



Омбудсман України  
Ombudsman of Ukraine

# LESSONS FROM UKRAINE FOR THE WORLD:

Challenges in the Field of Human Rights Protection



# EUROPEAN INTEGRATION UNDER SHELLING

**Ukraine has consistently affirmed its European choice since the restoration of its independence in 1991.** These aspirations became central demands during the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity. Over more than three decades, a number of key decisions have been adopted that have brought the country closer to the European Union. These include agreements on economic cooperation and free trade, the introduction of the visa-free regime, and the deepening of political dialogue.

**Ukraine has already completed the following stages of its accession to the European Union:**

- **28 February 2022** — Ukraine submitted its application for membership of the European Union.
- **17 June 2022** — The European Commission recommended granting Ukraine the status of candidate country for EU accession.
- **23 June 2022** — Ukraine was granted the status of candidate country for membership of the European Union.
- **14 December 2023** — The European Council decided to open accession negotiations with Ukraine.
- **21 June 2024** — The European Union adopted the Negotiating Framework for Ukraine's accession.
- **25 June 2024** — The formal launch of accession negotiations between Ukraine and the European Union took place.
- **27 June 2024** — The Joint Security Commitments between the European Union and Ukraine were signed.
- **30 September 2025** — Ukraine and the European Commission are due to complete the screening process across the negotiation chapters.

■ **Ukraine continues to implement reforms** aimed at aligning national legislation with the European Union acquis.





# HUMAN RIGHTS AS THE FOUNDATION OF UKRAINE'S EUROPEAN PATH:

## The Work of the Ombudsman's Office

The Ombudsman's Office attaches significant importance **to ensuring respect for human rights within Ukraine's European integration processes**. It uses a range of formats and mechanisms that enable its effective engagement in the following processes:

**1. Involvement in substantive work on individual draft laws along Ukraine's path towards EU membership. A clear example is the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine",** the development and refinement of which the Ukrainian Ombudsman Office was directly and actively involved in.

**2. Participation in bilateral (negotiation) meetings between Ukraine and the European Union** held within the framework of the official screening of Ukraine's legislation for its compliance with EU law (the *acquis*). These meetings covered several negotiation chapters, including *Chapter 23 "Judiciary and Fundamental Rights"*, *Chapter "Public Administration Reform"*, *Chapter "Functioning of Democratic Institutions"*, *Chapter 24 "Justice, Freedom and Security"*, *Chapter 31 "Foreign, Security and Defence Policy"*, and *Chapter 19 "Social Policy and Employment"*.

**3. Engagement in the preparation of materials for bilateral meetings between Ukraine and the European Commission.**

**4. Participation in the development of measures under the Roadmaps** on the Rule of Law and the Functioning of Democratic Institutions (the Roadmaps), as well as the Action Plan for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities (communities) in Ukraine (the Action Plan). As of today, our Office, together with other bodies, is working on the implementation of the measures of the Roadmaps and of the Action Plan.

**5. Participation in the preparation of Ukraine's reports** within the EU Enlargement Package for 2024 and 2025.

**6. Participation in the meetings of the Human Rights Dialogue between Ukraine and the European Union,** as well as in the meeting of the Subcommittee on Justice, Freedom and Security of the EU-Ukraine Association Committee.

**The Ombudsman of Ukraine, Dmytro Lubinets, regularly holds meetings with European partners** to strengthen cooperation and to ensure respect for human rights in Ukraine.





# PROTECTION OF RIGHTS IN THE SECURITY AND DEFENCE SECTOR: The Foundation of Public Trust in Those Who Defend the Country

One of the key areas of work of the Ombudsman's Office is ensuring respect for the rights of **military personnel, veterans, prisoners of war, missing persons and their families, as well as civilians** unlawfully abducted or detained by the Russian Federation.

The Ombudsman's Office consistently contributes **to the return** of Ukrainian citizens, including military personnel and civilians unlawfully detained by Russia.

**6,266 UKRAINIANS**  
including **403 civilians**, have been returned home











# ASSISTANCE FOR THE DEPARTURE from Temporarily Occupied Territories and the Evacuation of Ukrainians



The Ukrainian Ombudsman's Office **provides assistance to citizens seeking to leave the temporarily occupied territories and to evacuate** to areas under the control of the Government of Ukraine. In the course of implementing humanitarian family reunification measures **in 2025, it was possible to assist 261 adult civilians and 45 children to leave the occupied territories.**

## From Captivity to Home: Steps Towards Family Reunification

**A released civilian hostage approached the Ombudsman's Office for assistance.** He had been unlawfully deprived of liberty since 2018, while his wife, his 15-year-old stepson and his mother-in-law **had remained in the temporarily occupied territory, awaiting his release.**

The Office promptly organised the family's safe departure to the Government-controlled territory of Ukraine and ensured the minimisation of risks. **In less than a month, the family was able to leave,** and they were later provided with financial assistance and temporary accommodation.

**This area of work covers the restoration of rights for various categories of individuals,** including active-duty military personnel, veterans, and reservists. The Ombudsman's Office uses its established communication channels to search for missing Ukrainians and to assist in the identification of missing persons through photo and video data, helping families to obtain information.

**Meetings with families** of prisoners of war and missing Ukrainians are held on a regular basis. Over the past three years, **more than 300 meetings** have been organised with relatives of Ukrainian Defenders and unlawfully detained civilians.



