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## Quick Wins, Big Promises

- Wins**
- Removed lawmakers' immunity from criminal prosecution
  - Prosecutor General Ruslan Ryaboshapka fires Military Prosecutor Anatoly Matios
  - Parliament appoints Cabinet, other top officials in one day
  - Several reformers appointed to top posts
  - Sets unprecedented reform goals — with concrete deadlines

- Promises**
- 40 percent economic growth in 5 years
  - End Russia's war
  - Protect investor rights
  - Start agricultural land sales
  - Reduce parliament to 300 members from 450
  - Dismiss absentee lawmakers
  - Fire thousands of tainted judges and hire new ones
  - Stop corruption in defense industry
  - Fix corrupt Customs Service in 3 months

"We have everything: the political will of the president, a majority in the Verkhovna Rada, a government and prime minister that are willing to work. The only thing we lack is time. Society won't wait for something to start working in Ukraine in several years."  
— *President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sept. 2.*

"The goal of my team is to attain a minimum of 40 percent economic growth over five years...to create some 1 million new jobs."  
— *Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk on Sept. 2.*

**See coverage on pages 2, 3, 16**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reacts after lawmakers vote to lift parliamentary immunity from criminal prosecution in the Verkhovna Rada in Kyiv on Sept. 3, 2019. (UNIAN)

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# Zelensky's agenda for parliament, government

BY KYIV POST STAFF

It's almost a political tradition: a new president comes to office and sets an agenda for the Ukrainian government. But this time, it may be different.

On Sept. 2, President Volodymyr Zelensky sat down with the newly-appointed leaders of the par-

liament, the Cabinet of Ministers and law enforcement agencies and outlined their tasks. He also set deadlines for them — something of an innovation in Ukrainian political agendas.

The to-do list is hardly new: It contains many reforms that civil society and Ukraine's Western partners have been pushing for years. But for the

first time in the country's history, the president appears to have the tools he needs to accomplish his goals: a majority in the Verkhovna Rada and total control of the Cabinet.

"At the moment we have a unique situation, a truly unique chance to carry out all necessary reforms. And I want it very much," Zelensky said in his address to the gathered

lawmakers and officials.

"The only thing we lack is time. Society will not wait for a few years until something starts to work in Ukraine."

The Kyiv Post has outlined Zelensky's agenda, its timeframe, and the political and economic issues that may frustrate his government's efforts.

## Judiciary & law enforcement

### Restart the most corrupt state agencies

— by Jan. 1, 2020

Zelensky also ordered the government to hire new staff for the most corrupt agencies, which are responsible for inspecting businesses and issuing permits, by Jan. 1, 2020. Among them are the state services for cartography, geology and mineral resources, architecture and construction, environment protection, and transport safety, as well as the main road authority, Ukravtodor.



### Independent financial investigations service

— by Dec. 1, 2019

A law on the newly established State Service for Financial Investigations must be submitted to the parliament by Oct. 1 and passed by Dec. 1. The National Police and the State Security Service will be stripped of their authority to investigate economic crimes, a power that has often been abused to extort money from and seize businesses.



### Relaunch the State Customs Service

— by Dec. 1, 2019

The State Customs Service must

be relaunched by Dec. 1, to eliminate corrupt officials. One of the most notorious corrupt state agencies, the customs service was separated from the fiscal service last December. The customs service must also launch a "one-stop shop" system by Jan. 1, 2020.



### Curb SBU powers

— no hard deadline

On Sept. 2, Zelensky ordered a long-overdue reform of the SBU security service. Such reform efforts had seen no progress since at least 2016. He ordered the government to approve the SBU reform concept and introduce the corresponding legal amendments.

The reform is expected to drastically cut the secret service's power and strip it of unnecessary functions (such as investigating economic crime), making it a demilitarized, purely counter-terror and domestic intelligence agency.

The president said that the service would be reformed in compliance with the 2018 National Security Law, which envisages the SBU answering to the parliament.



### Fix Anti-Corruption Court

The long-anticipated High Anti-Corruption Court was launched on Sept. 5. However, if the current legislation is not changed, the court will be overloaded with about 3,500 cases and will not be able to function.

A bill submitted by Zelensky envisages transferring to the court only 200 cases investigated by the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine without overburdening it with minor cases.

### New High Qualification Commission

— 1 month after relevant bill is passed

A bill proposed by Zelensky envisages replacing the current High Qualification Commission of Judges, a judicial governing body that has been accused of blocking judicial reform and promoting tainted judges. The commission denied the accusations. The bill is submitted to the Verkhovna Rada and can be passed in September, meaning that the commission will be replaced in October.

### Fire tainted judges

— by Jan. 1, 2020

By the end of the year, the High Qualification Commission should vet and hire 2,000 new judges for the court of first instance.



