



UKRAINIAN
HELSINKI
HUMAN RIGHTS
UNION

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS
EVERY DAY

Protecting human rights. Every day.

This annual report provides an overview of the work of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union in 2025 in the field of human rights protection and the rule of law in Ukraine.

**UHHRU Annual Report for 2025, edited by O. Pavlichenko.
– Kyiv: Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, 2025.**

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Introductory word from the Executive Director

2025 — the third and fourth year of Russia's full-scale aggression — required work on the issues of war crimes, international humanitarian law, transitional justice, and holding war criminals accountable.

Enormous gratitude to everyone serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and holding the defense. UHHRU expresses its gratitude to its staff members who are in military service — Viktoriia Petruk, Oleksii Bidia, Nazar Losiuk, Serhii Movchan, Maksym Tymochko, Taras Tsymbriivskyi, Myroslav Lavrinok, Oleh Levytskyi, and Leonid Sitchenko.

Each year of UHHRU's work is shaped by events taking place in Ukraine and by new challenges for human rights protection.

It was in 2025 that the European Court of Human Rights adopted and published its ruling on Russia's responsibility for violations of the European Convention on Human Rights caused by its full-scale aggression (the case of Ukraine and the Netherlands v. Russian Federation). UHHRU lawyers took part in preparing materials for this case, drafting and supporting hundreds of applications filed by survivors of violations caused by the full-scale war.



2025 was a difficult year for everyone, and no less difficult for UHHRU, given limited resources and the need to suspend certain programs and reduce staff. But thanks to partners and vital support, the organization managed to preserve all areas of work — analytical, educational, and legal — and to continue effective work in all regions of Ukraine for vulnerable groups of the population, offering legal aid.

O. Pavlichenko

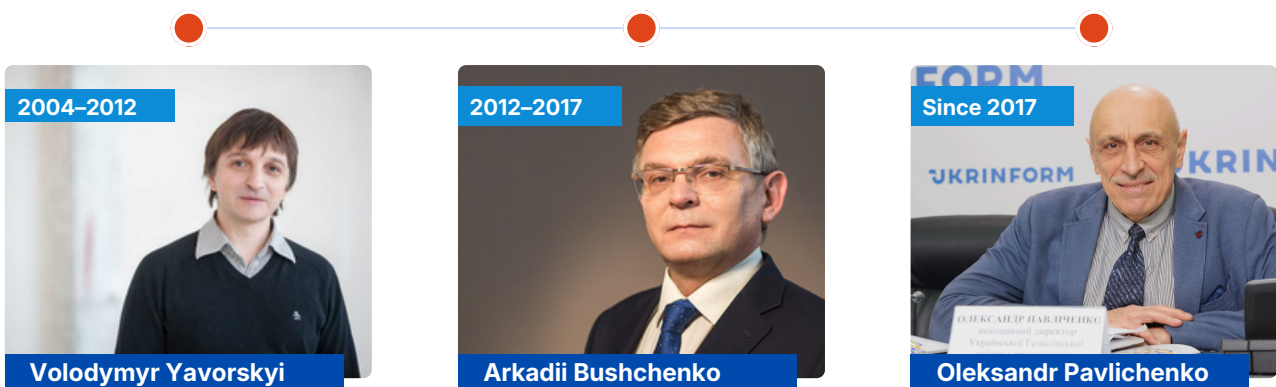
About **Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union**

The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) has been operating since 2004. Its founding assembly took place on April 1 at the First Ukrainian Forum of Public Human Rights Organizations, "Monitoring Human Rights in Elections"; official registration followed on June 30 of the same year, and the Union began active work in August. UHHRU was founded by 15 public human rights organizations. The Supervisory Board included figures of the human rights movement of the 1960s–1980s: Zynovii Antoniuk, Mykola Horbal, Yosyp Zisels, Vasyl Lisovyi, Vasyl Ovsiienko, Yevhen Proniuk, and Yevhen Sverstiuk.

Stages of Development

Volodymyr Yavorskyi, one of UHHRU's founders, headed the organization from April 2004 to February 2012. During this period, UHHRU lawyers won cases at the European Court of Human Rights concerning the state's violations of its obligations, provided legal support to journalists, and built a network of lawyers across Ukraine.

From 2012 to 2017, the Executive Director was Arkadii Bushchenko. This period saw Yanukovych's usurpation of power, the Revolution of Dignity, the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Thanks to the reception-office network already built, UHHRU provided free legal aid amid a sharp rise in demand: in 2014 alone, around 14,000 Ukrainians sought help.



Since November 2017, the organization has been headed by Oleksandr Pavlichenko. Before that, he managed Council of Europe projects in Ukraine, headed the "Ukrainian Legal Aid Foundation," and worked as deputy director of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group. One of the defining areas of this period has been work on the concept of transitional justice — a topic UHHRU has been systematically engaged with since 2014.

Today

UHHRU remains the largest association of human rights organizations in Ukraine, continuing the traditions of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, promoting compliance with the Helsinki Accords.

The Union is headed by Oleksandr Pavlichenko and unites 26 non-governmental organizations. The organization provides free legal aid through a network of public reception offices in 18 regions, represents clients' interests in national courts and before the European Court of Human Rights, analyzes legislation and its application, documents human rights violations, and trains lawyers, judges, and members of the professional community.



Governing Bodies of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union

Board



Anatolii Boiko

Chairman of the Board, Head of the NGO
"Odesa Regional Organization of the
Committee of Voters of Ukraine"



Dementii Bielyi

Head of the NGO "Kherson Regional
Organization of the Committee of Voters
of Ukraine"



Taras Shcherbatiuk

Head of the NGO "Cherkasy Human
Rights Center"



Andrii Misiats

Honored Lawyer of Ukraine, head of
the NGO "Podillya Legal League"



Oleksandr Kadiievskyi

Head of the NGO "Eastern
Human Rights Center"



Svitlana Smal

Executive Director of the NGO "Docudays"



Volodymyr Ponomarenko

Head of the Konotop Society "Dignity"

Governing Bodies

Audit Commission

- **Liudmyla Shestakova** — head of the environmental NGO "Flora."
- **Lidiia Topolevska** — head of the NGO "Center for Legal and Political Studies 'SIM'" (Lviv).

Supervisory Board

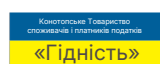
The Supervisory Board is composed of well-known human rights defenders and lawyers. Its size and membership are approved by the General Assembly of the Association.

The Supervisory Board is an advisory and consultative body of the Association. Its membership has included prominent figures of the 1960s–1980s human rights movement, including:

- **Yosyp Zisels** — member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, human rights defender, member of the Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes, and figure in the Jewish national movement.
- **Volodymyr Marmus** — Ukrainian civic and political figure, participant in the national liberation movement, writer, human rights defender, founder and leader of the "Rosokhatska Group."
- **Yevhen Zakharov** — director of the Kharkiv Human Rights Group, participant in the 1970s–1980s dissident movement, co-founder of UHHRU.