**Regional working groups** of the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War have been established on the basis of **8 Regional Offices.** These Offices are located in Dnipro, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Poltava, Ternopil, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy and Chernivtsi. **The groups are headed by the Ombudsman's Representatives.**

## Specific Cases of Human Rights Restoration:

### → A Ukrainian citizen whose rights were violated as Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre staff exceeded their authority during mobilisation activities.

In Zakarpattia, officers of the Patrol Police **unlawfully stopped and blocked a citizen's car**, claiming that he was “wanted by the Territorial Centre for Recruitment and Social Support”. This was done without issuing any procedural documents, without explaining his rights, and without notifying the Centre for Free Legal Aid. **The citizen had a valid deferment from mobilisation** due to being formally reserved. Despite this, his personal data had been entered into the system as a person subject to detention. This may indicate illegal or fictitious entry of information.

**After the stop, the individual was forcibly taken** to the Uzhhorod Territorial Centre for Recruitment and Social Support, where he was held without any legal grounds. The lawyer who arrived to provide legal assistance was not allowed access. This constituted a violation of both the citizen's rights and the professional rights of the lawyer. **The Ombudsman's Office also received a submission from the lawyer regarding the infringement of his professional rights.**

**Only after the personal intervention** of the Representative of the Ukrainian Ombudsman in the Zakarpattia region were the unlawful actions stopped. The Representative then personally picked up the citizen from the Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre.

### → A serviceman for discharge from military service for health reasons.

A serviceman applied to the Ombudsman's Office after being assigned Group III disability in September 2024. **However, the discharge report he submitted was left without consideration for several months.** The Ukrainian serviceman therefore turned to the Ombudsman's Office for assistance. **Following our intervention, he was discharged from military service within a short period of time.**

### → A veteran and a person with a war-related disability.

A war veteran with a disability applied to the Office of the Ombudsman after spending more than 20 years on the waiting list for housing, **with his need remaining unresolved.** **Following our intervention,** the veteran was provided with a one-room apartment and was subsequently removed from the housing register.

#### Implementation of Veteran Policy: A Series of Key Measures

- With the support of the Council of Europe, **monitoring of the observance of the rights of veterans** was carried out in several regions of Ukraine (Zakarpattia, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Khmelnytskyi and Vinnytsia). Based on the findings, **recommendations were prepared** for public authorities regarding the development of the necessary veteran-related infrastructure within local communities.
- The Office of the Ombudsman **is actively engaged in the development of the Veteran Policy Strategy** and is currently contributing to the drafting of the Code of Laws on Defenders.





# THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

**is the foundation on which the country's future rests**

**Russia is systematically and extensively violating the rights of the child, including killing, maiming, forcibly displacing and deporting minors. These crimes have been taking place since 2014!**

**Ukraine is bringing back its children** as part of the Ukrainian President's Bring Kids Back UA initiative.



**More than 1,880 CHILDREN**

**have been returned**, including more than 580 in 2025



**An International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children** was formed to coordinate joint efforts and cooperation between Ukraine and partner countries to address the issue of deportation and forcible displacement of Ukrainian children. The coalition has **44 members**, including the Council of Europe and the European Union, and four states are currently observers to the Coalition.



# NETWORK OF CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION CENTERS



## Child Rights Protection Center in **Kyiv.**

*Opened with the support of UNICEF.*



## Child Rights Protection Center in **Rivne.**

*Opened with the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).*

## Child Rights Protection Center in **Dnipro.**

*Opened with the support of the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).*



## Child Rights Protection Center in **Luts'k.**

*Opened with the support of UNICEF and the governments of Norway and France.*

## Child Rights Protection Center in **Kharkiv.**

*Opened with the support of UNICEF and the governments of France and Norway.*





**In Kyiv, the Center has an Interagency Support Team**, which takes measures to assist in the renewal / registration of documents, medical examinations, the provision of temporary accommodation, social and psychological rehabilitation of the child and members of their family, and ensuring the child's right to education and family upbringing.

**The Center operates according to the Barnahus model.**

## **Specific Cases of Restoring Children's Rights:**

### **→ The right to protection from all forms of violence.**

The Ombudsman's Office conducted monitoring visits to psychiatric institutions in the Lviv, Ternopil and Kirovohrad regions, where significant systemic violations of children's rights **were identified. Children complained about being placed in psychiatric care institutions as a form of punishment.**

Monitoring showed that the hospitalisation of children who were in **the Lviv Regional Clinical Psychiatric Hospital in 92 cases** was carried out without complying with the requirements of the law, and the children did not have clinical symptoms or manifestations of mental disorders. Therefore, psychiatric care should have been provided on an outpatient basis, without placing children in a psychiatric hospital.

**At the Ternopil Regional Psychoneurological Hospital**, the results of the inspection also confirmed the widespread practice of outpatient diagnoses during inpatient treatment. **More than 30 cases were recorded without proper consent for hospitalisation.**

**For each of the identified cases, a statement on criminal offences was sent**, along with response reports and recommendations to the Ministry of Health and regional military administrations, and official investigations were initiated. To prevent such violations in the future, **the Government has decided to provide inpatient psychiatric care to children only in multidisciplinary children's hospitals, financed by the National Health Service of Ukraine.**

### **→ Regarding the protection of children from sexual abuse.**

**Following a monitoring visit** to one of the Social Support Centres for Children and Families in the Kyiv region, information was received **about cases of sexual abuse of children and the concealment of this by the responsible authorities**, in particular the national police.

