to seek refuge abroad, and Germany is one of the largest countries in terms of the number of refugees from Ukraine.

He held a meeting with the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship – the Coordinator of OSCE projects in Ukraine – Ambassador **Marcel Pesko**.

And called for help in creating a monitoring mechanism in the temporarily occupied territories in order to understand what is happening there with the civilian population. He emphasized that we need to work to find an effective process of verification and search for our people and children who are deported or held captive by the aggressor country.



On the occasion of the **International Human Rights Day**, which is celebrated on 10 December at the decision of the UN General Assembly, Ukraine will host an important international conference. Representatives of Ukrainian government agencies and international guests will discuss a common vision of human rights protection.

This is an important event for Ukraine, as it is an opportunity to show the world how the rights of Ukrainian citizens are protected and restored in times of war. And for international partners, it is an opportunity to provide support and assistance in the human rights sphere.



Olga Strepochenko

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The right of the former civil hostage was renewed

A paramedic contacted us regarding the bank's violation of her right to defer payments on a loan for the period of her stay in captivity. Back in 2021, the applicant opened a bank account and received a credit limit of 14,000 hryvnias. She did not delay making mandatory payments. With the beginning of hostilities, the applicant was in the hostilities zone and performed the duties of a paramedic. Being surrounded by enemy troops, and later in captivity, she was unable to make loan payments.

After being released from captivity, the woman made a payment, but the bank continued to write off funds for repayment of interest on the credit limit.

It is worth noting that the applicant has established the status of a person in respect of whom the fact of deprivation of personal freedom has been established as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Therefore, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for human rights sent a request to the National Bank of Ukraine, which provided recommendations to the applicant's bank to consider the issue of changing the terms of debt service in her case.

Thus, the bank made a decision to forgive the applicant's remaining debt.

Based on the results of the response measures taken, the applicant's right as a consumer of banking services **was renewed**.

Human rights in global crises. Migrants and crossing borders. Wars, climate, pandemics and inequalities



The representative of social and economic rights, **Olena Kolobrodova**, took part in a panel discussion in Rome, which took place on the sidelines of the international conference «The Role of the Ombudsman in the World: Between Reality and Opportunity».

As Olena Kolobrodova noted, for almost 10 years, Ukraine has been living in conditions of challenges and threats, which have deepened after February 24, 2022. They appeared before every citizen of Ukraine, all bodies of state power and our institution. However, the work of the Ombudsman's Office was not stopped in any of the directions, in particular, regarding the monitoring of the observance of social and economic rights.