Member Organizations of the Union

Union Members



NGO "Dignity" – Konotop,
Sumy region



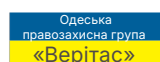
"Public Initiatives" –
Kropyvnytskyi



NGO "MART" – Chernihiv



"Public Bureau 'Human
Rights Defense'" – Sumy



Odesa Human Rights Group
"Veritas" – Odesa



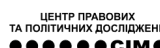
"All-Ukrainian Society of
Political Prisoners and the
Repressed" – Kyiv



"Public Committee for the
Protection of Citizens'
Constitutional Rights and
Freedoms" – Kyiv



Congress of National
Communities of Ukraine – Kyiv



Center for Legal and Political
Studies "SIM" – Lviv



Kherson Regional Organization
of the Committee of Voters of
Ukraine – Kherson



NGO "Docudays"



Kharkiv Human Rights
Group – Kharkiv



Cherkasy Human Rights
Center – Cherkasy



Chernihiv Public Committee for
the Protection of Human Rights



Chortkiv Interregional NGO
"Helsinki Initiative-XXI" – Chortkiv



Odesa Regional Organization
of the Committee of Voters of
Ukraine – Odesa



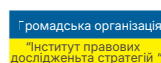
NGO "Territory of Success"
– Kropyvnytskyi



NGO "Flora" – Kropyvnytskyi



Ecological-Humanitarian
Association "Green World" –
Chortkiv



"Institute of Legal Research and
Strategies" – Kharkiv



Charitable Organization "Fund
of Mercy and Health" – Kherson



NGO "Eastern Human Rights
Center" – Kramatorsk



NGO "Podillya Legal League"
– Khmelnytskyi



"Chuhuiv Human Rights Group"
– Chuhuiv



"Human Rights Group 'SICH'" –
Dnipro



NGO "Community Growth
Center" – Kovel



"Northern Human Rights
Group" – Sumy



"Rivne Human Rights Group"
– Rivne

Public Reception Offices: **the widest legal aid network in Ukraine**

In 2025, UHHRU continued to develop the country's largest network of public reception offices, ensuring access to justice for the most vulnerable categories of citizens. The network covered 20 reception offices in 18 regions of Ukraine, effectively covering most regional centers. A team of professional lawyers and attorneys worked in a multi-format mode: providing in-person consultations at offices, telephone consultations, field visits directly to communities, and online support.

Scale of Assistance Provided

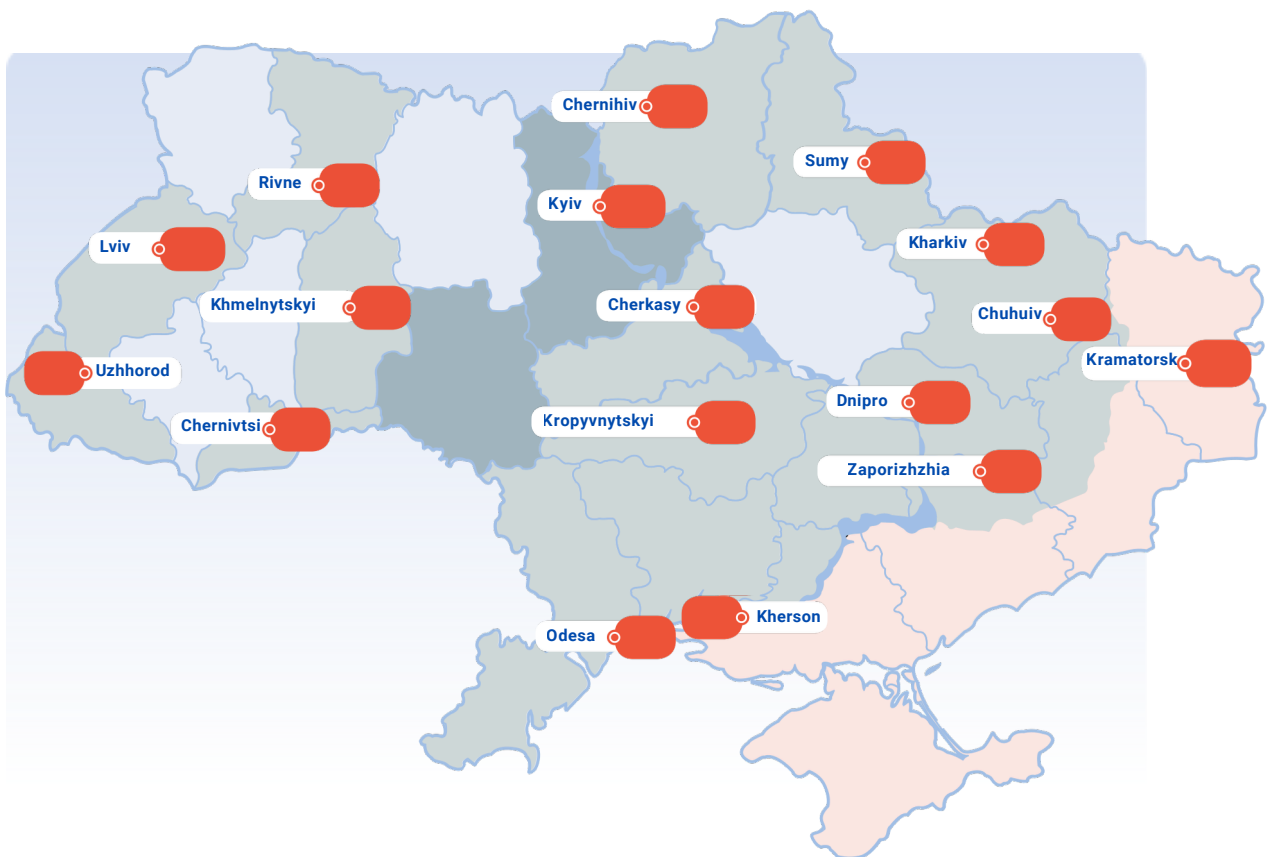
The network's results in 2025 demonstrate its critical importance for Ukrainian society: the reception offices processed 6,827 inquiries from citizens — 47.7% men and 52.3% women. Most inquiries came from Kyiv (1,469), Zaporizhzhia (1,207), Lviv (701), Kherson (455), and Cherkasy (447) — these five offices together received nearly 60% of all inquiries to the network.

Of the cases reviewed, 685 were completed with document preparation, 186 with preparation of procedural court documents, 22 involved court representation, 62 involved representation before central and local authorities, and 18 involved appeals to international institutions.

The most common channel for inquiries remains the telephone (53.2%), followed by in-person visits (27.6%). Field consultations in communities and inquiries via website or email each accounted for 8.3% — this format is used especially actively in Zaporizhzhia and Rivne, where field work is one of the key channels of client engagement. The reception offices also maintain several chatbots for online consultations, moderated by lawyers from the reception offices and the SLC — a lifesaving format when an in-person visit is physically impossible.

Public Reception Offices: **map**

Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union provides free legal aid through a network of public reception offices. You can find the contact information for our reception offices **[via the link on our website](#)**.



685

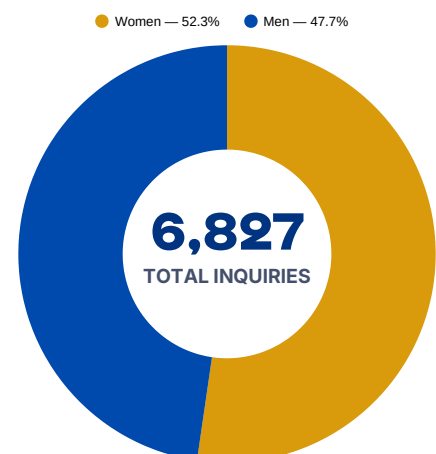
CASES WITH DOCUMENTS PREPARED

Plus 186 procedural court filings, 22 court representations, 18 appeals to international bodies.

20

RECEPTION OFFICES

Across 18 regions of Ukraine.

