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**UKRAINIAN
HELSINKI
HUMAN RIGHTS
UNION**

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USAID HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACTION PROGRAM**

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USAID HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACTION PROGRAM UPDATES

HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING, ANALYTICAL ACTIVITY AND ADVOCACY

Victory over discrimination: Ukraine’s Education Ministry unites “Crimea-Ukraine” and “Donbas-Ukraine” educational centres, thus, easing admission for youth from temporarily occupied territories

The given step is aimed at creating more equal access to higher education for young people residing in the temporarily occupied territories – this is what Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU)/ USAID Human Rights in Action Program in concert with other civil society organizations have been actively campaigning towards and what was made possible including thanks to our efforts. This means that starting from the 2020 admission campaign, enrollees from Crimea and Donbas can choose **from 77 higher education institutions** throughout Ukraine¹ only by the results of exams without passing an External Independent Testing².

While welcoming this decision, we call on the government to eliminate all the existing inequality and discrimination and to secure the state-funded study places for Donbas youth (20% of overall number of available free of charge study places) through introducing for them a Quota-2 Admission Procedure (as already done for the Crimean residents) – [details in Ukrainian](#)³.

Remembrance of conflict’s victims is a crucial layer of Program-tailored transitional justice model for Ukraine

- Human Rights Abuse Documentation Center of UHHRU presented a new thematic report on Kremlin’s war crimes – this time it [recalls events](#) in the town of Kadiyivka (former Stakhanov) of Luhansk Oblast which is still occupied. This edition is a part of the USAID Program-authored series of reports under shared title “Story of a City”, depicting stories of invaded (including already liberated) localities in the conflict-torn Donbas and therefore laying grounds for future reconciliation processes, preserving historic records of tragic events, eventually making justice⁴.
- Unbiased memorization of all conflict victims is one of the foundations upon which transitional justice model rests. Having that as a guiding tenet, our Documentation Center [released the latest statistics](#) on lives lost amidst the armed conflict in Donbas in January-March 2020 ([link in Ukrainian](#)).



¹ As of May 12, **there are 91 HEIs on this list already**, [confirmation link](#) in Ukrainian.

² As compared to the last year’s list of 19 universities for Donbas youth relocated to the government-controlled area, mainly in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

³ See also this [interview](#) with acting Education Minister Lubomira Mandziy in which she provides some explanations for entrants from the temporarily occupied territories on this year’s admission campaign ([link is in Ukrainian](#)).

⁴ To proceed further, the Documentation Center [calls interested individuals](#) ([link is in Ukrainian](#)) to share their conflict-related stories to be included into our upcoming thematic report about Dovzhansk (former Sverdlovsk) of Luhansk Oblast.



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- Reshat Ametov is believed to be the first victim of the occupational regime in Crimea, brutally killed in 2014 for his anti-occupational views. This day the Program [would like to commemorate](#) this brave person, whose case is still under litigation, including in the European Court of Human Rights, with no one brought to responsibility yet (*link is in Ukrainian*).

Unveiling a shared monitoring report on functioning of the renovated entry-exit checkpoints and service zones at the administrative border with Crimea (*links are in Ukrainian*)



USAID Program's legal aid lawyer from Kherson co-presented a new [monitoring report](#) prepared in cooperation with the Presidential Envoy on Crimea, Ministry on Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, "Crimea SOS" NGO, and which is based on the results of a joint monitoring visit held in March 2020.

See this [link](#) with key takeaways from the report to find out whether it is now easier to cross the administrative border for an average traveller.

Amidst COVID-19 outbreak, UHHRU/Program is ready to play its part as human rights defender in this period of great concern (*links are in Ukrainian*)

- UHHRU/ USAID Program lawyer has authored a legal analysis concerning the array of measures taken by the government to combat a spread of the coronavirus pandemic in Ukraine – [while some are unquestioned, others raise ambiguity](#).
- UHHRU Executive Director [delivered comments](#) in regard to what responsibility quarantine-breakers will conceivably bear, particularly those incoming individuals who cross the administrative border with the temporarily occupied Crimea. The publication also depicts some statistical data and measures applied at the entry-exit checkpoints in the Kherson Oblast.