In response to the violation of children's rights, the National Police of Ukraine was recommended to **conduct an internal investigation**. However, the Main Directorate of the National Police in the Kyiv region responded that the circumstances identified by the Ombudsman Office had not been confirmed. We subsequently found that **the internal investigation had been conducted improperly**, in particular, the evidence confirming the violation of children's rights had not been assessed. In this regard, **a request was sent to conduct a repeat internal investigation.**

As a result, **7 police officers were brought to disciplinary responsibility**, 5 of whom were senior officers, including the deputy head of the Bila Tserkva District Police Department, who was dismissed from his post.









# ACCESS FOR AFFECTED PERSONS to the International Register of Damage for Ukraine



Photo: Libkos

To record the damage caused to Russia and potentially receive compensation, **the International Register of Damages for Ukraine (RD4U) has been created.**

Despite the openness of the Register, **a significant proportion of IDPs**, especially people with disabilities, older persons and those in difficult life circumstances, **are unable to submit an application** on their own due to a lack

of technical means, low digital literacy, health problems, advanced age, difficulties in collecting documents or a lack of understanding of the procedure.

To remove these barriers, **the Office of the Ombudsman has launched a special initiative to support IDPs in category A1.1** (*“Forced internal displacement”*), which provides information and awareness-raising activities, legal advice and practical assistance in submitting applications through the “Diia” portal. **Thanks to this initiative, assistance has been provided in submitting 1,500 applications.**

## CITIZENS’ ACCESS TO SHELTERS: a guarantee of safety, not a formality

The Office of the Ombudsman is working systematically to ensure that **every shelter in Ukraine is safe, accessible and suitable** for use by all citizens, including persons with disabilities and people with reduced mobility.

**776 monitoring visits**  
were conducted to civil protection facilities  
in 2025

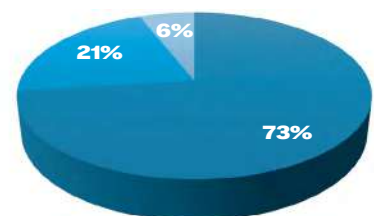
**716 facilities**  
are operational



**55 facilities**  
were found to be  
non-operational

Based on the results of the inspections, **2,700 recommendations** were made.

- **73%** are in the process of being implemented;
- **21%** have been implemented;
- **6%** have not been implemented.



**The main topics of the recommendations** are the provision of first aid kits, barrier-free access, sufficient water supplies, comfortable seating and clear navigation signs.

- **A final report on the monitoring of shelters is being prepared**, which will be presented to the general public and forwarded to the responsible authorities for
- the implementation of the recommendations.



# MONITORING THE LIVING CONDITIONS

## of internally displaced persons

### in temporary accommodation facilities



**676 monitoring visits**  
were conducted to temporary accommodation sites  
throughout Ukraine in 2025

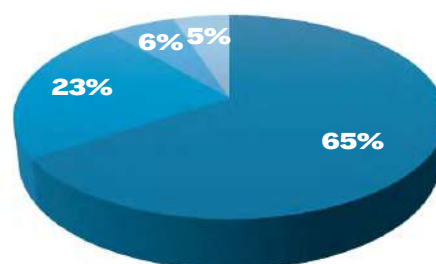
**637 facilities**  
are operational



**39 facilities**  
are temporarily closed

Based on the results of the inspections,  
**2,032 recommendations** were made.

- 65% are in the process of being implemented;
- 23% have been implemented;
- 6% have been partially implemented;
- 5% have not been implemented.



The recommendations address **priority issues**:

- inadequate bathrooms and showers for people with reduced mobility;
- insufficient furniture for storing personal belongings;
- the need to repair living rooms and common areas;
- the lack of fire alarms and shelters for use during air raid alerts.

■ In addition, during visits, meetings and individual consultations are held,  
■ at which appeals are accepted.

### Special report by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, “Local IDP Support Programmes: Analysis of Effectiveness and Prospects.”

The Ombudsman’s Office, in cooperation with the Ukrainian Red Cross Society, conducted an **analysis of the effectiveness of more than 1,300 local targeted programmes to support IDPs**, which were implemented at the regional, district and community levels.

**The programmes covered the following areas:** employment and retraining, support for relocated businesses, housing provision, psychological assistance, vocational training and retraining, enhancing social cohesion and conflict resolution.

Based on the results, **the effectiveness of the programmes was assessed, and 14 recommendations** were prepared for the Cabinet of Ministers and other state authorities. **A special report** is currently being prepared.



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS: key priorities and current challenges

In the context of the legal regime of martial law, the Ombudsman's Office **safeguards the social, economic, and cultural rights of citizens**. Based on the results of this work, **central executive authorities have taken into account the recommendations** of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights in:

## → **two special reports aimed at protecting the rights of:**

**1. adults in need of guardianship and care.** The Ministry of Justice has initiated the ratification procedure of the Convention on the International Protection of Adults. It has approved the Operational Action Plan for implementing, in 2025–2027, the Strategy for Reforming Psychoneurological and Other Residential Institutions and for the Deinstitutionalisation of Care for Adults with Disabilities and Older Persons until 2034;

**2. citizens' right to clean and accessible water.** The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources has developed a draft Operational Action Plan for implementing, in 2025–2027, the Water Strategy of Ukraine until 2050. The Operational Plan provides for the identification of zones vulnerable to nitrate accumulation in accordance with the provisions of the Council Directive of the EEC (European Economic Community) of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.

