



Омбудсман України
Ombudsman of Ukraine

REGIONS OF UKRAINE ARE UNDER ATTACK



HUMAN RIGHTS ARE UNDER THREAT

№4
2025



EASTER MIRACLE:

277 Defenders at Home, on Free Ukrainian Land

On April 19, the 63rd prisoner exchange took place. Thanks to Ukraine's efforts, **246 servicemen were returned as part of the prisoner exchange**, and another 31 were released beyond the exchange.

Servicemen of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Guard of Ukraine, the State Special Transport Service and border guards who defended Mariupol and other settlements in Donetsk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Luhansk regions returned home.

Employees of the Ombudsman's Office were present at the exchange site to fix the condition in which the released prisoners were returned to Ukraine.

4,552 UKRAINIANS

returned from enemy captivity as of April 30, 2025

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"Mom, I made it, I made it through!"
— the first words of a serviceman returning home.



Ми Вас дуже чекаємо



11 CHILDREN FROM TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF UKRAINE AND RUSSIA RETURNED HOME



Following citizens' appeals to the Ombudsman's Office and as part of reintegration measures, **9 children were returned from the temporarily occupied territories (hereinafter – TOT) of Ukraine, and two more from the territory of the Russian Federation.** The return was carried out within the framework of the implementation of the approved action plan of the President of Ukraine **Bring Kids Back UA.**

The children are aged from 2 to 17 years old. While in the TOT, the families lived under constant pressure from the occupation regime because of their pro-Ukrainian position, were persecuted, intimidated and deprived of basic rights, which created serious risks for their children.

MEETING WITH FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS:

The State Continues to Search for Each and Every One of Them

The Ombudsman's Office holds weekly meetings with **family members of missing servicemen**, one of which was with the families of soldiers of the 30th Separate Mechanized Brigade (Ukraine).

The relatives received answers to key questions: the steps the state is taking to search for missing persons and the work on the process of exchanging prisoners of war. They were told about the priority of returning the severely wounded, seriously ill and those who have been in captivity for the longest time.



The search for and return of our defenders is something the state is fighting for every day.



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PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IS THE BASIS OF THE FUTURE OF THE STATE



The **Child Rights Protection Center** held a roundtable discussion on “**Ukrainian children in war: how can the state overcome the consequences of occupation and deportation?**”. During the event, the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights “The Impact of Armed Conflict and Occupation on Children’s Rights in Ukraine” was presented.



It is important that the facts of violations of the rights of Ukrainian children are recognized and documented at the UN level. This forms the legal basis for the future international responsibility of the aggressor country,” emphasized the Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets.



The Child Rights Protection Center held an important meeting with the **Belgian delegation headed by the Prime Minister of Belgium Bart De Wever**. The main topic of discussion was Russia’s crimes against Ukrainian children.

The Belgian delegation had the opportunity to talk to children who had been returned from the occupation. Their stories are not just testimonies. They are the truth about the crimes that Russians commit every day.



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■ TRAINING FOR THOSE WHO SUPPORT EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES: Webinars for Educators who Teach Children in the Temporarily Occupied Territories (TOT)

The Ombudsman's Office in cooperation with the Vostok-SOS (East-SOS) Charitable Foundation held a **series of webinars for educators working** with high school students in the TOT.

During the training, more than 3000 teachers received comprehensive information on:

- simplified admission procedure through the educational centres “**Crimea-Ukraine**” and “**Donbas-Ukraine**”;
- preparation of the necessary documents;
- features of the admission campaign;
- existing support programs for applicants from the TOT.

Passing this knowledge to students will help increase the number of applicants from the TOT, which is an important step in ensuring equal access to education, supporting young people and their integration into Ukrainian society.



*Such initiatives not only expand access to important information, but also open up new opportunities for personal and professional development for young people, regardless of their place of residence,” said **Dmytro Lubinets**.*

■ MONITORING OF EDUCATIONAL CENTERS: Improving Opportunities for Young People from the TOT

For the second year in a row, **the Ombudsman's Office has been monitoring the activities of the educational centres “Crimea-Ukraine” and “Donbas-Ukraine”**. Such systematic work allows not only to assess the level of access to the right to education for people from the TOT, but also to identify effective ways for its further development.