Other related activities by UHHRU in brief:

- *Immediate and effective ceasefire to fight COVID-19*: Civil society issued [appeal](#) to all parties to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.
- The overall human rights situation in the country raises concerns as more and more emergency measures in response to COVID-19 are activated, but their actual remedial potential is questioned on many levels. UHHRU urges the public officials to restrain from unjustified moves and calls to respect human rights, democracy and the rule of law during pandemic as recommended by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in her latest release – [link in Ukrainian/English](#).
- UHHRU jointly with ally human rights groups call on foreign governments [not to lift sanctions](#) against the aggressor-state (thereby allowing it to avoid responsibility for committed violations and war crimes) in the name of countering coronavirus pandemic.



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- European human rights NGOs, including UHHRU, [appealed](#) to the Italian Prime Minister as for the presence of the RF's military in Italy amidst the COVID-19 outbreak.
- The Ukrainska Pravda media outlet released its special project publication titled “Back in the USSR. How Crimea is Being Changed Under Russia’s Occupation” – [link in Ukrainian](#). This material uses UHHRU findings, for instance, from the “[Crimea Beyond Rules](#)” analytical law digests and more.

STRATEGIC LITIGATIONS

Within this direction USAID Human Rights in Action Program supports strategic legal cases domestically and internationally to protect public interests⁵, as well as assures their broad media coverage among professional community and public. Total number of conflict-related UHHRU Strategic Litigation Centre’s (SLC) cases within the Program equals 165.

Chatbot for women to claim child support alimony through court (*links are in Ukrainian*)

USAID Program is glad to announce the immediate [availability](#) of a chatbot, operated by the Strategic Litigation Center of UHHRU. Its main purpose is to help women – primarily, from the conflict-affected region, temporarily occupied territories and those internally displaced – to file a claim for a child support, alimony, if they don't have a chance to seek lawyers' help in person. The chatbot is operational on the various social e-platforms like the Telegram, Facebook as well as on UHHRU's website. [Here is](#) also an explanatory material to help users to figure it out.

The screenshot displays the website of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'NOVINI', 'ANONSI', 'BIBLIOTEKA', 'ZAVKI', 'TENDERY TA VAKANSI', and a search icon. Below the navigation bar, there are three main menu items: 'Про нас', 'Наша робота', and 'Контакти захисту прав людей, вразливих до ВІЛ та ТБ'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Новини' (News) and features three news items with images and text. The right column is titled 'Корисні поради' (Useful advice) and lists various topics such as 'Переселення та кримінал', 'АТО', 'Поліція та суди', 'Активізм (журні збори, протести)', 'Люди з інвалідністю', 'Батьки, діти, сім'я', 'Вкладники банків', 'Праця та пенсія', 'Житло та комуслуги', and 'Допомога ромам'. Below the 'Корисні поради' section, there is a 'Спецтема «Допомога ромам»' (Special topic «Helping Roma») section. On the right side of the page, there is a chatbot interface for 'Робот-крест Україна' (Ukraine Crossbot) with a text box and a 'Введіть повідомлення...' (Enter message...) input field.

⁵ Strategic litigations are one of the most powerful tools of human rights protection; conducted in the interests of a citizen or a group of citizens to achieve systemic changes in the legal field for the benefit of society and used for the purpose of creating the case-law (precedents).



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Step by step justice prevails in military depots blasts' cases in Balakliya, Kharkiv Oblast

Three years ago blasts took lives of two people, ruined private property and caused colossal stress to survivors. Since then Program-supported lawyers have been protecting people in court, and this time we are glad to announce that one more case has turned to be a success story. The Supreme Court ruled that a victim must be paid in the amount of 278,480 UAH as a material damage compensation and additionally 20,000 UAH as a moral damage compensation – [link in Ukrainian](#).