## → **draft regulatory acts aimed at protecting the rights of:**

- **persons with disabilities and persons who are not entitled to a pension:**

**1. specific time frames have been established** for the territorial bodies of the Pension Fund of Ukraine within which they must decide on the appointment of state social assistance, in the context of transferring this function from the social protection authorities;

**2. the rehabilitation system** for persons with disabilities has been improved through the introduction of an updated individual rehabilitation program;

**3. a new ground for establishing disability has been envisaged:** deprivation of a person's liberty as a result of the armed aggression against Ukraine.

- **workers of critical infrastructure facilities, civil servants, and local self-government officials:**

The procedure for granting a one-time financial assistance to this category of workers who suffered harm to life or health as a result of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine **has been improved**. The right to such assistance arises even if the critical infrastructure facility is included in the Register of Critical Infrastructure Objects after the incident occurs. In particular, the rights of family members of 26 deceased employees of one of the state enterprises to receive this assistance were reinstated.



## ▪ consumers of housing and communal services:

The right of citizens who use electricity for heating their homes to a preferential tariff has been ensured until 30 April 2026.

## ▪ citizens' right to access cultural assets and preserve cultural heritage:

The Strategy for the Development of Culture in Ukraine until 2030 has been approved.

In 2025, the rights of more than **2,600 citizens**, were restored, including persons with disabilities, older persons, individuals affected by the Chornobyl disaster, adults from among orphans and children deprived of parental care, families of deceased employees, and others.

## The Following Rights Were Restored:

- the residents of one of the streets in the village of Luka-Meleshkivska, Vinnytsia region, **to access quality drinking water** in public wells and artesian boreholes through their disinfection;
- the residents of a village in the Korosten district of Zhytomyr region **to safe atmospheric air**. By decision of the Zhytomyr District Administrative Court, the business entity was temporarily prohibited from operating an installation for burning livestock by-products;
- **the family members of 26 deceased employees of a state enterprise to receive a one-time assistance** for harm caused to the life and health of workers of critical infrastructure facilities as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine;
- **a pensioner to receive a refund** of overpaid natural gas supply services in the amount of more than 15,000 UAH, which the gas supply company had not refunded to the applicant for more than three years;
- **60 residents** of an apartment building in Zaporizhzhia to receive natural gas supply services, which had been disconnected to the entire building due to one resident's failure to sign a supply contract.

In June of this year, an Alternative Report to the fifteenth National Report of the Government of Ukraine on the implementation of the provisions of **the European Social Charter (Revised) under Group 1** – labor rights – was submitted to the Secretariat of the **European Social Charter**.



“This document was prepared by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights on the basis of parliamentary oversight data concerning the observance of citizens' labor rights, as well as information received from the parties to social dialogue – trade unions, employers' associations, state authorities, and enterprises of various forms of ownership. Such a comprehensive approach has made it possible to ensure an objective assessment of the situation in this sphere,” notes **Olena Kolobrodova, Representative of the Commissioner for Social and Economic Rights**.



# RIGHTS OF NATIONAL COMMUNITIES: steps taken by Ukraine

Ukraine has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at protecting the rights of national minorities (communities) in Ukraine:

- • **Pilot project ‘Documenting persons belonging to the Roma national minority and developing legal mechanisms to simplify this procedure’ for 2023-2024 in the city of Mukachevo, Zakarpattia region.**

**As a result:**

- **159** people received passports, **83** received birth certificates, and **68** received full legal assistance;
- **updated the ‘Roadmap’** for issuing documents to people who previously did not have them, considering changes in the current legislation of Ukraine;
- prepared **12 recommendations** to state and local authorities based on the analysis of problem cases.

- **The project ‘Social Atlas of Roma Communities in Zakarpattia in partnership with the Council of Europe.**

**It aims to ensure the rights of the Roma community and full access to social services and benefits.**

A large-scale survey was conducted on **the needs of Roma communities** in several settlements in Zakarpattia, and **5 educational events** were held to raise awareness among the Roma population about their rights.

**6 meetings** were organised with local authorities.

- **May 21 has been designated as the Day of Interethnic Harmony and Cultural Diversity.**

The establishment of this holiday **is the result of cooperation** between the Ombudsman’s Office, the public sector, experts, representatives of national minorities (communities) and international partners. It will be celebrated in accordance with a decree issued by the President of Ukraine.





## CONTROL AND RESEARCH OF THE HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC VALUE OF THE REMAINS IN THE KYIV-PECHERSK LAVRA: results of the Commission's work

The Ombudsman's Office participated in the work of the **Commission for Verifying the Historical and Scientific Value of the Remains** of the Holy Pechersk Saints in the Near and Far Caves of the National Reserve 'Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra'. In 2025, **20 visits** were made to this shrine, 63 objects in the Near Caves were inspected, and research began in the Far Caves, where 34 objects are planned to be examined.

**This work is being carried out to ensure the transparency of processes** and the legality of procedures related to the research and preservation of religious heritage sites.

## SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS A METHOD OF WARFARE used by the Russian Federation and an instrument of genocide against the Ukrainian people! Payment of urgent interim reparations

Oleksandr Osipov, Representative of the Commissioner for Equal Rights and Freedoms, Rights of National Minorities, Political and Religious Believers, was part of the **Pilot Project to provide urgent interim reparations to individuals, which was implemented by the Global Fund for Survivors of Violence.**

During the project, **1,208 applications were received from persons who were likely to have suffered from the CRSV**, and the payment of urgent interim reparations was agreed for almost 1,000 victims, including 655 men, 302 women and 21 children.

**The largest number of appeals** from individuals who expressed a desire to receive urgent interim reparations among state bodies **was forwarded by the Ombudsman's Office.**

**For the first time, a gender audit** of the Ombudsman's Office was conducted with the support of UN Women Ukraine. **This is a comprehensive assessment and analysis of the institution's activities** in terms of taking a gender approach into account in various areas of its work.





## Specific Cases of Human Rights Restoration:

### → Protection of the rights of children from the Roma community in Zakarpattia.

In Zakarpattia, **conditions dangerous to the life and health of children were identified**. On the initiative of the Representative of the Commissioner, they were immediately removed and taken to medical facilities.

**Other violations were also identified:** third parties took advantage of the vulnerability of a large family and registered themselves as the parents of a newborn child in order to travel abroad during martial law, **which has signs of child trafficking**. Possible cases of fictitious parenthood and document forgery were identified.

**Law enforcement agencies launched a pre-trial investigation**, and the prosecutor's office requested materials to verify the legality of the decisions made.

With the assistance of the Ombudsman's Office, **the children received the necessary documents**, and the guardianship authorities ensured their further safe placement.

### → A woman's right to protection from domestic violence was restored.

A woman who was systematically abused by her ex-husband, who not only insulted her but also threatened her with physical violence, appealed to the Ombudsman's Office. The applicant **repeatedly appealed to law enforcement agencies**, but the domestic violence continued.

**Only thanks to the response** of the Ombudsman, the information provided by the applicant was entered into the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations on the grounds of a criminal offence.

### → The rights of people who had been victims of human trafficking were restored.

During media monitoring, material was found exposing three people who had **involved 31 people in labour exploitation**, taking advantage of their vulnerable situation.

Following the Commissioner's appeal to the local state administration at the place of residence of these people, the National Social Service of Ukraine **established the status of victims of human trafficking for eight victims**.

Obtaining this status gave them access to a range of free medical, psychological, social and legal services, as well as guaranteeing them a one-off cash payment.



**“** The Ombudsman's Office pays close attention to monitoring compliance with equal rights and freedoms, the rights of national minorities and individuals' political and religious beliefs. These issues are the focus of attention, as they are essential on Ukraine's path toward membership in the European Union,” notes **the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Dmytro Lubinets**.



# ACTIVITIES OF THE HUMAN DIMENSION WORKING GROUP

**Point 4 of the Peace Formula** provides for the return of Ukrainian children, civilians and prisoners of war who have been unlawfully displaced and deported by Russia. **Ukraine, Canada and Norway are co-chairs of this track.**

**The aim of the work** is to develop mechanisms for the release of Ukrainians from Russian captivity, the return of illegally displaced and deported children, and to ensure the reintegration and support of all returnees.

**International partners involved in the process** include UNICEF, the ICRC, the OSCE, the UN, UNHCR, the Council of Europe and representatives of foreign diplomatic missions.

**The Working Group was officially launched on 26 February 2024.** A total of ten meetings were held between 2024 and 2025.

## Key results of the work:

- The Ombudsman's Office presented **9 ideas for projects on the return of Ukrainian children** and invited members of the Working Group on the Human Dimension to join them.
- **The 4 report under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism** on Ukrainian civilians arbitrarily detained by Russia was presented.
- New approaches to **the return of prisoners of war in cooperation with Türkiye and the possibility of visiting the camp for Russian prisoners of war by representatives of the states participating in the working group** were discussed.
- Commissioner Dmytro Lubinets **proposed revising the Geneva Conventions** to better protect the civilian population.
- It was reported that **at the Montreal Conference, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine was tasked with creating a database for certain categories of persons**, and this process has already received support from the OSCE, UNICEF and Estonia.
- **An update on the Register of Deported Children was presented:** the establishment of commissions to search for children, the adoption of resolutions regulating the process of verification and search for children.
- The importance of advocacy campaigns, coordination of humanitarian initiatives and **the establishment of a special tribunal** to bring the perpetrators to justice was emphasised.
- **For the first time in almost 70 years, the ICRC added a new commentary** on the protection of children in war to the Fourth Geneva Convention.



# INTERACTION WITH NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS

On the initiative of the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Dmytro Lubinets, **the Institution of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights became a member of**



- the European Network of Equality Bodies (**EQUINET**);



- besides, the Commissioner took office as a member of the Board of Directors of the International Ombudsman Institute (**IOI**); the Ombudsman's Institution is a member of the mentioned Institute;



- work is currently ongoing to obtain observer status for Ukraine in the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (**FRA**);



- the Commissioner became a member of the Board of the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (**ENNHRI**) and an alternate member of the Bureau of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (**GANHRI**). In addition, in August 2025, the Commissioner's Institution began preparations for re-accreditation by the GANHRI in order to confirm its 'A' status. In October 2025, the necessary documentation was prepared and submitted for consideration during the 47th session of the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation.