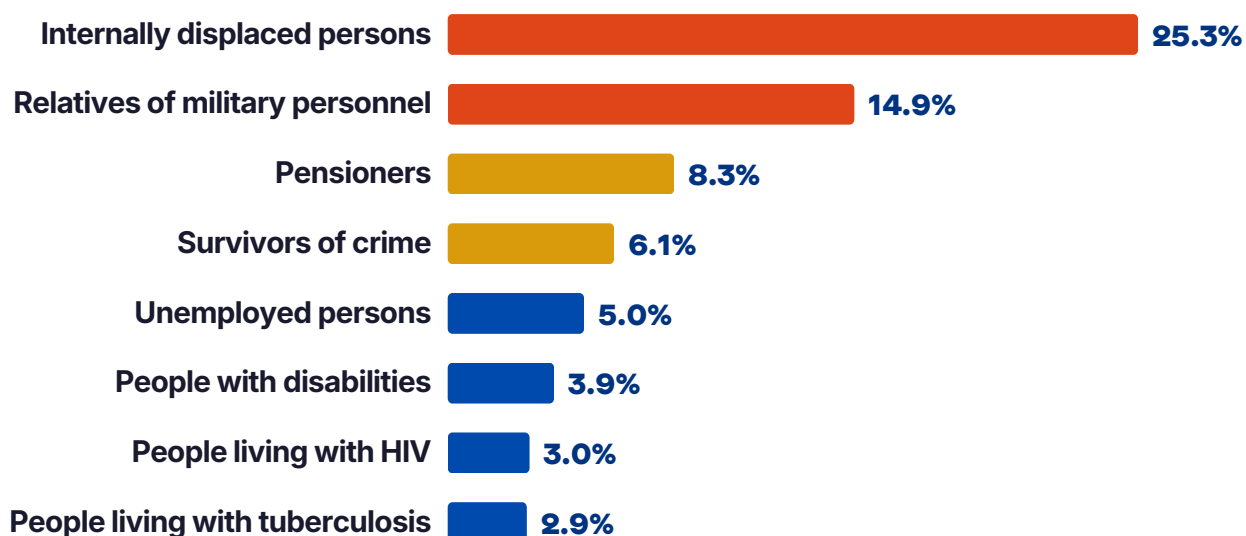


Client Profile: Reflecting Ukrainian Realities

The structure of inquiries vividly reflects the social challenges of wartime. The largest group of clients were internally displaced persons (25.3%): people who lost their homes to Russian aggression and needed legal support in restoring documents, obtaining social benefits, and protecting housing rights. The concentration of IDPs is especially high among clients of the reception offices in Kramatorsk and Zaporizhzhia, regions closest to the front line.

Relatives and family members of military personnel (14.9%) sought help resolving specific legal issues related to military service and its consequences. Traditionally vulnerable groups made up a significant share: pensioners (8.3%), survivors of crime (6.1%), the unemployed (5%), people with disabilities (3.9%), people living with HIV (3%), and people living with tuberculosis (2.9%).

Other categories of clients included civic activists, convicted persons and their relatives, single mothers, and members of the LGBT+ community, demonstrating the universal need for qualified legal aid among the most diverse segments of the population.



Thematic Scope: From Everyday to Systemic Issues

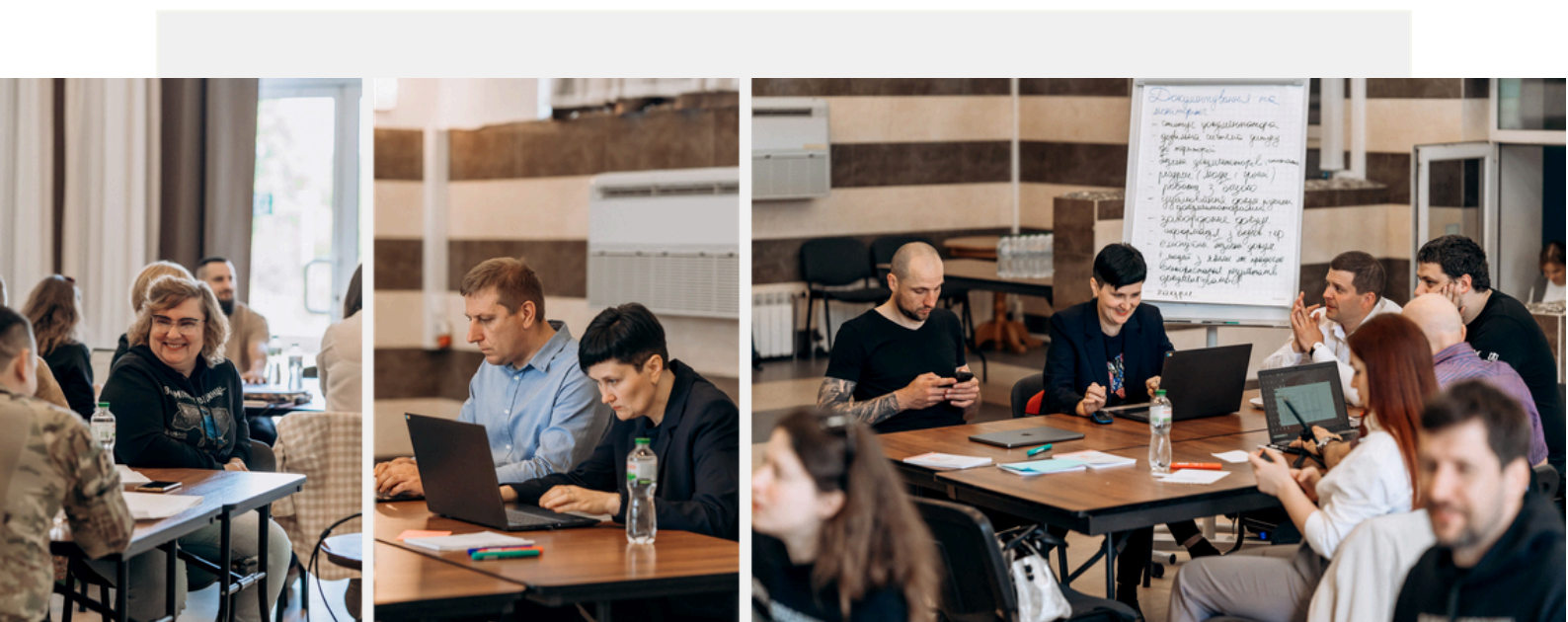
Citizens most often sought help on issues of social guarantees (15.5%) and civil law: compensation for damaged property and inheritance cases (11.5%). A significant share concerned access to information (11.3%) and reparations (6.4%), mostly related to the consequences of the war. Also actively addressed were violations of the right to health (4.5%), criminal law (4.4%), pension law (3.5%), family law (3.3%), and housing law (3.2%).

A wide range of other topics included labor law, violations during court proceedings and pre-trial investigations, torture and ill-treatment, and discrimination, confirming the complex nature of the legal problems Ukrainians face, which the network deals with every day.

Systemic Impact and Precedents

The work of the public reception offices went far beyond providing individual consultations. Cases showing signs of systemic violations were referred to UHHRU's Strategic Litigation Center, ensuring a comprehensive approach to resolving problems and shaping new court practice.

Every statistic has a human face. The stories of reception-office clients demonstrate not only individual victories but also systemic shifts in legal practice.



Client Stories

Protection of Parental Rights

Two minor children were removed from their family while the father was on sick leave for official opioid substitution therapy. UHHRU lawyers conducted parallel administrative and civil proceedings and gathered medical evidence and character references.

The court of first instance and the appellate court dismissed the child-welfare service's claim, but even after the final ruling the authorities delayed the children's return. Thanks to persistent advocacy, the father was reunited with his children after nearly six months of separation.



Deferral for a Single Father

A man had been raising his daughter alone since 2018. To obtain a deferral from mobilization, he needed a separate court ruling establishing the fact of sole custody. UHHRU lawyers gathered evidence from child-welfare services, schools, and medical institutions, and represented the father in court for more than five months. On August 7, 2025, the ruling granting deferral until his daughter reaches adulthood took effect.