Other related activities by UHHRU in brief:

Application to the European Court of Human Rights

- An application has been filed on behalf of an entrepreneur who continued doing business after parts of Donbas had been occupied. He was detained by the representatives of the so-called “DPR” twice and held in custody on suspicion of “espionage” with demands to abandon his business. He subsequently faced “personal sanctions” in the “DPR’s” territory and was banned from entry, with his business handed over to another person for free.
- An applicant was unlawfully detained by representatives of the so-called “DPR” and then handed over to the RF’s “FSB”⁶. Russia’s law enforcement agents launched a pre-trial investigation against him on suspicion of espionage. He has been held at the Krasnodar pre-trial detention facility for over a year, with his detention getting extended every other month. He is not allowed to see his family. In December 2019, the Russian human rights NGO “Memorial” declared the applicant a political prisoner.
- Supplemental materials have been prepared to the previously submitted application concerning the circumstances of illegal detention and ill-treatment, and a new application has been submitted to the ECtHR on violation of the right to a fair trial, forced labor, violated property rights and the right to respect for private life. These things were experienced by a woman who was sentenced by the so-called “DPR court” to 11 years in prison, of which she had served two. She returned home in December 2019 after a detainees swap between Russia and Ukraine.
- As in the case above, our lawyers have been assisting an applicant who had been held captive for two years in the so-called “DPR” where he was subjected to force during interrogation in order to make him confess and where he was forced to perform labor. He was eventually sentenced by a so-called “DPR court” to 12 years in prison “for espionage”. The man was released in December 2019 amidst a detainees swap between Russia and Ukraine.

FREE LEGAL AID

[UHHRU network](#) of legal aid centers (LACs) keeps on delivering free legal aid (including outreach legal consultations in the remote areas), holding information and awareness raising events in the sphere of human rights as well as documenting war crimes and conflict-related human rights abuse. USAID supports activities of the UHHRU’s legal aid centers in [Toretsk](#), [Mariupol](#), Kramatorsk, [Pokrovsk](#) of Donetsk oblast, [Stanytsa Luhanska](#), [Sumy](#) and Dnipro providing legal aid to conflict-

⁶ Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation.



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affected population, as well as a [Kyiv-based Specialized LAC](#) targeting both Crimean and Donbas residents and IDPs and a Specialized Crimea-oriented LAC in Kherson.

Latest infographics to illustrate legal aid network's performance

The Program continues regular reporting on the LACs' legal aid delivery in conflict-affected regions. We are glad to present information covering [March 2020](#) with thematic, regional and gender disaggregation.

Events to raise people's awareness on how to protect their rights and further informational activities adhering to Program's objectives (*links are in Ukrainian*)

- What has changed for IDPs because of introduced quarantine amidst the COVID-19 outbreak – *find out [here](#).*
- [Information](#) on the unemployment filing procedure during quarantine, which has certain nuances when it comes to IDPs.
- The newly established legal aid center in Stanychno-Luhansk Rayon is already hard at work keeping the conflict-affected population informed. Here is a handful of the LAC's articles on various topics: (1) [obtaining](#) temporary housing by IDPs, (2) [peculiarities of depriving](#) an internally displaced father of his parental rights, (3) [education-related benefits](#) for internally displaced children, (4) how should IDPs "[getting rid](#)" of the status of a small business owner. The LAC stays at everyone's disposal should any further questions arise.
- Amnesty and transitional justice – UHHRU lawyer [went on the air](#) to explain their peculiarities.
- IDPs have been asking the Sumy-based LAC how to have their monthly targeted aid for living expenses (including utilities) extended, since these applications must be submitted every six months. How to handle this issue taking into consideration all the quarantine restrictions – [find answers here](#).