## International Advocacy for Human Rights Protection

The Ombudsman's Office **regularly prepares and submits reports, comments and briefings to international bodies** such as the UN OHCHR, OSCE, Council of Europe and UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission. These documents highlight gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by Russia, particularly in the temporarily occupied territories.



**“The Ombudsman's Office is actively working on the international stage, informing the world about human rights violations by Russia. These include war crimes such as the deportation of Ukrainian children, the unlawful abduction of civilians, the torture of prisoners of war, and extrajudicial executions. We document these violations and submit the evidence to international institutions, from the United Nations to the Council of Europe and the International Criminal Court. Thanks to this systematic work, the Ukrainian voice is heard. Our materials become part of international reports and official investigations. Based on the data we provide, resolutions are adopted and international pressure on the aggressor state increases. The violations that Russia tries to conceal become public – depriving it of the opportunity to evade accountability,”** noted **Ombudsman of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets.**



# NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM:

## Systematic Protection of Human Rights in Places of Deprivation of Liberty



The Secretariat of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights **acts as the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM)**, regularly monitoring places of deprivation of liberty.

In 2025:

▪ **541 visits**

to places of deprivation of liberty conducted;

▪ **9 regional ‘cluster’ visits**

in 9 regions conducted in cooperation with the public;

▪ **48 submissions**

to ministries, local authorities, law enforcement and judicial bodies on the elimination of identified violations made.



Challenges in the Field of Human Rights Protection

**The automated NPM system** is a system that includes a public section with a map of places of detention, a training platform, and an internal section for employees of the Ombudsman's Office and representatives of civil society organisations involved in NPM visits.

Its implementation will make it possible **to increase the efficiency and transparency of the NPM's activities**. The project was developed and is being tested with the support of the Council of Europe.

### → **Fatal Accident Concealed: Special Investigation Conducted Following Intervention by the Ombudsman's Office.**

As part of the implementation of the National Preventive Mechanism, **a concealed fatal accident involving a convict at work was discovered** at Pervomaiskyi Correctional Colony No. 117.

The employer did not notify the State Labour Service and the Pension Fund of Ukraine within 24 hours, as required by law.

**The Ombudsman's Office reacted immediately** – after its intervention, the State Labour Service of Ukraine conducted a special investigation.

The incident was recognised as work-related, and **criminal proceedings were opened** regarding a possible violation of occupational safety legislation.



## → **Keeping Minors in Conditions Similar to Solitary Confinement for Long Periods of Time Is Unacceptable!**

In 2024–2025, NPM teams documented **the unacceptable practice of keeping juvenile prisoners in solitary confinement for up to six months at a time**. Such cases were discovered, in particular, in the public institutions ‘Ivano-Frankivsk Penitentiary Institution (No. 12)’ and ‘Vinnytsia Penitentiary Institution (No. 1)’.



According to international standards, **solitary confinement for more than 15 days is a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment**.

During confidential conversations, minors reported months of isolation without the possibility of contact with other people, which creates a high risk of irreparable damage to their development.

In order to protect the rights of minors and prevent practices that constitute cruel treatment, Commissioner Dmytro Lubinets sent relevant information to the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine for the immediate cessation of such actions and **to bring the conditions of detention of minors into line with international and national standards**.

## → **Fact of Intentional Bodily Harm to a Prisoner Established.**

After analysing the materials of official investigations into **the death of a prisoner in the Kyiv pre-trial detention centre**, employees of the Ombudsman’s Office established that the institution’s staff were probably aware that other persons had inflicted bodily harm on him in the exercise yard. However, **they did not report this to the investigating authorities** or other authorised persons until the prisoner died.

The police who arrived at the scene did not enter the information into the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations about a possible crime against the prisoner, although it was obvious that his explanation about ‘injuries on the beams could not be true – because there were no such beams in the yard at all. **Since the actions of law enforcement officers appear to constitute a cover-up of a crime**, the investigation of this fact has been transferred to the State Bureau of Investigations in Kyiv.

During the transport of prisoners and convicts in special carriages, serious violations by employees of the National Guard and penal institutions were recorded. In 2024, during such transports, **there were 4 deaths and 11 cases where people had to call an ambulance**.

The investigation showed that some of the deaths and sharp deterioration in health **could be linked to poisoning by drugs or other prohibited substances**. This was possible because National Guard employees violated the rules that were supposed to ensure the safety of people during transport.

Because of these facts, at the initiative of the Representative of the Commissioner, the prosecutor’s office **entered information into the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations under several articles of the Criminal Code**, in particular regarding official negligence, illegal drug trafficking, and negligent attitude of prison service employees towards their duties.



# RAISING STANDARDS FOR THE PROTECTION OF INFORMATION RIGHTS IN UKRAINE:

## key steps taken by the Ombudsman's Office



The Ombudsman's Office **promotes the development of a national system for the protection of citizens' information rights**, guided by best European practices.

At the international conference “Balancing Access to Information and National Security – Lessons from Ukraine during Armed Conflicts,” **the Kyiv Declaration on the Balance between Access to Information and National Security during Armed Conflicts was adopted**, which combines international and Ukrainian practices of access to official information during armed conflicts and aims to improve global standards in this area. The Information Commissioners of Scotland and Croatia, as well as national civil society organisations and government bodies, have signed the declaration.