### Relaunch Supreme Court

— by the end of 2019

Zelensky's judicial reform bill stipulates halving the number of Supreme Court judges from 200 to 100. The Supreme Court must be relaunched within two months after the High Qualification Commission is replaced, meaning it is most likely will take place by the end of 2019.

The new High Qualification Commission of Judges will select a new, smaller Supreme Court out of the old judges of the court. Those of them who are deemed not worthy of the Supreme Court will be either fired or transferred to appeal courts.

Cement the president's right to appoint heads of investigative agencies

A constitutional amendment adopted in the first reading is set to cement in the Constitution the president's right to appoint and fire heads of Ukraine's National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the State Investigations Bureau. Formally the president already has these powers — they're given to him by the laws regulating these agencies. The amendment also adds this right to the Constitution, increasing the president's influence. The amendment must be passed during the next session of the Verkhovna Rada, which begins in February 2019.

## Infrastructure



### Open railways

— by Jan. 1, 2020

By year-end, the Infrastructure Ministry must prepare a plan to abolish the monopoly of state railways authority Ukrzaliznytsya by allowing privately-owned locomotives on the country's tracks. The open railway market is supposed to bring independent train operating companies to Ukraine and resolve the country's pervasive logistics issue. Currently, there is a shortage of grain cars and locomotives, which negatively affects the agricultural sector.

### Pass the bill on river shipping

— by Nov. 1, 2019

By Nov. 1, the parliament should pass a law on inland waterborne transport that could give a boost to the development of river shipping and lower agricultural producers' dependence on railways.

The Infrastructure Ministry and the majority of market players previously supported the idea of letting ships under foreign flags and foreign shippers onto Ukrainian rivers. However, the law met strong opposition from Nibulon, the second largest river shipping company, which used its lobby in parliament to hamper the law.



### Pass legislation to fix bad roads

— by Nov. 1, 2019

By Nov. 1, the parliament must pass a law on mid-term financing for the construction and repairs of Ukraine's notoriously bad roads. It also must pass a law on bringing the price of road construction and repairs to the standards of the international financial institutions.

These measures are necessary to eliminate corruption, in which the cost of work is artificially inflated so that dishonest actors can pocket government money.

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# Economy and business environment



## Submit 2020 budget

— by Sept. 15, 2019

The Finance Ministry must submit the 2020 budget plan by Sept. 15. Before, the budget was usually considered in the last weeks, or even days, of the year.



## Cut subsidies to agroholdings

— by 2020

The 2020 state budget should eliminate subsidies to large agroholdings and redirect the money to supporting small farms. Under the existing system, the more agricultural companies produce and pay taxes and dividends, the more they receive state subsidies. This has benefited large agroholdings such as MHP and Ukrlandfarming, leaving individual farmers and small enterprises out.

Earlier in July, Zelensky ordered anti-corruption agencies to investigate how oligarch-owned MHP, Ukraine's biggest meat and dairy producer and the main exporter of chicken to Europe, had received the largest share of state subsidies — billions of hryvnias.

## Open farmland market

— by Dec. 1, 2019

The government has to submit two laws on lifting the ban on farmland sales and on creating a private market for farmland by Oct. 1. The parliament must then pass both laws by Dec. 1. Moreover, the State land registry must be updated to include data on all agricultural land plots in the country by 2021.

The ban on farmland sales has been in place since 2001, depriving private landowners of access to financing, since land plots cannot be sold or used as collateral. Lifting the moratorium and creating an open farmland market was one of the key requirements of the International Monetary Fund as a measure to boost Ukraine's investment-hungry agricultural sector.

Despite reformers' enthusiasm for a land market, the idea has proven highly controversial. Populist politicking has led many Ukrainians believe that the reform will allow

foreigners to buy up all the country's land.

"Explain to the people that nobody is taking away their land. The land reform is directed at the development of Ukraine's agriculture and, first and foremost, the interests of small owners," Zelensky said.



## Restart privatization

— by April 1, 2020

Zelensky wants to speed up the privatization of state enterprises, which had experienced many delays and setbacks in the previous years. Privatization is a major demand of international financial donors. Ukraine has about 3,500 state-owned enterprises.

Conflicts of interest with enterprise leadership and a lack of political will have stymied previous privatization drives. State enterprises can be lucrative cash cows for corrupt officials and their business associates. Meanwhile, dubious privatization schemes have funneled some state enterprises into the hands of dishonest businesses, analysts told the Kyiv Post.

The Cabinet has until Dec. 1 to submit a list of 500 state-owned small and medium enterprises to be sold via the ProZorro online procurement platform. The government will also do away with the current list of companies exempt from privatization. A new list, to be drafted by Oct. 1, will be much shorter.