In 2025, **the Ombudsman's Office conducted 191 monitoring visits to educational centres**, resulting in 589 recommendations. Their implementation is aimed at improving the conditions of admission and education for people from the temporarily occupied territories.

The implementation of these recommendations is constantly monitored by the Ombudsman of Ukraine, as the results of last year's monitoring visit have already shown their effectiveness: the number of students from the temporarily occupied territories who entered through educational centres has increased.

Constructive cooperation, constant attention to the needs of applicants and targeted measures yield tangible results in ensuring equal access to education for all Ukrainian citizens.



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PROTECTION OF CITIZENS' RIGHTS TO CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE WATER UNDER MARTIAL LAW: Main Conclusions and Recommendations

The Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets presented a **Special Report on the State of Observance of Citizens' Rights to Clean and Affordable Water Under the Legal Regime of Martial Law**.



The document consists of 4 sections and is based on real data — 511 appeals from citizens to our institution, 9 monitoring visits, results of laboratory tests of water quality and an all-Ukrainian online survey with 13,673 respondents from all regions of Ukraine.

The **Special Report** covers the following key areas: the impact of Russia's armed aggression on the realization of the right to drinking water, the impact of business entities on water resources, the effectiveness of state policy, and the implementation of international standards in national legislation.





39 YEARS LATER: HONOURING CHORNOBYL'S HEROES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING THE VICTIMS

On the anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster, the Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets was at the site of the tragedy.

The Commissioner took part in the commemoration of the fallen liquidators and all victims of the accident with the participation of the authorities and international partners supporting Ukraine.



Also, an offsite meeting of the **Temporary Special Commission of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on social protection of the victims of the Chornobyl accident** was held here.

In his speech, Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, stressed that citizens' appeals to the Ombudsman's Office clearly demonstrate the existence of systemic problems. He emphasised that those who sacrificed their health to save humanity deserve decent support from the state. He also called for this day to be used as an impetus for further concrete actions.

The authorities should develop new laws to protect the rights of liquidators and their families, as well as provide them with proper social protection and health insurance.



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INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE: cooperation for the protection of human rights



The Ombudsman's Office is actively engaged in international activities, establishes cooperation with foreign partners, international organisations and networks, and participates in initiatives aimed at protecting human rights.

Through the exchange of experience and joint projects, the Office promotes the implementation of international human rights standards in national practice.

In April, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, **Dmytro Lubinets**:

- signed a **Memorandum of Cooperation** with the international charity organisation **Global Empowerment Mission**;
- met with Ambassador of Canada **Natalka Cmoc** and Ambassador of Norway **Helene Sand Andresen**;
- spoke at the **Interactive Dialogue on the situation in Ukraine** at the UN Human Rights Council;
- met with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, **Christoph Kamp**;
- spoke online at an event in the British Parliament on the **'Return the Children Now'** campaign for the return of Ukrainian children.

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THE STATE OF QATAR

is a reliable partner of Ukraine in returning children and supporting their families!



During the visit to Qatar, Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets held an important meeting with **State Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi**. The key issues discussed were the return of Ukrainian children and civilians from the TOT and the Russian Federation, as well as areas of further cooperation in the humanitarian sphere.

Dmytro Lubinets stressed that Qatar plays a key and important role as an intermediary in the return of Ukrainian children!



Ukraine is sincerely grateful to the country for its comprehensive humanitarian support! This is a manifestation of true leadership, solidarity and humanity," the Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets said.

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Together with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Ukrainian **children who had been returned from forcible displacement and deportation visited Qatar.**

They also met with **Mariam bint Ali bin Nasser Al Misnad, Minister of State for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.** Ukrainian families told international partners their stories about their experiences: the occupation of their cities, separation and the difficult path to reunification.

The Commissioner stressed that these are the families of 15 children returned by the **Office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine** from the TOT and the Russian Federation with the mediation of **the State of Qatar** within the framework of the approved **Bring Kids Back UA** action plan. The children were accompanied by legal representatives: guardians or parents.