### Best practices for upholding citizens' information rights during wartime:

#### → **Journalistic investigations against officials' silence: the Ombudsman's Office has restored the right to access information.**

**In the first case**, a citizen and the editor-in-chief of the Fourth Power investigative journalism agency submitted requests to the Rivne Medical Academy for information on the remuneration and payments to management, the number of employees and related data for 2024. The institution extended the review period, citing the significant volume of information, but did not provide it within the time frame established by law.

**In the second case**, the director of the online publication KyivVlada appealed to the Bilohorodka Village Council for information about the reconstruction of a preschool education facility. The topic was of public interest due to numerous tenders in Prozorro, their amounts and adjustments. The administrator also failed to respond properly.

**After the intervention of the Ombudsman's Office**, in both situations, the administrators reconsidered the requests and provided the requesters with complete information.

#### → **Unlawful disclosure of personal data.**

**The Ombudsman's Office received a number of complaints** regarding the unlawful use and disclosure of citizens' personal data: passport details, tax identification numbers and copies of official documents. **Since all cases showed signs of criminal offences**, the Ombudsman of Ukraine forwarded the relevant materials to the National Police of Ukraine. As a result of the response in each case, **the law enforcement agency entered** the information into the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations and **initiated criminal proceedings** under Article 182 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine regarding the illegal dissemination or use of confidential information.

#### → **The water supply companies of Chernihiv, Kherson, and Nizhyn disclosed the personal data of 24,000 individuals.**

The official websites of several water supply companies in Ukraine **published information about debts for housing and communal services**, which contained the personal data of debtors. As a result of the measures taken, **the published personal data was deleted and the rights of more than 24,000 people were restored.**



# THE ROLE OF THE OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE IN FORMING THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE ECtHR

The Office of the Ombudsman of Ukraine **provides ongoing communication and expert support in inter-state cases between Ukraine and Russia.** In particular, **it deals with issues related to Russia's violation of international humanitarian law requirements** regarding Ukrainian prisoners of war, civilians, and children.

A landmark decision was made by the Grand Chamber of **the ECtHR in the interstate 'Ukraine and the Netherlands v. Russia'** case, which upheld almost all of Ukraine's complaints against the Russian Federation.

The ECtHR stated that the events in Ukraine are unprecedented in the history of the Council of Europe. **The nature and scale of the violence,** as well as ominous statements about Ukraine's statehood, its independence and the very right to exist, pose a threat to the peaceful coexistence in Europe. **Those actions are aimed at undermining the very foundations of democracy** on which the Council of Europe and its Member States stand, by destroying personal freedoms, suppressing political freedoms and **blatantly disregarding the rule of law.**

**The ECtHR placed particular emphasis** on the problem of the abduction and unlawful transfer of Ukrainian children. In its conclusions, the Court referred to evidence **confirming the systematic nature of these violations.** In particular, the ECtHR took into account the data presented by the Commissioner in a special report entitled "UNBLOOMED. Violation of the Rights of Ukrainian children in the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine and in Russia: Deportation, Militarization, Indoctrination." **The Court also took into account public comments and statements made by the Ombudsman of Ukraine, Dmytro Lubinets,** in the media and on international platforms.

The ECtHR's reference to the work of the Commissioner's Office underscores the importance of the Commissioner's mandate and **the role of the Institution as an independent national human rights mechanism** in recording violations and informing international bodies.

## Specific Cases of Human Rights Restoration:

→ **Following the response of the Ombudsman's Office, the judge was brought to disciplinary responsibility.**

The Ombudsman's Office **found that judges** of one of the local general courts in the Poltava region **had violated the right of the victim and his legal representative to participate in the consideration of the case** of an administrative offence and to receive a copy of the court decision, which deprived the legal representative of the minor victim of the opportunity to appeal it.

**In response to the violations identified,** the Commissioner filed disciplinary complaints against the judges in question.

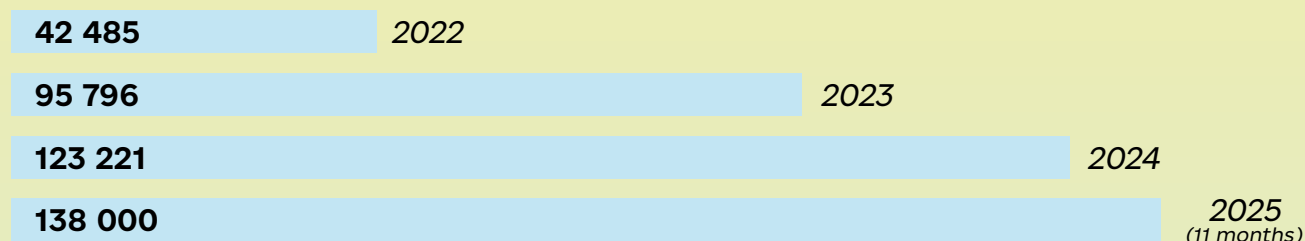
By decision of the Second Disciplinary Chamber of the High Council of Justice, **the judge was brought to disciplinary responsibility** and a disciplinary penalty in the form of a reprimand was applied.