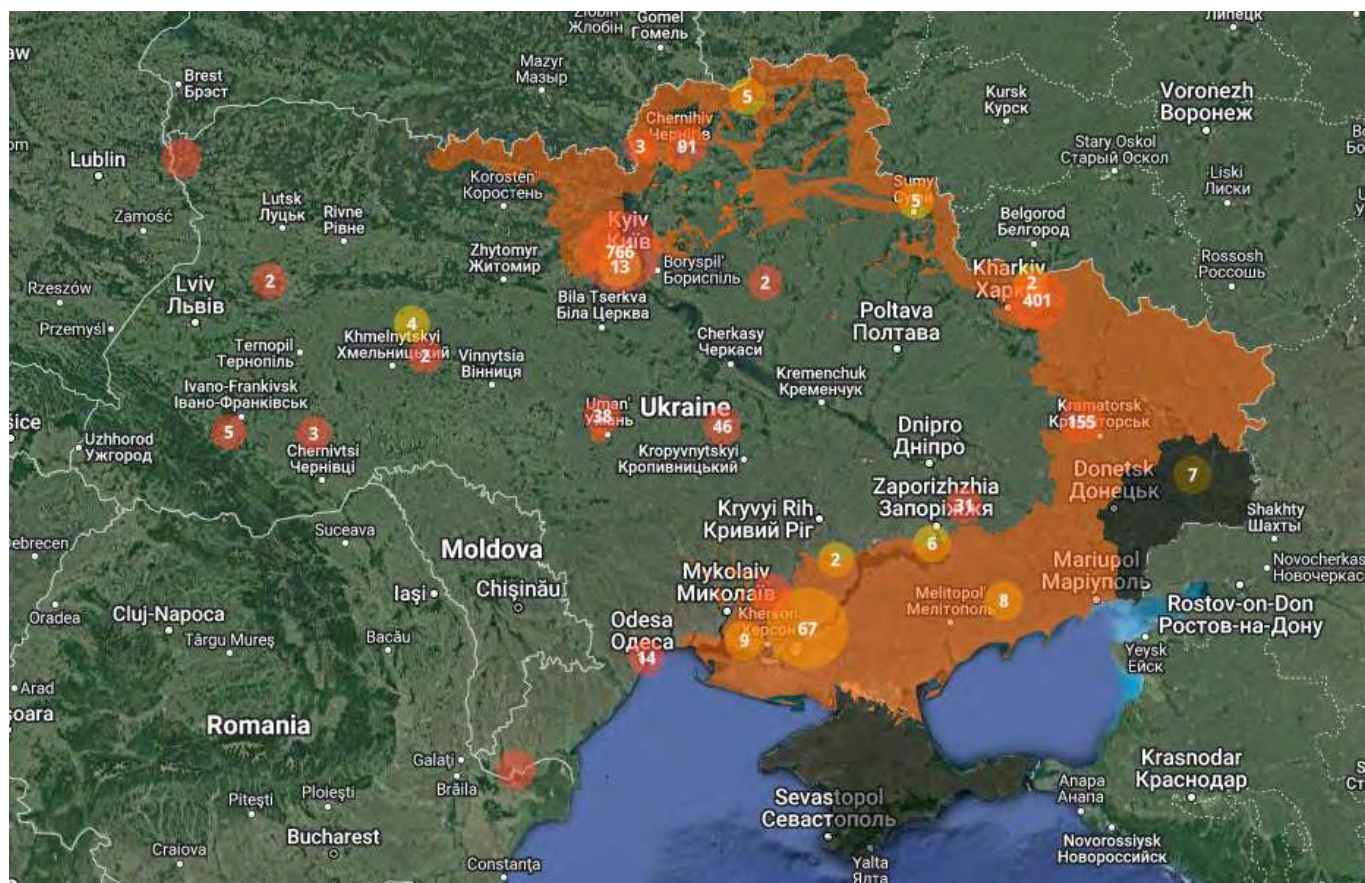
Olena Kolobrodova drew the attention of the discussion participants to the fact that as a result of Russia's destruction of Ukraine's infrastructure, the labor rights of citizens, the right to access to medical care in the affected regions, to education, and to housing are being violated. The Russian Federation does not stop trying to erase Ukrainian national identity.

The consequences of Russian aggression for Ukraine's environment are also catastrophic. The total damage to the environment, as of the beginning of September, amounts to 57 billion dollars.

The undermining of the Kakhovska HPP dam by Russian troops, the occupation of the ZNPP, which created a radiation threat, the mining of about 30% of the territory of Ukraine, which is dangerous for people's lives. **All these facts testify to ecocide against the Ukrainian people.** However, international legislation does not contain a clear legal definition of the concept of ecocide as a separate crime.



Photo: Kostyantyn and Vlada Liberovy



Olena Kolobrodova

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Violence is one of the enemy's intimidation tools against the civilian population



The representative of the Commissioner for equal rights and freedoms, the rights of national minorities, political and religious views Mykhailo Spasov spoke in Rome at the international conference «The role of the ombudsman in the world: between reality and opportunity». During the session «Human rights in global crises. Migrants and Border Crossing/ Wars, Climate, Pandemics and Inequalities» he emphasized that violence is one of the enemy's tools of intimidation of the civilian population.

Violence is committed against peaceful citizens for humiliation and to weaken their resistance. Victims are not only women, but also men, children, and the elderly. Mykhailo Spasov reported that since the beginning of the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation, the Prosecutor General's Office recorded **235 cases of sexual violence related to the conflict, of which: 150 – women and 85 – men, including 13 children, were subjected to sexual violence**, in particular such types of sexual violence as : rape, mutilation or violence against genitals, forced exposure, threats and attempted rape, forced to watch sexual abuse of loved ones, etc. However, the real figures are much higher, as those persons who died or were injured in the temporarily occupied territories remain unverified.