Social Assistance for the Child of a Fallen Defender

A woman evacuated from an occupied city, lost her husband in the war, but was denied child assistance due to the absence of documents that could not be obtained under occupation. Reception-office lawyers built a legal position based on national legislation, the principle of the child's best interests, and ECHR case law, and pursued the case through the appellate court — the refusal was overturned, and the woman received the assistance due to her.



Right to Medical Documentation

A woman was seriously injured during a missile strike on a hotel in Kryvyi Rih in February 2025. The hospital refused to issue documents about her injury needed for charitable assistance, citing the fact that she was receiving opioid substitution therapy. After a formal inquiry from UHHRU lawyers, the hospital issued the full set of documents within a week. The woman was officially recognized as a survivor of a war crime, and the lawyers also secured official hospital recommendations to prevent similar discrimination in the future.

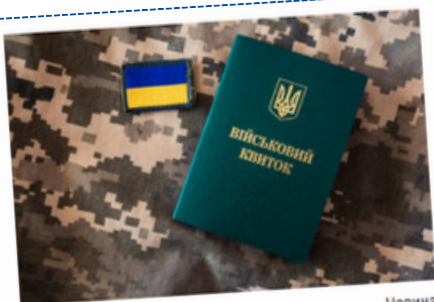


31.07.2025

Новина

«Ви наркозалежна, тому документів не буде»: як жінка з Запоріжжя боролася за медичні довідки після...

Right to Treatment for a Serviceman with Hepatitis C



06.08.2025

Новина

Боротьба за право на лікування: як військовий з гепатитом С намагався відновити свої права

A serviceman contracted hepatitis C while being treated for a combat injury, but medical institutions refused for almost a year to officially record the diagnosis, which blocked his access to treatment and discharge from service. Thanks to legal submissions and inquiries by UHHRU lawyers, the diagnosis was entered into his medical records, the man received free antiviral therapy, the illness was recognized as service-related, and he was discharged from the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Payment for a Veteran

A veteran wounded during service in Afghanistan and shell-shocked in eastern Ukraine in 2015–2016 spent six years seeking a one-time financial payment, which the Ministry of Defense commission systematically denied him. With the support of a reception-office lawyer, the case was brought to the Supreme Court of Ukraine, which ordered the Ministry of Defense to make the payment in accordance with the second disability group.

Recognition of Property Rights and Status of a Fallen Defender

Lawyers secured recognition of ownership of an apartment that a registrar had refused to register, citing an allegedly incomplete set of documents — the claim was granted in full. In a second case, the appellate court declared a serviceman who went missing in Russia's Kursk region to have died while performing a combat mission — giving the sister of the deceased grounds to formalize inheritance rights and payments.

Legal Education and Awareness-Raising

Another important part of the reception-office network's work is legal education among residents of the regions. In 2025, the reception offices and the head office held 139 information and awareness-raising events — lectures, presentations, publications in the media and on social networks, and videos. The reception offices in Rivne (30 events) and Cherkasy (17) were the most active in awareness-raising work.

Topics covered a wide range of pressing issues: pension matters, reforms, human rights in the context of interactions with the police, protection from domestic violence, countering bullying of IDP children, and, of course, overcoming the legal consequences of the war.

Research and Monitoring

Alongside providing individual legal aid, the reception offices in eight cities — Sumy, Dnipro, Cherkasy, Lviv, Zaporizhzhia, Chernihiv, Odesa, and Kherson — served as the network's research resource, identifying and analyzing regional trends in human rights violations. The results of research conducted by the reception offices in 2024 were actively published and covered throughout 2025, while monitoring and data collection continued directly throughout the year.

A separate initiative is the "Local Human Rights Index" project: throughout the year, the monitoring methodology was updated, positive human-rights-protection practices in communities were recorded, and, based on the assessment results, communities received recommendations for improving the situation.

The reception offices also took part in documentation within the "Tribunal for Putin" initiative — presenting findings at specialized events, with materials from field visits included in an international photo exhibition on Russia's war crimes.

Data collected by reception offices in frontline and war-affected regions also formed the basis of an analytical review of systemic problems in protecting survivors' rights, prepared for an international consortium working to strengthen judicial accountability in Ukraine — this review became the foundation for training modules for judges and prosecutors.

Strengthening the Network: Donor-Funded Projects

Part of the reception offices' work in 2025 was reinforced by individual donor-funded projects that complemented network-wide activity with targeted support for vulnerable groups and systemic analysis.

Within a project providing comprehensive support to survivors of war crimes, reception offices in Kyiv, Kherson, Lviv, Zaporizhzhia, and Chernihiv provided 661 legal consultations — mainly on state compensation, reparations for destroyed housing, confirmation of status, and pension provision for IDPs. In parallel, reception offices in Kyiv, Lviv, and Zaporizhzhia, supported by colleagues in Rivne, Zhytomyr, and Dnipro, provided specialized legal aid to people living with HIV, tuberculosis patients, and other risk groups: in the second half of the year alone, 632 inquiries were recorded, and the "Legal Bot 100% LIFE" chatbot conducted more than 2,200 sessions and 1,300 information sessions.



Strategic Significance

UHHRU's public reception offices are the primary link in human rights work, where the path to justice begins. This is where people first encounter the system for protecting their rights and receive help and understanding of justice mechanisms. This foundational work creates the ground for further development of court practice, identification of systemic problems, and the formation of new approaches to human rights protection. The reception offices combine day-to-day assistance to people with the accumulation of experience that becomes the basis for strategic litigation and deeper changes in Ukraine's legal system.

Strategic Litigation Center: its role in advancing human rights protection practice

In 2025, UHHRU's Strategic Litigation Center (SLC) supported and continued to support more than 200 cases at the European Court of Human Rights, most of which concern the consequences of the full-scale invasion: civilian deaths, injuries, abductions, torture in captivity, and destruction of property. A separate area covers cases concerning systemic flaws in Ukrainian legislation and judicial practice, where what is needed is not just individual rulings but changes in practice. Six of these cases concluded with rulings that set precedents in the areas of electoral rights, attorney-client privilege, freedom of assembly, and protection of property rights.

Strategic Cases: National Level and Thematic Areas

Among the completed cases: challenging an incorrect recalculation of a sentence term for a person forcibly taken to Russian territory while serving a sentence; restoring access to treatment for a chronic illness for a demobilized serviceman; and protection against discrimination based on disclosure of health status in a family dispute.

Among the main categories of cases handled by the SLC in 2025:

- Torture and ill-treatment of prisoners of war. Cases of medics and fighters of the "Azov" unit captured during the evacuation from "Azovstal": beatings, torture, and detention without medical care and without access to the ICRC.
- Ineffective investigation of servicemen's deaths. Cases where the investigation classified a death as suicide, while families dispute this conclusion and demand a full investigation. Proceedings in such cases often stall for years without initiative from the families.
- Compensation for moral damage to survivors of sexual violence
- Enforced disappearances of civilians. Cases involving the abduction of men by the occupying authorities — the applicants (mostly wives and mothers) exhausted domestic remedies in Ukraine and Russia and turned to the UN Human Rights Committee requesting priority review and interim measures.
- Property, pension, and status issues. Recognition of property rights to real estate in temporarily occupied territory, restoration of pension payments for IDPs, and establishment of legal facts needed to receive payments.
- Unlawful deportation and conviction on Russian territory. In particular, a case concerning forcible removal and an 11-year prison sentence handed down following a sham trial.
- Rights of mobilized and demobilized persons. Challenging decisions of military medical commissions, protection from unlawful accusations of unauthorized absence from a unit during treatment, and the right to alternative service for clergy.