Large state companies must have privatization plans by Dec. 1. They should be drawn up with the help of investment advisers. The first tender must be held no later than April 1, 2020.



## Allow concessions of public property

— by Oct. 1, 2019

The parliament must pass a law on concessions and a law on the lease of state and communal property by Oct. 1. These laws will allow for the government to partner with private enterprise.

The Infrastructure Ministry also has to run pilot tenders for the concession of the Olvia and Kherson seaports by Jan. 1, 2020.

## Investment protection law

— by Jan. 1, 2020

A new law on stimulating and protecting foreign investment has to be passed by the parliament by Jan. 1, 2020.

Currently, foreign investment is regulated by a different, but deeply flawed set of laws. The last amendments to them were made in November 2018 and gave foreign investors easier access to the Ukrainian securities market. These changes ruled that investors no longer need to sign direct contracts with Ukrainian national custodians and can use the services of financial intermediaries instead.

However, the Anti-Corruption Action Center has criticized the law for allowing foreign companies to hide their beneficial owners. It does not oblige the financial intermediaries, or simply foreign banks, to report who owns the company to the Ukrainian authorities. Moreover, purchased securities could be used to legalize laundered money, the anti-corruption activists said.



## Reform financial sector

— by Oct. 1, 2019

The parliament must pass the so-called "split" bill by Oct. 1. This will eliminate the financial services regulatory body and split its functions among the central bank and the securities commission.

The National Bank of Ukraine would regulate insurance, leasing, credit unions and pawn shops. The securities commission would regulate pension funds, construction financing and real estate. "Split" legislation was passed in its first reading in July 2016, but has since languished in parliament.

The current regulator has been criticized for its limited capacity to oversee non-banking services. As a result, the financial services market has become clogged with financial schemes. Going ahead with the split is the only way to clean up the sector, proponents say.

But opponents have asked Zelensky to stop the split, complaining that it is unconstitutional and would cause a decline in the financial services market.



## Sign gas and oil production sharing agreements

— by Dec. 1, 2019

The Ukrainian government must close deals on gas and oil production and exploration with the winners of subsoil auctions by Dec. 1. These contracts will bring Ukraine \$430

million in investments — the winners have to finance the exploration work during a five-year period.

Gas and oil developers bid for nine hydrocarbon blocks through the ProZorro public procurement system. According to the bidding results, Ukgazvydobuvannya, a subsidiary of a state-owned oil and gas monopoly Naftogaz, won four tenders in total.

International tenders for oil, gas and coal production were launched in Ukraine in December 2018 as the previous government angled to minimize gas imports and boost domestic production. Ukraine currently produces 1.2 percent of its known reserves each year while. The global average is 4–5 percent.



## Prepare for oil and gas exploration tenders

— by Jan. 1, 2020

The Energy Ministry must prepare lots for open tenders for oil and gas exploration permits by Jan. 1, 2020.



## Lower commercial loan and mortgage interest rates

— by Oct. 1, 2019

The government must create conditions for banks to lower loan and mortgage rates by Oct. 1. Currently,

customer lending interest stands at 17 percent. Mortgage rates are around 20 percent.



## Legalize casinos and amber mining

— by Dec. 1, 2019

The laws on legalizing casinos and amber mining must be submitted to the parliament by Oct. 1 and passed by Dec. 1. The measure comes as part of a broader effort to fight the shadow economy.

Gambling has been banned in Ukraine since 2009, but underground clubs and casinos continue to operate illegally, generating millions of dollars in untaxed revenues. Zelensky suggested licensing casinos in five-star hotels in a bid to boost tourism.

Only nine companies hold licenses to mine amber legally. As a result, lucrative illegal amber production is largely controlled by criminal gangs, and wildcat mining has caused significant environmental damage.

## New Labor Code

— by Jan. 1, 2020

A new labor code must be approved by Jan. 1, 2020. This reform aims to reduce informal employment by stiffening penalties for shadow accounting. Huge numbers of Ukrainians are employed in the informal economy, working and earning a salary, but not paying taxes on their income.

more [Agenda](#) on page 16

## ON THE MOVE

Advertisement



Maria Koval

Redcliffe Partners is excited to welcome Counsel Maria Koval who has just joined us as our new Head of the Intellectual Property practice. Having over 15 years' experience specialising in intellectual property issues and IP litigations, Maria will considerably boost our capabilities and offerings in this sector.

Before joining Redcliffe, Maria worked with the intellectual property teams of leading Ukrainian law firms, focusing on a variety of IP issues including IP rights infringements, strategies on IP rights protection and licence and franchise agreements, as well as regularly handling litigation and disputes. Maria is a Domain Name Arbitrator of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Arbitration and Mediation Center, and a member of both the Pharmaceutical Trade Marks Group and the Copyright Committee of the International Trademark Association.