An effective system of providing socio-psychological, legal and medical services should be created to help the victims. In Ukraine, with the support of international public organizations, there is a network of Rescue Centers. Assistance at such Centers is provided safely, confidentially, free of charge and only with the voluntary and informed consent of those who come to such Centers.

The representative of the Commissioner thanked international partners for supporting Ukraine in such a difficult time and called on the participants of the international conference to unite and increase international pressure on the Russian Federation in order to restore justice and bring the guilty to justice.

Measures to eliminate any forms of discrimination against children with disabilities



In May 2023, a message was discovered on the Facebook network, in which **a case of violation of the rights of a child with disabilities**, in particular the right to rest and leisure at a children's entertainment facility in the city of Uzhhorod, was recorded. A child with a disability, who moves around in a wheelchair, was not given the opportunity to participate in recreational activities at the institution, due to the lack of accessibility of the play space and the incorrect attitude of the staff.

In order to find out the circumstances and obtain explanations, the representative of the Commissioner for equal rights and freedoms, the rights of national minorities, political and religious views, Mykhailo Spasov, addressed the entertainment institution, the Uzhhorod City Council, and the Zakarpattia Regional Military Administration.

Andriy Kryuchkov, the representative of the Commissioner in Zakarpattia Oblast, was involved in the consideration of this case. Following the joint response of the representatives of the Commissioner, the following measures were taken:

By the local authorities:

- the institution was visited by the deputy mayor, the director of the social policy department of the Uzhhorod City Council, and the mayor's advisor;
- in accordance with the provided recommendations, changes were made to the rules for visiting the children's area, information work was carried out among the staff of the institution;
- the Uzhhorod City Council plans to create a working group to check the accessibility of public facilities.

By the children's entertainment center Kids Club:

- the institution's management officially apologized for the unfortunate incident;
- purchased a portable ramp to ensure the accessibility of the play space;
- staff training on accessibility and tactful communication was carried out.

Thus, due to the response of the Commissioner, measures were taken to eliminate any manifestations of discrimination against children with disabilities and representatives of other low-mobility population groups, and the principle of accessibility in the field of services, recreation and leisure was ensured.

Protection of national minorities (communities) in Ukraine: improving the legal framework, in line with Council of Europe standards



The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and the Representative on Equal Rights and Freedoms, National Minorities, Political Views and Religious Beliefs took part in the event dedicated to the official launch of the joint EU-Council of Europe project «Supporting the implementation of European standards on combating discrimination and national minority rights in Ukraine», as well as in the forum «Protection of national minorities (communities) in Ukraine: improving the legal framework in line with Council of Europe standards».

An important document was presented at the forum – «Study on the Situation of National Communities and Indigenous Peoples in the TOT of Ukraine». It was conducted by our Office jointly with the Council of Europe. It contains materials from the media, social networks, and witness testimonies of the events that took place and continue to take place in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

A number of meetings were also held with the Public Defender of Rights of Slovakia **Robert Dobrovodsky**, a Representative of the DG NEAR support group for Ukraine **Martin Muehleck** and other partners of Ukraine.



Mykhailo Spasov

Representative of the Commissioner for Equal Rights and Freedoms, Rights of National Minorities, Political and Religious Beliefs

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Monitoring the observance of human rights in places of detention

From the beginning of the year to the middle of September 2023, employees of the Department for Implementation of the National Preventive Mechanism made **345 visits** to places of detention in Ukraine.



In September, a visit to «Pervomayska Correctional Colony No.117» took place. This institution is a minimum security correctional institution with general conditions of detention. At the time of the visit, there were 180 convicts in the institution. Since the beginning of 2023, cosmetic repairs of the premises are taking place in the institution, the quarantine area is equipped with furniture and diagnostic devices, an individual space is created for convicts, an information stand with national and patriotic symbols is decorated on the central avenue of the institution.



During the confidential conversations, most of the convicts refused to communicate with the representatives of the national preventive mechanism group or answered with clichéd phrases that amounted to: «you will leave, and we will live here.»