Thanks to the cooperation with the Qatari side, **it was possible to organise a recreation and psychological rehabilitation programme** for these children and their families, which took place in Doha.



NINTH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON POINT 4 OF THE PEACE FORMULA: finding solutions for the return of our citizens

The 9th meeting of the Working Group on Point 4 of the Ukrainian Peace Formula was held at the Human Rights Protection Centre in Zhytomyr.

The main topic of the meeting was the **search for mechanisms to return our citizens home**. All categories of citizens were discussed: deported and forcibly displaced children, unlawfully detained civilians, and prisoners of war.



To bring back more of our people, we urgently need international support, particularly through strong and coordinated pressure on Russia. It is also necessary to help bring the perpetrators to justice for the crimes committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, which amount to more than 165,000!"
Dmytro Lubinets added.



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PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES (COMMUNITIES) IN UKRAINE:

Achievements and Challenges on the Path to European Integration

Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets presented the status of implementation of the recommendations from the **Special Report of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights** regarding the Observance of the Rights of National Minorities (Communities) and Indigenous Peoples in the Context of the Russian Armed Aggression against Ukraine.



The Special Report contained 75 recommendations for the authorities in the areas of language, education, combating discrimination, documentation, etc.



The issues of observance of the rights of national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples are under special attention of the European Commission and directly affect Ukraine's European integration process,” said Dmytro Lubinets.

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JOINT WORK OF the state, civil society and international partners enhances qualitative results in the implementation of the NPM

Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets presented a **Special Report on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Ukraine in 2024** to the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights, De-occupation and Reintegration of TOT of Ukraine, National Minorities and Interethnic Relations.

The document contains 8 chapters and covers a wide range of issues: from conditions of detention in penitentiary institutions to violations in the operation of temporary detention centres, psychiatric hospitals and social institutions.



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS in Medical Institutions in Places of Detention

During the visits of the **NPM** to places of detention, in particular to the medical units of penitentiary institutions, **numerous violations are recorded**. Persons in custody or serving sentences often do not receive proper medical care.

The most common problems include

- chronic shortage of medical staff;
- violations during medical examinations;
- lack of round-the-clock supervision of patients;
- in some cases, the lack of accompaniment to the doctor, even if he/she is present;
- situations when other convicts take care of the seriously ill without professional help.



Such conditions do not just violate the right to healthcare – they pose a real threat to people's lives. The human right to medical care cannot be restricted – the state is obliged to guarantee it,” said the Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets.



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THE EUROPEAN DATA PROTECTION BOARD (EDPB) GUIDELINES have been published in Ukrainian

The Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights with the support of the **German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)** published **Ukrainian translations of the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) guidelines.**

These documents cover the rights of data subjects, the exercise of the right to be forgotten, consent, data protection by purpose and by default, processing of personal data using video devices, and notification of personal data security breaches. They are available on the official website of the Ombudsman's Office.



PRESENTATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIGITAL SECURITY LAB

Employees of the Information Rights Monitoring Department took part in the presentation of the Annual Report of the Digital Security Lab **“Digital Rights in Focus: How Ukraine Fulfilled International Obligations in 2024”.**

The report presented the state of implementation of the **basic information rights of citizens**, including the right to access the Internet, freedom of expression and the right to privacy. Particular attention is paid to the impact of the development of artificial intelligence technologies on human rights, as well as the realization of the right to free elections in the digital environment through the prism of political advertising regulation.

The participants discussed European standards of **personal data protection**, the problems of implementing ethical standards in the field of AI development, and the prospects for creating a single digital regulator in the context of Ukraine's European integration.



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THE RIGHT TO ENFORCE A COURT DECISION WAS RESTORED

In January 2025, the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights received an **appeal from a lawyer on behalf of a citizen**, asking for assistance in restoring the citizen's right to enforce a court decision made in his favour by a military unit.