ECHR Rulings in 2025

Pozdniakov and Others v. Ukraine

The applicants — residents of Donetsk who relocated to Cherkasy due to the armed conflict and registered as internally displaced persons — could only vote using party lists in local and parliamentary elections. The authorities refused to change their voter registration address, on the grounds that they “did not belong” to the community at their new place of residence.

On May 2, 2025, the ECHR found a violation of Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 in conjunction with Article 14 — discrimination against IDPs in electoral rights. The Court ordered Ukraine to reform the voter-registration procedure so that displaced persons can fully exercise their right to vote regardless of displacement status.

Reznik v. Ukraine

The case concerned a search of a lawyer’s home in 2013. During the investigation of the lawyer’s client, investigators seized computers and data-storage devices without providing any safeguards for attorney-client privilege. On January 23, 2025, the Court found a violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 13 (right to an effective remedy). The ruling emphasizes that searches of lawyers require special procedural safeguards and effective mechanisms for appeal.

Biliavska v. Ukraine

A homeowner who allowed her adult children to live there temporarily filed an eviction claim after their behavior made it impossible for her to return home. The courts applied the 1983 Housing Code and denied the claim. The ECHR found a violation of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 and Article 8, noting that applying Soviet-era legislation “does not correspond to modern realities” and that the courts had failed to take into account the applicant’s vulnerability — an elderly woman trying to return to her own home.

Vyacheslavova and Others v. Ukraine

The case concerns the events of May 2, 2014 in Odesa — the deaths of people in the fire at the Trade Union Building. Relatives of the deceased and injured persons challenged the police's inaction and the absence of an effective investigation. On March 13, 2025, the ECHR found a violation of Article 2 (right to life) in both its substantive and procedural aspects: the state failed to prevent the deaths, failed to organize a timely rescue, and failed to conduct an effective investigation. For the applicant represented by UHHRU lawyers, the Court additionally found a violation of Article 8 — due to the delay in returning her father's body.

Bohai and Others v. Ukraine

Participants in a peaceful protest against the use of animals in performances were detained by police without explanation and taken to a police station, effectively ending the demonstration at its outset. The ECHR found a violation of Article 5 § 1 (right to liberty) and Article 11 (freedom of peaceful assembly): the police failed to justify why detention was used instead of less restrictive measures.

Alakhverdian v. Ukraine

The case concerned a review of a conviction by the Supreme Court after the ECHR had previously found a violation — specifically, the use of confessions obtained without a lawyer present. The Supreme Court excluded some of the evidence but upheld the conviction without explaining why the remaining evidence was not considered derivative of the unlawful confession. The ECHR found that such a limited review does not meet the requirements of a fair trial, and that full restoration of the right is possible only through a fresh examination of the merits of the case.

Amicus Curiae to the Constitutional Court of Ukraine

In November 2025, UHHRU submitted a legal opinion to the Constitutional Court regarding a provision that, under martial law, mandates pretrial detention for servicemen accused of committing war crimes, without the possibility of choosing an alternative preventive measure.

In UHHRU's view, this provision fails to protect against arbitrariness, deprives the court of discretion, and effectively nullifies the right to judicial protection. A similar provision was already declared unconstitutional in a Constitutional Court ruling of June 25, 2019. Engagement with the Constitutional Court through amicus curiae submissions allows influencing constitutionally significant issues before a ruling is adopted, rather than after.



Why This Matters

Through the combined experience of SLC lawyers and the network of public reception offices, UHHRU provides legal aid in cases that not only restore justice for specific survivors but also create precedents capable of changing legislation, administrative practice, and state accountability to society.

Changes in voter-registration practice for IDPs, strengthened safeguards during searches of lawyers, standards of police conduct at peaceful protests, and the priority of modern legislation over Soviet-era norms in housing disputes — each of 2025's rulings has consequences extending far beyond the individual case.

More than 200 cases related to war crimes are currently pending review. Their outcome will determine what accountability Russia bears for what it has done and what reparations survivors will receive. The Center continues to shape legal standards and support these cases — combining national and international experience in human rights protection.

Analytical Department: **data collection and analysis as the foundation for decision-making**

In 2025, UHHRU's analytical work remained the foundation for documenting war crimes, supporting international advocacy, and shaping recommendations for state policy. The team of analysts turned collected facts into research, submissions to international institutions, and materials for expert discussions — ensuring the connection between the work of the reception-office network, the Strategic Litigation Center, and international accountability mechanisms.

The “Tribunal for Putin” Initiative: three years of work in review

On March 25, 2025, the “Tribunal for Putin” (T4P) Initiative published the results of three years of work: nearly 85,000 documented war crimes and nine submissions to the International Criminal Court. UHHRU takes part in the Initiative as one of the specialized human rights organizations, providing documentation and analysis of episodes for the T4P database.



Research work of the reception-office network

In 2025, the analytical work of UHHRU's public reception-office network continued. The team published materials building on previous work: covering access to reparations, showing how the state and communities respect the dignity of survivors, and identifying gaps in legislation and the institutional inability of certain authorities to respond to people's needs.

Publications by the reception-office network in 2025

• How IDP councils in Cherkasy region can work more effectively: expert recommendations

• How communities in Dnipropetrovsk region uphold the rights of owners of damaged and destroyed housing

• Number of domestic violence cases in Sumy region increased by 20%

• What hinders the restoration of destroyed and damaged property in Kherson region

• Shortage of places and unsatisfactory accommodation conditions, limited access to humanitarian aid: problems of IDPs in Kirovograd region

• Social adaptation of displaced persons in Volyn region: challenges and prospects

• How Rivne region documents damage caused by Russian shelling

• Shortage of school places, online learning, and limited access to extracurricular activities: challenges facing IDP children

• Employment during the war: the experience of Vinnytsia region

• Research on the right to a safe environment for life and health under wartime conditions within Khmelnytskyi region

• Analysis of the current state and employment issues of the population in Chernivtsi region and in Ukraine

• Education under shelling: how frontline communities in Donetsk region fight for children's right to education

• Poltava region — among the leaders in IDP integration: experience, challenges, prospects

Cooperation with the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry

Systematic cooperation with the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on violations in Ukraine continued in 2025. Through a series of meetings, including in May and August, the Union shared evidence on Russian war crimes. During the UN delegation's August visit to UHHRU's office, participants discussed legal obstacles to compensation for destroyed housing, torture of prisoners of war, persecution of civilians in temporarily occupied territories, and the practice of fabricated cases.

Earlier, UHHRU had appealed to the UN Commission to investigate the Russian military's use of drones for remote mining and attacks on civilians on the right bank of Kherson region. The UN Commission took this submission into account in its report and recognized drone attacks on civilians in Kherson region as crimes against humanity.

OSCE Human Dimension Conference (Warsaw)



On October 9, 2025, a side event was held as part of the OSCE Human Dimension Conference in Warsaw, dedicated to Russia's practice of enforced disappearances and unlawful detention in temporarily occupied territories and on its own territory. UHHRU representatives presented the results of documenting Russian crimes against prisoners of war and the unlawful imprisonment of civilians. The event was organized by the humanitarian initiative "Search. Captivity" together with T4P Initiative organizations: the Center for Civil Liberties, UHHRU, and the Center for Law Enforcement Studies (CLEAR).

PRAVA Project: Judicial Accountability and Protection of Survivors' Rights

In 2025, UHHRU began participating in the "Protecting Victim Rights through Judicial Accountability in Ukraine" (PRAVA) project under the Matra Government to Government program, running from 2025 to 2029. The project is implemented together with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee (NHC) and the East Ukrainian Center for Civic Initiatives (EUCCI). Its goal is to strengthen the rule of law and judicial accountability in Ukraine through the protection of survivors' rights.