Thus, the representatives of the group of the national preventive mechanism got the impression that there are cases of intimidation of convicts and the possible use of physical force in the institution. In order to eliminate the specified violations of human rights, as well as to get rid of them in the future, the Commissioner will take all measures provided for by law.

The Ombudsman of Ukraine, Dmytro Lubinets, met with the delegation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Alice Jill Edwards.

He presented the activities of the Department on implementation of the national preventive mechanism.

In turn, Alice Jill Edwards reported on her visit to the location where Ukraine detains Russian prisoners of war, confirming their good conditions and lack of torture.



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The Ombudsman held a large meeting with representatives of the Association of Cities of Ukraine and local self-government bodies on compliance with citizens' information rights

Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, held a large meeting with representatives of the Association of Cities of Ukraine and local self-government bodies. More than 600 participants from all over Ukraine joined it.

Dmytro Lubinets briefly spoke about the work of the Ombudsman's Office in order for representatives of local self-government bodies and public organizations to understand what is included in the authority of the institution.



Then the participants of the meeting divided the work into two directions:

1. outlined the main aspects of the right to access to public information and the problems of ensuring this right;
2. provided answers to questions, in particular, regarding access to public information, as well as questions related to prisoners of war and missing persons under special circumstances.

Dmytro Lubinets emphasized that access to public information must be ensured in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine. «So far, we have received 19,422 reports from citizens about violations of their informational rights. We drew up 45 protocols on administrative offenses for non-compliance with the requirements of the Law of Ukraine «On Access to Public Information», of which 60% of the offenders were officials of local self-government bodies,» – said the Commissioner.

The participants of the meeting were given recommendations on how to avoid violations, as well as answers to the most common questions. In addition, they will be provided with information materials, which will include, in particular, an algorithm of actions for relatives whose relative is considered missing under special circumstances.

Dmytro Lubinets thanked his colleagues from the Association of Cities of Ukraine for the initiative of holding this meeting. «This is the first experience of holding such a large-scale event in the history of the institution. However, we are ready to meet regularly in the future!» – said the Ombudsman.



You have the right:
useful explanations
and infographics



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A person's right to proper judicial protection and access to justice has been renewed

A citizen appealed to the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights regarding the violation of her right to proper legal protection and access to justice. The applicant reported that by the decision of the Solomyansky District Court of the city of Kyiv dated 22.09.2021, a simplified lawsuit was opened for her claim for the recovery of arrears from the payment of wages unpaid upon dismissal, but a court decision in the case has not been passed for more than 2 years.

As a result of the preliminary processing of the citizen's appeal, the Commissioner sent letters of inquiry to the Solomyansky District Court of the city of Kyiv. Taking into account the received information, which testified to the presence of violations of the rights, freedoms and interests of the citizen, a decision was made to open proceedings based on the received appeal.

According to the results of the inspection by the Commissioner, within which all the necessary measures were taken aimed at restoring the rights of the female citizen, which consisted not only in the restoration of the right to proper access to justice, but also the right to decent remuneration, the Chairman of the Solomyansky District Court of the city of Kyiv informed, that the decision of the Court dated 31.08.2023 satisfied the citizen's claim for the collection of arrears of wages and average earnings for the period of delay in full payments upon dismissal. In favor of the citizen, 49,860 hryvnias of average earnings were charged during the delay in payments upon dismissal and 908 hryvnias of court fees.

Thus, as a result of the intervention of the Commissioner and the measures taken within it, the citizen's right to proper legal protection was restored.

The right to a fair trial must be ensured for every citizen of Ukraine!

In the case of the rape of a minor, after the Zakarpattia Court of Appeal annulled the verdict of the Volovetskyi District Court of the Zakarpattia Region, the court of first instance started a new trial. In the preparatory court session scheduled for September 27, 2023, the court will consider the request submitted by the prosecutor to consider the criminal proceedings in a closed court session.

In accordance with paragraph 9 of the first part of Article 17 of the Law of Ukraine «On the Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Human Rights», the Commissioner has the right to be present at court sessions of all instances, including closed court sessions, subject to the consent of the subject of law, in the interests of whose trial was declared closed.

