

Activities of the Ukrainian National Bar Association during the military aggression

Von Dr. Valentyn Gvozdiy, Vizepräsident der Nationalen Anwaltsassoziation der Ukraine

Ukrainian National Bar Association (UNBA) is the single professional advocacy organization in Ukraine, uniting almost 65 000 members. UNBA is truly independent of the State and is an influential institution that protects human rights in Ukraine and upholds the rule of law in our country.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Ms. Lidiya Izovitova, the President of the UNBA, and I, as the Vice President of the UNBA, have put titanic efforts for the effective functioning of the UNBA even under martial law introduced on February 24, 2022, and further extended by the subsequent decrees of the President of Ukraine until August 23, 2022.



Despite the hardships of war and martial law, Ukrainian advocates continue their constitutional mission of defending clients from criminal charges and protecting their legitimate rights and interests. UNBA secured the archives and records of the Bar and limited access to the Unified Register of Advocates of Ukraine to prevent any abuse of personal data.

According to the Unified Register of Advocates of Ukraine (URAU), there are 39,065 male and 24,726 female advocates in Ukraine. Dozens were mobilized to the Armed Forces of Ukraine or joined Territorial Defense. Unfortunately, some of them were killed in action, including young women. Those are just the records. It is hard to say what the reality is in terms of numbers.

Also, we cannot currently tell how many female advocates have left Ukraine as refugees or requested temporary protection from other States. Many women and children in the temporarily occupied territories were forcefully relocated by Russian occupation forces. Also, we can't say how many of them moved to other regions, fleeing from bombardments. Together with the heads of the Regional Bar Councils, UNBA has organized a chain of assistance to the Western region for advocates and their families that left their homes due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Assistance with accommodation and provision of necessary materials and means is provided during their movement. Bar Councils offer free legal assistance to displaced persons, military, and volunteers, working pro bono round-the-clock.

Ukrainian National Bar Association has established the Single Information Center for advocates consolidating information about violations of advocates' rights and providing accurate information on security risks. The Bar also emphasized that advocates should use proven sources of information and not succumb to manipulation and hostile propaganda, as waves of enemy manipulative information citing no sources or originating from sources without reputation or history sweep across the media from time to time.

Thanks to time-tested solutions and adaptability developed by the UNBA systems, for the period of martial law, we have adopted several decisions on taking qualification exams, traineeships for future advocates, consideration of

disciplinary complaints, and maintaining confidentiality of personal data of Ukrainian advocates.

UNBA abolished the requirement for mandatory continuing legal education for advocates during martial law. The Higher School of Advocacy of UNBA has also opened free access to courses in international humanitarian and migration law because these in-depth courses are in high demand by both advocates and citizens.

UNBA has relaxed some procedures to facilitate the institution's operation, and admission of new members to the Bar relaxed some formal requirements for enlisted advocates and established a structure to assist advocates that found themselves in hardship – i.e., loss or damage of housing, wounded or sick.

Upon request of UNBA, American IT-giant LexisNexis Corp is now finishing the development of the Match Portal – the website enabling any advocate in the world to offer their help to Ukrainian colleagues regarding employment, traineeships, grants, housing, etc. It will be the world's first web-portal offering tangible help of advocates to advocates.

Representative Offices of the Ukrainian National Bar Association abroad provide legal assistance to Ukrainians in need who had to leave the homeland, free of charge. UNBA has almost 40 such Representative Offices worldwide, including Germany (the Representative Office of the UNBA has been functioning in Berlin since 2017). They provide legal aid to Ukrainians within their capacity. Our representative offices constantly communicate with embassies and consulates of Ukraine, in accordance with the Memorandum between UNBA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

In the first days of the war, Ukrainian National Bar Association created the UNBA Board of Trustees, which collectively decides on the distribution of charitable assistance from the account of the UNBA Charitable Foundation to help advocates in need. Particular criteria for requesting aid have been developed depending on the nature of the needs – complete or partial loss of housing; single parents; advocates in need of life-saving medicine; senior advocates. Also, UNBA has created a [cause](#) at the [Benevity Causes Portal](#). [LexisNexis](#) has kindly offered to double all donations made through Benevity. So far, more than 320 advocates

have received funding. Unfortunately, some colleagues have already died. Many advocates have entirely lost their homes. The detailed information on the activities of the Board of Trustees is published in the [Report](#) of the UNBA on the International Charitable Assistance for UNBA during martial law and is updated regularly.

We are incredibly grateful for the support received from advocates all over the world. In our time of need, we felt the strengths of the spirit of the legal profession. This unity now helps UNBA defend the rights of people and advocates in Ukraine and provide professional legal aid to anyone who needs it.

Bitte beachten Sie die [Meldung auf der Website der RAK Berlin vom 13.07.2022](#) über die Plattform [Immigration4Ukraine.eu](#), auf sich jetzt auch Rechtsanwältinnen und Rechtsanwälte für Pro Bono Rechtsberatung für Geflüchtete registrieren können.