UHHRU participates in the project's Steering Committee and Core Team, as well as in the working group on survivor support. UHHRU analysts prepared a structured review of systemic problems in protecting survivors' rights, based on data from the network of public reception offices. They described the legal and procedural obstacles in cases of captivity, torture, enforced disappearance, and property damage, and separately identified gaps in support for civilians after release, in reparations mechanisms, in the protection of IDP rights, and in social guarantees for servicemen, veterans, and their families. The review was prepared in Ukrainian and English and shared with partners as a basis for defining advocacy priorities.

UHHRU analysts also contributed to revising the curriculum and developing two specialized modules for the National School of Judges and the Prosecutors' Training Center. The modules focus on protecting survivors' rights during armed conflict and on applying the EU Directive on the rights of victims of war crimes. Consortium coordination took place at a working seminar in Kraków (September 30–October 1, 2025) and a strategic session in The Hague (December 1–5, 2025), where partners summed up the project's first stage and defined next steps.

Discussion Platform on Transitional Justice

On December 9, 2025, on the eve of Human Rights Day, UHHRU held a discussion platform titled "A New Human Rights Strategy: Transitional Justice as a Path to Restoring Human Rights." The event brought together 76 representatives of government bodies, civil society organizations, international partners, and the academic community, who sought approaches to integrating transitional justice mechanisms into the new National Human Rights Strategy through 2035. The platform was structured around three panels: the right to truth; justice and accountability; and reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence.

Panel 1. The Right to Truth. Moderated by Oleksandra Romantsova, Executive Director of the Center for Civil Liberties. Speakers discussed documentation and memorialization as tools for shaping narratives for Ukraine's advocacy, as well as the issue of missing persons and their relatives' access to information. Panelists included Tetiana Shevchenko (State Archival Service), Anton Drobovych (KSE Center for Human Rights and War Memorialization), Oksana Romaniuk (Institute of Mass Information), and Yuliia Yanchuk (Ministry of Culture).

Panel 2. Justice and Accountability. Moderated by Olena Semorkina, UHHRU analyst. The focus was on challenges facing the national justice system during wartime: risks of policy on collaboration activity and in-absentia sentences, and the resilience of the judicial system. Panelists included Supreme Court Judge Mykola Mazur, Office of the Prosecutor General representative Stanislav Petrenko, Roman Romanov (International Renaissance Foundation), Mykola Yurlov (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Mykhailo Tarakhkalo (Head of UHHRU's Strategic Litigation Center).



Panel 3. Reparations, Survivor Support, and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence.

Moderated by Alona Luniova, Advocacy Director of the ZMINA Human Rights Center. The discussion centered on the effectiveness of national survivor-support programs amid limited resources, the contribution of institutional and anti-corruption reforms to sustainable peace, and the role of human rights education. Panelists included Veronika Plotnikova (Office of the Prosecutor General), Inna Zavorotko (Ministry of Defense), Yuliia Lykhach (Higher School of Public Governance), Kseniia Hedz (Right to Protection Charitable Foundation), and Mykhailo Kamenev (Register of Damage for Ukraine).



Platform participants identified key structural problems: the state still lacks a unified transitional justice policy and a responsible body, and there is a lack of interagency coordination and resources to support survivors. Following the discussion, participants developed a shared vision of a coordination model between the state and civil society, to be reflected in the National Strategy and the transitional justice framework policy.



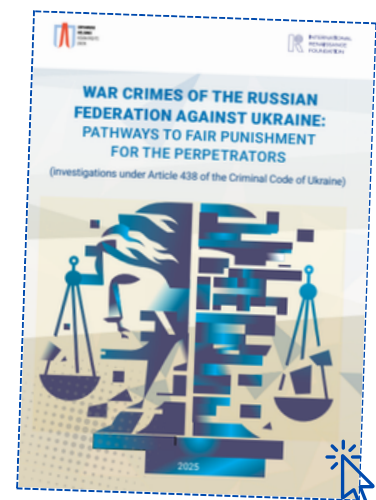
Policy and Legislative Engagement

Research on War Crimes Investigation Practices

During the second half of 2025, the analytical team worked on a study titled “War Crimes of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine: Pathways to Just Punishment of Perpetrators (Investigations under Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine).” The study covered the period from February 24, 2022 to September 30, 2025. Analysts reviewed official data, court practice, and open sources, and surveyed 181 law enforcement officers (64 prosecutors and 117 National Police investigators) and 44 defense lawyers.

The study revealed a gap between the number of registered crimes and actual indictments and convictions. Analysts pointed to staffing and resource overload in the law enforcement system, difficulties in classifying crimes, shortcomings in interagency cooperation, and procedural challenges in in-absentia proceedings. Based on this analysis, they formulated practical recommendations for strengthening the state’s institutional capacity.

The study’s findings were presented on February 3, 2026, with the participation of Roman Romanov (International Renaissance Foundation), Oleksandr Pavlichenko (UHHRU Executive Director), and Aksana Filipishyna and Vladlena Padun (UHHRU analysts), followed by a public discussion involving representatives of the National Police, the Office of the Prosecutor General, the Coordination Center for Legal Aid Provision, and the Center for Civil Liberties.



Working Group at the Ministry of Justice: Democratic Reforms and the National Human Rights Strategy

UHHRU analysts were included in a working group at the Ministry of Justice tasked with developing the Roadmap on the Functioning of Democratic Institutions — part of fulfilling the requirements of the first EU accession negotiating cluster, “Fundamentals.” The Cabinet of Ministers approved this document by Order №475-r of May 14, 2025.

Separately, analysts took part in expert sessions at the Ministry of Justice on the draft National Human Rights Strategy through 2035 and prepared proposals for the text of the document.

Volunteer Activity: Coordinating NBU Requirements

UHHRU representatives are regularly involved in meetings on volunteer-movement issues chaired by Iryna Vereshchuk, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. In 2025, the Union raised the issue of volunteer integrity criteria under National Bank of Ukraine Resolution No. 102 of August 27, 2024. Following consultations with the Center for Democracy and Rule of Law, the ZMINA Human Rights Center, and other organizations, UHHRU analysts prepared an analytical brief and a letter to the NBU proposing changes to eliminate risks to volunteer activity, and held coordination meetings with bank representatives.

Children's Rights: Legislative Advocacy

Recruitment of Children into Armed Conflict

Analysts drew attention to a problem society still insufficiently recognizes: adults recruiting Ukrainian children through social media to gather information about military facilities or to take part in sabotage against the military. The team examined whether Article 438 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine provides sufficient tools to hold recruiters accountable.

Joint Custody, Evacuation of Children, Mentorship

Analysts represented UHHRU's position at several Verkhovna Rada platforms:

- Subcommittee on Family and Children's Affairs (Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy): discussed draft laws No. 12123 and No. 12132 on joint parental custody, which take different approaches to preserving a child's connection with both parents after divorce, with the second proposing joint custody as the default model. Also reviewed draft law No. 12353 on mandatory evacuation of children from dangerous territories.
- Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy: reviewed the same three draft laws, as well as draft law No. 13200 on mentorship.
- Consultations with the Committee on Legal Policy: analysts provided proposals on introducing guardianship by order — a simplified mechanism for quickly appointing a guardian for a child in an emergency, without a lengthy court procedure.
- Working group on the mentorship draft law (No. 13200): analysts contributed to drafting the document establishing support for children left without parental care through an adult mentor. On December 18, 2025, the Verkhovna Rada adopted the law, and the President signed it.