The same legal aid center also provides clarification on other subjects related to the protection of IDPs' rights, such as how to [obtain the status](#) of a child affected by hostilities and armed conflicts or [how to apply](#) for IDPs-targeted assistance during quarantine.

Legal assistance to those affected by the armed conflict and occupation (*links are in Ukrainian*)

- Lawyer from Dnipro LAC helped a senior internally displaced woman to score victory in the Supreme Court, which [judged](#) she must be compensated 50,000 UAH because her house was totally destroyed by the armed conflict in Donbas. That amount of money is certainly non-sufficient, however Program's lawyers continue to set precedents ready to play its part when the government is ready to talk about instituting a full-fledged, fair compensation system.
- Program lawyer, also from Dnipro, wins another IDP's suspended pension case, reflects online on roots of the trouble with unpaid pensions countrywide and systematic non-execution of court judgments by the Ukraine's Pension Fund – [this link has the story](#).
- *Program's LAC in Toretsk helped a single mother to get her social benefit:* responsible social protection authorities rejected her application because as they thought her income was above the required rate. The court judged they were mistaken – [link in Ukrainian](#).



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HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

UHHRU keeps on organizing human rights training events as well as formulating a comprehensive national human rights education policy. This activity is implemented under Ukraine-wide Educational Program “[We Understand Human Rights](#)” (WUHR)⁷, which is being the only informal educational system that has the material basis for its activities – Educational Human Rights House-Chernihiv.

Teaching-and-methodological manual for educational institutions is out now ([links in Ukrainian](#))



USAID Human Rights in Action Program [released](#) a manual titled “Studying international humanitarian law in educational institutions”, using which the schools can now launch their own IHL courses. The [manual](#) is mainly aimed at self-study, asking the right questions and finding answers, working as a group in an effort to understand what IHL is and how it affects the lives of people living in a situation of an ongoing armed conflict.



Program co-hosts a series of webinars for legal aid practitioners ([links in Ukrainian](#))

These webinars are organized in partnership with the Office of the President’s Envoy on Crimea and devoted to transitional justice and IHL application amidst the armed conflict and occupation:

- The [first](#) webinar had Iryna Marchuk, a recognized international law expert from the Copenhagen University (Denmark), as its guest speaker. The topic was the transitional justice experience of other countries and ways to apply it in Ukraine’s realm.
- The [second](#) webinar titled “Does Ukraine need a hybrid court as a mechanism to bring to criminal liability for war crimes and other grave crimes?” also took place. The invited speaker was the legal expert Roman Martynovskyy from partnering “Regional Centre for Human Rights” NGO.
- Presidential Envoy on Crimea Anton Korynevych hosted the [third](#) webinar titled “Application of IHL. Armed conflicts and their qualification”.
- USAID Program’s law-making and analytical expert Olena Semyorkina hosted the [fourth](#) webinar concerning restoration of public trust as a component of guarantees of human rights violations’ non-repetition (through institutional reforms, lustration, quality legislation etc.).

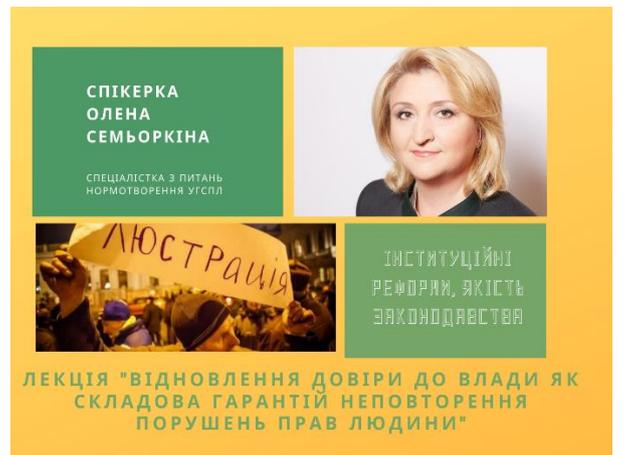
⁷ Launched in 2007, the Program envisages development of informal human rights education, contributing to cultivating a human rights culture, strengthening respect for the rule of law in Ukraine, promoting intercultural understanding and principles of peaceful conflict resolution. The Program currently counts more than 3,500 alumni from all regions of Ukraine.