I have submitted a request for the presence of an employee of the Ombudsman's Office in court sessions for the purpose of monitoring compliance with the procedural rights of participants in court proceedings. In the event of a decision to consider the case in closed mode, the court must find out the opinion of the legal subjects, in whose interests the court proceedings were declared closed, regarding the petition submitted by me. **Monitoring of compliance with procedural rights in this case continues.**

The right to a fair trial must be ensured for every citizen of Ukraine! I am waiting for a fair and legal court decision!

The Russian Federation continues its brutal shelling of peaceful Ukrainian cities

In September (as in previous months), Russia bombarded Ukraine with various missiles and bombs. This leads to loss of life, injuries and significant material damage.

So, on **September 6**, the Russian military attacked the town of Kostyantynivka, Donetsk region. **16 people died** as a result of hitting the territory of the market, and another **33 were injured**.



On **September 8**, Russian missile attacks caused the destruction of a residential building in Sumy and damage to civilian infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia. Kryvyi Rih also came under enemy fire. As a result of the Russian attack, 1 person died and 59 were injured.



On **September 10**, a group of foreign volunteers of the Road2Relief organization came under fire in the Donetsk region. Volunteers from Canada and Spain died, other volunteers were injured. The foreigners went to assess the needs of the civilian residents of the village of Ivanovske.



On September 19, the city of Lviv came under enemy fire. As a result of the night attack on the city, about 300 tons of humanitarian goods were destroyed. In Kherson, a police sergeant was killed by Russian artillery fire, and two more civilians were seriously injured.



On September 21, according to the Ukrainian authorities, at least **6 people were killed and dozens were injured** as a result of massive rocket attacks in Kyiv region, Cherkasy region, Kharkiv region, Khmelnytskyi region, Ivano-Frankivsk region and Rivne region. In addition, enemy strikes were directed at energy infrastructure facilities. Similar tactics were used by the Russian Federation last year as well.



On September 25, the Russians directed 19 attack drones, 12 cruise missiles and 2 supersonic missiles at the Odesa region. Odesa port, hotel, granaries, other houses and warehouses were damaged.



This information reflects only a small part of the events taking place in Ukraine due to Russian armed aggression.

Human Rights in Ukraine

since the Beginning of Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine

2,598

people released
from Russian
captivity

including
→

144

civilians

≈

25,000

persons missing under special circumstances
and illegally deprived of personal liberty as a result
of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine

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

9,614

killed civilians

17,535

injured civilians

504

dead
children

1,125

injured
children

1,241

missing
children

19,596

children forcibly
taken to Russia

**1.4
million**

people without
access to water
due to the destruction
of infrastructure

**4.6
million**

people with
limited access
to water

**4.9
million**

people now
identified
as IDPs

**8.2
million**

people receiving
temporary shelter
in other countries

≈ **700
thousand**

people in Ukraine were left
without drinking water due to
the destruction of the Kakhovka
hydroelectric power station

3,782

destroyed
educational
institutions

1,031

destroyed
kindergartens

1,622

destroyed
healthcare
facilities

348

destroyed
religious
buildings

1,804

destroyed
objects
of culture

≈ **167,200**

destroyed
houses

126

destroyed
railway
stations

346

destroyed
bridges and
bridge crossings

576

destroyed
boiler
houses

426

destroyed
factories and
businesses

* As of September 25, 2023

«Ombudsman of Ukraine» chatbot



This is an opportunity to get answers to important questions quickly and conveniently. It contains important information divided into 17 categories.

In particular, servicemen, internally displaced persons, and families with children can receive answers about their rights here. There is also a category for people who are in the temporarily occupied territory or were forcibly deported.

The chatbot is available at
@ukraine_ombudsman_bot



Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine

The Russian Federation and all the war criminals it sent to Ukraine will bear the most serious responsibility for the evil they committed.

Ukraine meticulously documents every crime and every brutality.
All those who are guilty will undoubtedly be held accountable.

We will never forget or forgive. And so is the world.

#StandWithUkraine



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