Repeal of Ministry of Education and Science Order No. 1112

At the request of the education ombudsman, analysts prepared an analytical brief on Ministry of Education and Science Order No. 1112, which effectively restricted access to education for children from temporarily occupied territories, combat zones, and those evacuated abroad. After public backlash and criticism from human rights defenders, MPs, and frontline communities, the ministry fully repealed the order in July 2025.

Status of Children Affected by the War

Analysts reviewed Law of Ukraine No. 4438-IX of May 14, 2025, which expanded the range of children eligible for status as war-affected persons: this now also applies to children deported or forcibly displaced by the enemy, regardless of their current location.

One-Time Assistance for Orphaned Children of Fallen Servicemen

Analysts identified a gap in the procedure for granting one-time financial assistance: current orders of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs allow only an official guardian to apply for the assistance, while children raised by foster caregivers, foster families, or family-type children's homes are effectively excluded from the list of recipients. UHHRU appealed to the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Defense, proposing to fix this gap.

Protection of Personal Data of Children in Conflict with the Law

Following UHHRU's intervention, a violation of the confidentiality of children in conflict with the law by the Ministry of Education and Science was stopped. The Union discovered that personal data of minor offenders had been published in open ministry orders and appealed to the Ombudsman. After the appeal, the Ministry anonymized the data, bringing its practice into line with the Beijing and Havana Rules on the protection of children's personal data.

Statements and Appeals

UHHRU analysts contributed to several joint statements and appeals by civil society during the year:

- Statement on draft law No. 13071 on the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons, which proposes abolishing visa requirements for humanitarian workers and volunteers during martial law;
- Statement on the need to change legislation for the social protection of civilians unlawfully deprived of liberty as a result of Russian aggression;
- Appeal to Parliament on repealing Law No. 4555 and restoring the independence of NABU and SAPO;
- Appeal by member organizations of the "Tribunal for Putin" Initiative regarding the criminal prosecution of Vitalii Shabunin.

Educational Activities:

knowledge that changes practice

In 2025, UHHRU's educational direction expanded its work on integrating transitional justice topics into the professional training of civil servants, local government representatives, lawyers, teachers, and young people. The organization developed regulatory and methodological frameworks, conducted training for various professional groups, and supported those who go on to independently spread this knowledge in the regions.

2025 in Numbers

730**public servants**

completed 5 specialized courses on transitional justice

110**senior category "A" officials**

— heads of regional and district administrations — mastered the application of IHL and transitional justice in their work

89**trainers**

from the civil-servant professional-development system trained to teach transitional justice topics

10**regional professional-development centers**

began teaching their own courses

16**student teams**

from across Ukraine took part in the Debate Tournament

5**specialized training courses**

developed for various categories of civil servants

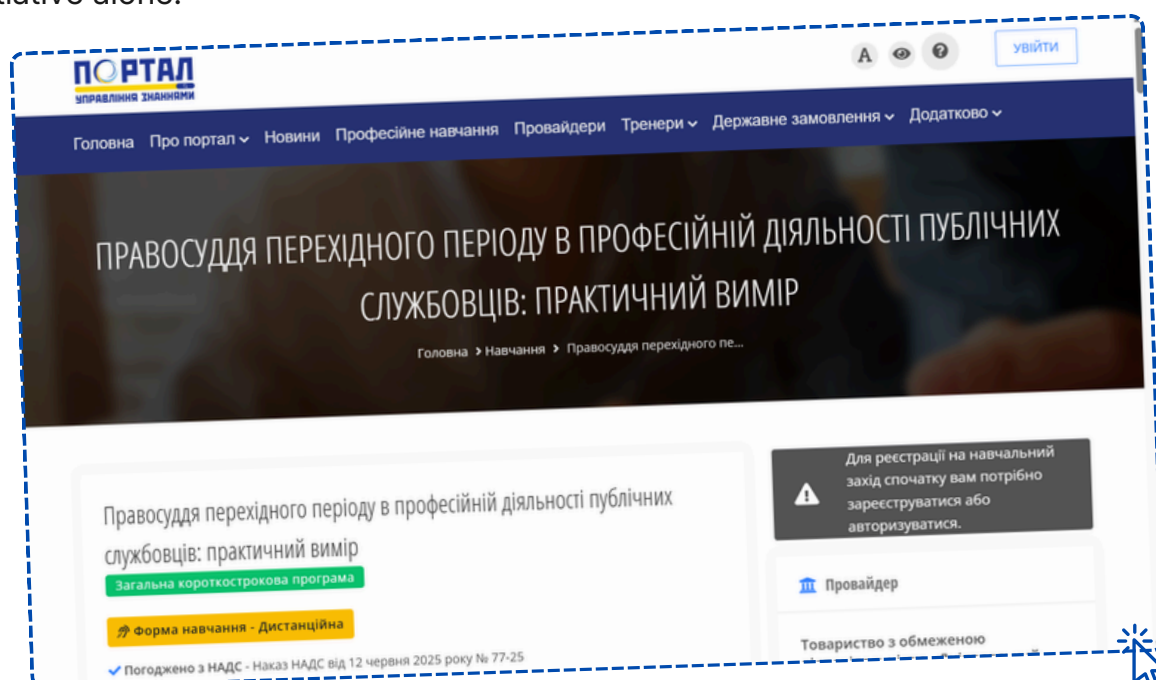
Transitional Justice in the Civil Servant Training System

During the reporting period, the integration of transitional justice topics into the system of professional training and continuing education for civil servants was strengthened. An educational, methodological, and institutional foundation was created for the systematic application of transitional justice principles in the professional activity of state and local government authorities.

An important result of 2025 was the approval **by the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service Affairs of the standard professional-development program “Transitional Justice in the Professional Activity of Civil Servants: A Practical Dimension.”** The topic of transitional justice thus received formally established status in Ukraine’s civil-servant training system.

Based on this program, in partnership with the Higher School of Public Governance, an **online course “Transitional Justice in the Professional Activity of Civil Servants: A Practical Dimension”** was developed and placed on the Higher School of Public Governance’s educational platform, StudyIA.

Thanks to this, officials and other professionals at various levels — from central government bodies to local administrations — will be able to take survivors’ rights into account in their daily work, relying on established standards rather than personal initiative alone.



Who Was Trained: From Civil Servants to Senior Officials

5 specialized distance-learning courses were developed and delivered for various categories of civil servants, tailored to their professional functions — in the areas of rule-making, provision of administrative services, social protection, documentation and archiving, reparations, memorialization, and state policy formation. The training reached 730 civil servants from various regions of Ukraine — 551 women and 179 men. This more than doubled the planned target of 300 participants.

At the request of the Higher School of Public Governance, a separate course was held for 110 senior civil service officials — heads of regional and district state administrations from all regions of Ukraine. Participants mastered the practical application of international humanitarian law and transitional justice in their work.

The training helped civil servants develop a practical understanding of the state's role in ensuring survivors' rights, restoring justice, and strengthening public trust. Participants worked with tools for documenting human rights violations and harm, applying reparations mechanisms, working with archives, memorialization, reintegration of de-occupied territories, as well as principles of human-centeredness, non-discrimination, and accessibility of public services.

Training Trainers: Education Spreads Across the Regions

89 trainers — representatives of professional-development centers, government authorities, local self-government, and higher education institutions — completed four specialized training sessions and were added to the Higher School of Public Governance's trainer registry. After the training, the UHHRU team supported 30 program graduates: holding 13 mentoring sessions and reviewing 13 training programs. As a result, 6 regional professional-development centers began teaching their own courses on transitional justice.

An important outcome was the integration of transitional justice topics into the regional system of professional training. As a result of this work, 8 programs were approved by the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service Affairs and prepared for implementation by the Zaporizhzhia, Vinnytsia, Volyn, Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Poltava, and Zhytomyr regional professional-development centers.