The Commissioner decided to open proceedings on the appeal, within which letters were sent to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

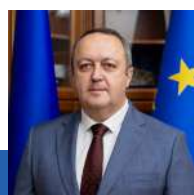
As a result of the measures taken, the Command of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine received information that based on the results of the inspection and the information provided in the letters of the Ombudsman's Secretariat, the military unit **had enforced the court decision in favour of the citizen**.

THE RIGHT OF A PRISONER AND CONVICT TO MEDICAL CARE WAS RESTORED

The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights received **an appeal from a prisoner** held in one of the pre-trial detention facilities in Ternopil region regarding a possible violation of her right to proper medical care due to the failure to conduct the necessary examination and prescribe treatment.

In early April, **a convict serving** a sentence in a penal institution in Rivne region addressed the Ombudsman with similar issues.

As a result of the checks initiated by the Commissioner, the applicants' right to medical care with the Commissioner's assistance was restored.



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SHELLING CONTINUES: CIVILIANS ARE UNDER ATTACK

On April 2, Russia attacked Kryvyi Rih, killing 4 people and injuring 14, including children.



Kharkiv, Sumy, Dnipro, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Kherson regions. **Ukraine is under daily attacks from the Russian Federation**, which kill civilians, destroy homes and damage civilian infrastructure.



On the night of April 6, Russia launched a massive attack on peaceful cities. Kyiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, and Mykolaiv regions were affected. The attack damaged civilian infrastructure, residential buildings, and a high-rise building, and resulted in injuries and a death.



April 13. Sumy. On a major religious holiday for Ukrainians, Palm Sunday, Russia launched another missile attack on a peaceful city. **35 people were killed. Among them were two children.** The building of the regional Human Rights Protection Center was also hit.



On April 18, the mournful day of Good Friday, Russia committed war crimes by attacking peaceful Ukrainian cities.

In Sumy, Russians **attacked a confectionery shop** baking Easter cake with drones. As a result, **a man** who had come to buy the products **was killed** and a woman was injured.

Kharkiv suffered a large-scale attack with ballistic missiles: apartment buildings and a civilian enterprise were damaged. **One man was killed in his own apartment, and more than 60 people were injured, including 5 children.**





April 23 in Marhanets, Dnipropetrovsk region, the enemy hit a bus carrying employees of a company. 9 people were killed and 30 wounded.



The night of **April 24** turned out to be deadly for Ukraine, with massive attacks on a number of regions. The capital suffered the most. Emergency services worked at 13 locations. **13 dead and over 80 wounded in Kyiv.**

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On April 25, Russia struck a high-rise building in Pavlohrad, Dnipro region. The strike **killed 3 people, including a child, and injured others.**



PEOPLE ARE THE MOST VALUABLE THING!

Russia violates human rights in Ukraine on a large scale!



4,552

people released
from Russian
captivity

including
→

174

civilians

≈ 63,000

people missing under
special circumstances

*Data from the Register of Persons Missing in Special Circumstances

13,134

civilians
killed

31,867

civilians
wounded

*According to the UN Human Rights
Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

624

children killed

1,930

children wounded

2,222

missing children

*According to the Children of War information portal

1,293

children returned by Ukraine
(including from TOT)

4.6

million

people
became IDPs

6.5

million

people sought
refuge abroad

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SHELLING OF CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Russia destroys residential buildings, educational and medical institutions

3,798

destroyed
and damaged
educational facilities

including
→

1,313

destroyed
and damaged
kindergartens

*According to saveschools.in.ua

1,984

destroyed
and damaged
destroyed
healthcare facilities

including
→

428

hospitals

352

ambulatories

645

destroyed
religious
buildings

2,205

destroyed
cultural
objects

≈ 250,000

destroyed or
damaged houses

**≈ 139 thousand
square kilometers**

of Ukraine's territory are
considered potentially mined

*Data as of the late
April 2025



Омбудсман України Ombudsman of Ukraine

2025 shall be the year of justice for Ukraine and the entire free world,
the year of bringing the Russian Federation to justice for war crimes.
We are thoroughly documenting every violation
so that the perpetrators are punished.

Peace for Ukraine must be just.

#StandWithUkraine



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