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- The [fifth](#) webinar was titled “Transitional justice in the work of the Crimean Prosecutor’s Office” and it was delivered by a member of the Crimean Prosecutor’s Office Evhen Komarovskyy.



Childhood in occupied Crimea: Raising an important issue of Kremlin’s blatant propaganda at human rights film festival⁸

Program’s education coordinator [co-hosted](#) (*link is in Ukrainian*) discussion “Childhood in the occupied Crimea: with weapon in hands and without the right to be a Ukrainian” at the margins of

⁸ Online at this point.



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the 17th International Human Rights Film Festival Docudays UA. The RF's policy aimed at erasing the national identity in the invaded territory is absolutely non-acceptable and must be addressed through international pressure towards the aggressor-state in parallel to launching domestic investigations and delivering explanations by Ukraine's Education Ministry on occupational authorities' hostile children-oriented influence to the population of Crimea.

A few more online lectures delivered by Program's experts in April (links are in Ukrainian)

- “Terminology of war. Qualification of the armed conflict in Ukraine” was the subject of the [first lecture](#) of the newly established Open World Academy – an educational platform designed to disseminate the best Ukrainian and American practices among the Open World Program's graduates, as well as knowledge about various spheres of the civil society activity.
- Program hosted a [lecture](#) for the staff of the Office of the Presidential Envoy on Crimea, which spanned fundamentals of tailored transitional justice model for Ukraine, namely its four strategic pillars.



MAIN EVENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AREA

Verkhovna Rada adopted decision to re-address the international community to once again condemn Kremlin's lasting aggression against Ukraine and occupation of its territories

This Parliamentary statement suggested certain novations in addition to the already known aspects, such as militarization of Crimea, military aspects of occupation, the RF's attempts to deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea, violations of the rules of international trade navigation etc. [Link 1](#), [link 2](#), in Ukrainian.

Detainees swap took place between the GOU and Kremlin-backed illegal formations from invaded Donbas

As a result, 20 Ukrainian nationals have been liberated from unjust detainment – their full list is available from [President's website](#)⁹.

⁹ Plenty of political detainees still remain caged in Crimea and Russia, and the progress of their liberation is pretty sluggish; with this in mind, civil society activists [launched a flashmob](#) #ПоговорітьЗНами [talk to us] obviously addressing President Zelensky to keep his efforts focused on this pressing issue and urging him to maintain a constant subject-matter dialogue with the suffered families ([link is in Ukrainian](#)).



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Political detainee Sayfullaev released from Russian prison

Ferat Sayfullaev, one of the defendants in the Hizb ut-Tahrir case in Crimea, is [released](#) from prison after having served his full five-year “sentence”.

Lawfare.gov.ua website is something to add to preferences

[The website](#), in Ukrainian, helps everyone to navigate a bunch of Ukraine’s legal applications against the RF as an aggressor-state pending before different international courts. It is operated by Ukraine’s Ministry of Justice and has been [launched](#) just recently.

Statement by the EU Spokesperson on Russia’s land ownership decree affecting Crimea

“The European Union does not recognise the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, which is a clear violation of international law. Therefore, the European Union does not recognise this decree, which is yet another attempt to forcibly integrate the illegally-annexed peninsula into Russia”, [says the statement](#)¹⁰.

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¹⁰ President’s Envoy’s to Crimea remarks are also given [here](#), in Ukrainian; just reminding that USAID Program’s legal analysis of this decree was [released earlier](#), in Ukrainian.