Training Trainers: Education Spreads Across the Regions



To ensure sustainable training quality, a teaching and methodology guide, “Culture and Practice of Teaching Transitional Justice for Civil Servants,” was prepared and received a recommendation for publication from the Higher School of Public Governance. In addition, based on the results of the specialized courses, a practical guide, “Transitional Justice: Tools and Practices for the Civil Service,” was developed. This has created a standardized methodological base that trainers, teachers, and professional-training providers can use.

A separate outcome was the formation of a professional community of transitional-justice specialists, bringing together representatives of government bodies, local self-government, the professional-training system, academia, and civil society. On January 29, 2026, a discussion platform, “Best Practices and Challenges in Implementing Transitional Justice Mechanisms,” was held in Kyiv with 84 specialists, additionally watched online by 740 people, which strengthened cross-sector dialogue and generated demand for further exchange of practices and systemic cooperation.

As a result, transitional justice has gained a practical foundation for further integration into the civil-servant professional-training system — from training trainers and developing training programs to their approval by the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service Affairs and the direct training of hundreds of civil servants. This creates the preconditions for further scaling of approaches and their application in shaping and implementing state and local policy during the transitional and post-war periods.

Course “Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict”

On November 24, 2025, a year-long course for judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and lecturers concluded, held jointly with the National School of Judges of Ukraine and the Higher School of Advocacy of the National Bar Association of Ukraine.

The course consisted of three modules totaling 180 academic hours. The first covered the international human rights protection system and key articles of the European Convention; the second, international humanitarian law; the third taught how to apply both systems together and address complex questions at their intersection. The training was conducted in a blended format: online sessions combined with in-person meetings, with each module including case analysis and work with real cases.



Students, Young Lawyers, and Policy Influence

Preparing to Train Judges, Prosecutors, and Lawyers

In parallel, preparatory work continued under the MATRA project: consultations with national and international experts on the training needs of the legal community in protecting the rights of survivors of armed conflict, participation in international working groups, and development of the methodology and content of thematic seminars.

Practicum for Master's Students at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (September–November 2025)

A long-standing joint program of UHHRU and the Educational and Scientific Institute of International Relations of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv combined theoretical training with practical experience. Master's students worked on real cases involving the protection of the rights of survivors of armed conflict alongside lawyers, judges, prosecutors, and human rights defenders.

Second Vasyl Ovsienko Debate Tournament (Kyiv, December 8–10, 2025)

The tournament was held in partnership with the Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine, at whose initiative this format was created. 16 teams of law-clinic students from various regions of Ukraine debated the reform of state human rights policy, Ukraine's European integration course and its impact on rights protection, and current challenges facing the human rights community. The debate format gave participants the opportunity to examine complex legal issues from different angles and develop argumentation and public-speaking skills.



Influence on State Education Policy

Oleksandra Kozorog, Head of the Education Department, took part in expert working groups of the Ministry of Education and Science, in particular in developing the Concept for Training Pedagogical Staff and the Conceptual Framework for Civic and Historical Education Fields. This made it possible to integrate a human-rights-based approach and a modern understanding of civic education into the shaping of state education policy.

Summary

In 2025, the topic of transitional justice gained formally established status in the civil-servant training system: the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service Affairs approved a standard professional-development program, on the basis of which an online course, training guides, and a trainer registry were created. 730 civil servants completed training — more than double the planned target — and a further 8 regional programs were prepared for implementation. At the same time, the educational direction supported the legal community and young lawyers, and formed a professional community of transitional-justice specialists for further exchange of practices.

Partners of the direction in 2025

National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service Affairs, Higher School of Public Governance, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, Association of Legal Clinics of Ukraine, State University of Trade and Economics, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, UNDP, the MATRA project, ZMINA Human Rights Center, and the Center for Civil Liberties.

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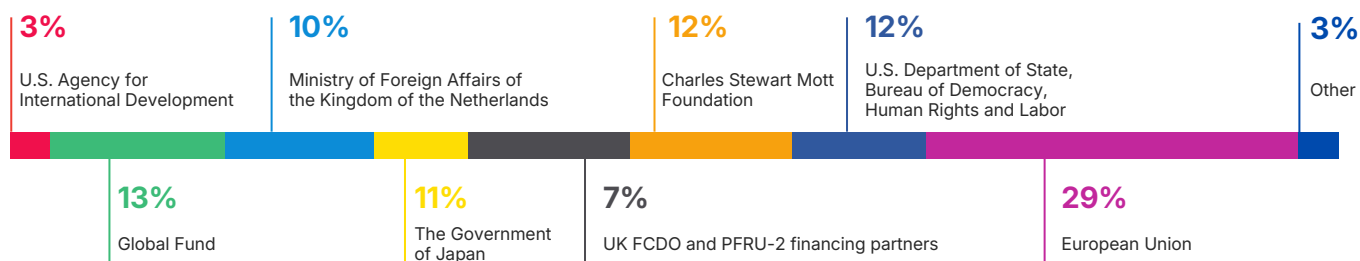


Switzerland.



Financial Report

INCOME (USD):

\$590,378


United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Cooperative agreement # AID-121-A-14-00004	\$17,950
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U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

Agreement with the Human Rights Information Center # SAQMIP24GR5269-UHHRU	\$30,340
Agreement with the Human Rights Information Center # SAQMIP24GR5282-UHHRU	\$38,654
Total from US Department of States:	\$68,994

European Union

Agreement with the Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation # NDICI CRISIS FPI/2023/450-032	\$35,307
Agreement with the International Renaissance Foundation # G55740	\$31,183
Agreement with the International Renaissance Foundation # G55901	\$59,518
Agreement with the Center for Civil Liberties dated 1/12/2025	\$5,997
Agreement with the Center for Civil Liberties dated 15/12/2025	\$8,156
Agreement with the Human Rights Information Center # 6.4(10)-NDICI-THE-NEAR 2024-460-443	\$34,440
Total from EU:	\$174,601

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

\$70,000

UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and PFRU-2 financing partners, Agreement No. 21-GA-07 dated 01.12.2025	\$41,523
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Agreement with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine # 4000006893	\$28,784
Agreement with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee # RBJ-25-01	\$31,625
Total from the Ministry:	\$60,409

The Global Fund

Agreement with the All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV # 027-GF-24	\$78,011
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Every Casualty Worldwide Limited

Agreement dated 1.12.2025 — project "Supporting UHHRU's Casualty Recording Activities"	\$7,902
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The Government of Japan

Agreement with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) #GA-JSB/HR-2025-3	\$64,407
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland

Agreement with the Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine dated 1.12.2025	\$5,025
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Ukrainian Red Cross Society

Book donation	\$1,556
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TOTAL AMOUNT:
\$590,378

Financial Report

PROGRAM COSTS (USD):

Salary	\$131,589
Support of Public Reception Offices	\$65,377
Fees for lawyers and litigation related costs	\$84,034
Fees for experts	\$45,213
Publications and promo-materials	\$693
Public events	\$4,868
Working meetings	\$178
Trainings and other educational activities	\$38,791
Educational events for staff	\$380
Maintenance and update web-sites and databases	\$2,444
Consumables and office supplies	\$1,812
Books, periodicals and data bases	\$644
Communications	\$89
Office rent	\$20,570
Contracted personnel	\$246,432
Total:	\$643,114

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS (USD):

Salary	\$156,080
External audit	\$22,953
Communications	\$1,494
Office rent	\$9,242
Delivery and postage	\$486
Bank fees	\$1,908
Consumables and office supplies	\$814
Contracted personnel	\$17,132
Contingency	\$1,289
Total:	Total: \$211,398

TOTAL AMOUNT

\$854,512

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