# THE NUMBER OF APPEALS TO THE OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY

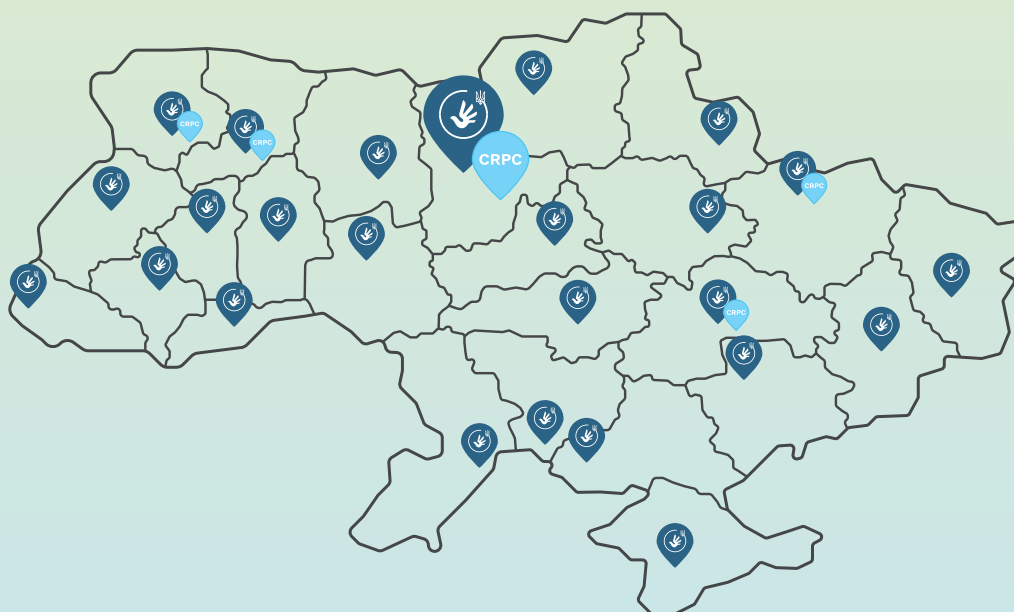
More than **138,000** appeals  
over 11 months of 2025



## EXPANSION OF WORK IN THE REGIONS

The Ombudsman's Office is expanding its work in the regions. **Each region has a Representative of the Commissioner** (in those that are temporarily occupied, Representatives work in other cities; for example, the Representative of the Commissioner for the Rights of Residents of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol works in Kyiv, and the Representative of the Commissioner in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions works in Dnipro).

**Human rights protection centres** are being opened in the regions. Currently, such centres are open in Sumy, Poltava, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Zaporizhzhia, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv, Zakarpattia; and in Kyiv, Rivne, Lutsk, Kharkiv and Dnipro, the **Child Rights Protection Centre** operates.



**The Office plans to open other Human Rights and Child Rights Protection Centres in the future.** This will ensure that every citizen, regardless of their circumstances, can seek help if their rights are violated!





# THE FACE OF WAR:

## Russian crimes that cannot be justified

Russian crimes in Ukraine are not just isolated incidents of violence, but a deliberate policy of terror that affects every city and every family. Daily strikes on civilian infrastructure, abductions of people in temporarily occupied territories, deportation of Ukrainian children, torture of prisoners – all this paints a gruesome picture of a war in which Russia deliberately blurs the line between the front line and peaceful life.

**All this has been going on since 2014:** for almost 12 years, Russia has been violating human rights, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions.

### → **Shelling civilian infrastructure is a violation of international humanitarian law that cannot be justified.**

By shelling residential buildings, schools, hospitals and religious sites, Russia is violating the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols. **Russian attacks on peaceful cities are killing people: 14,383 Ukrainians have been killed** since the start of the full-scale invasion, and **37,541 have been wounded** (according to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission). These figures could be much higher!

**On 19 November 2025, Russia attacked Ukraine**, in particular the Ternopil region. In Ternopil, several buildings were destroyed. Rescuers spent four days clearing the rubble and searching for people trapped underneath. **As a result of this Russian crime, 36 people were killed. Six of them were children.**



### → **The occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant poses a nuclear threat to all of Europe.**

This largest power plant in Europe is located near the city of Enerhodar. In the event of fatal consequences, not only Ukrainian lands may be affected.

**The zone of radiation contamination could spread to Romania, Bulgaria, Central European countries and the northern part of the Middle East, including almost the entire territory of Türkiye. And the consequences of a possible accident in the centre of Europe will be felt by more than one generation of humanity.**







**The main violations committed by Russia in occupying the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant:** militarisation of the facility and deployment of weapons at the plant, violation of nuclear and radiation safety by failing to ensure operation in accordance with standards, obstruction of the work of international inspectors. By these actions, Russia is violating the Geneva Conventions, their additional protocols, and international humanitarian law.

→ **Systematic violation of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories.**

The occupation administrations are creating their own rules, **where there are no guarantees of safety or protection.** People are unlawfully detained, held in basements and 'filtration' points, and tortured. Hundreds of families remain separated due to enforced disappearances, abductions and deportations.

**Freedom of speech** and freedom of religion are systematically restricted, and any expression of pro-Ukrainian sentiment is punished with persecution. Specific violations include **forced passportisation and mobilisation in the temporarily occupied territories.**

■ **All of this constitutes a violation of the Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, international humanitarian law and human rights!**



[moscowconvention.com](https://moscowconvention.com)







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