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Editorials

# Promises to keep

At the 100-day mark of his misbegotten presidency on June 3, 2010, Viktor Yanukovich made fantastic promises that he pledged to deliver because of his command of the executive, legislative and judicial branches.

Among them: Ukraine would become one of the world's top 20 economies (it's 59th today). Growth would be 6-7 percent annually. Life expectancy would increase by two years — from 68 to 70. Inflation would be low. He talked of greater transparency and competitiveness, simplified taxation, an end to the shadow economy and more. Of course, little of it came to pass. Ukraine moved so far backwards that the 100-day EuroMaidan Revolution chased Yanukovich back to his Kremlin masters in 2014.

Now, a new and young president, Volodymyr Zelensky, is also making big promises, just as his five predecessors did. To his credit, Zelensky has already delivered on some of them — chiefly lifting the legal immunity from criminal prosecution for members of parliament and other steps to make lawmakers easier to investigate for corruption. He has set deadlines and concrete goals, along with his prime minister, Oleksiy Honcharuk, and a completely new Cabinet of Ministers (except for Oksana Markarova in finance and Arsen Avakov as the nation's top cop.)

The promises are coming fast and loose: End Russia's war "as soon as possible," grow the economy by 40 percent in five years, establish rule of law and end the "caste of untouchables."

But more will need to be done. And there are worrying trends.

The new president is quickly wrapping himself in a cocoon, the same mistake that his predecessors made. It makes him look insecure. The administration exudes disdain for journalists and traditional news organizations. His interviews are heavily scripted PR gimmicks with non-journalists. His people seem more concerned about their social media profile than answering such hard questions as: Why are you keeping the anti-reformer Avakov on? And, when will someone rein in the mafioso Odesa Mayor Gennady Trukhanov?

Because it is so popular at the moment, the administration is getting away with the arrogance that could lead to its downfall. It was no slip of the tongue when Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Bohdan, said journalists aren't needed to communicate with the public. It's how this administration will operate. Zelensky, in short, hasn't dispelled the nagging feeling that he is beholden to special interests -- in particular, billionaire oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky. We've seen politicians go down this road before — we'll be waiting at the other end, when Zelensky's team sees the light in time or, if they don't, to tell them "we told you so."

# Hong Kong win

Ukrainians have fought to rid themselves of a Kremlin-backed plutocracy that robbed them of rights, freedoms and their collective wealth. That struggle, to keep Ukraine firmly out of Russia's grasp, continues.

Hongkongers understand. They are going through something similar now, and protest leaders look to Ukraine for inspiration as they attempt to shake off the noose that's being tightened by Beijing.

Many Hongkongers see Ukrainian revolutionaries as their brothers and sisters. A Maidan spirit has swept through Hong Kong as activists label their protests as the Summer of Discontent. Ukrainian flags have been hoisted, a popular documentary about the EuroMaidan Revolution is widely shared and even projected onto outdoor walls throughout the city.

This week, some Hongkongers and activists will celebrate a modest victory as Chinese-backed leaders withdraw the controversial extradition bill that sparked the protests. But while Beijing hopes this is the beginning of the protest's end, it might only be the end of the beginning.

It seems extremely unlikely that the concession will be enough. And pro-democracy campaigners say it meets only one of their many demands, amounting to a Band-Aid on rotting flesh. For Hongkongers, the goal posts have decisively shifted. Protests have morphed into a popular uprising for independence from China. As China and Russia cement their positions as the preeminent dictatorial powers of the 21st century, we must stand with Hongkongers and defend democracy.

NEWS ITEM: The new parliament, led by President Volodymyr Zelensky's Servant of the People party, had a very busy first day on Aug. 29. The lawmakers stayed in the Rada from 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. the next morning, voting on draft bills and appointing the government. Unusually for a president, Zelensky stayed in the session hall with lawmakers most of the time.



NEWS ITEM: The Ukrainian parliament on Sept. 3 lifted lawmakers' immunity from prosecution, implementing a groundbreaking constitutional change that has been promised for over two decades. The immunity was a privileged that motivated many shady people and outright criminals to run for parliament.



NEWS ITEM: Belarus President Aleksander Lukashenko said that he wanted to start riding a bicycle to work but wouldn't do it because of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Before going into politics, Zelensky played the president in comedic TV series "Servant of the People," where he rode a bicycle to work. "If I do it now, everyone will think I'm copying him," Lukashenko said on Sept. 2.

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People walk amid rubble as part of a building burns following an airstrike by Syrian regime forces in Syria's northwestern Idlib province on Aug. 28, 2019. (AFP)

# Punish Russia for its crimes in Syria



**BRIAN BONNER**  
BONNER@KYIVPOST.COM

*Editor's Note: The destruction of Syria by its chemical weapons-using dictator, Bashar al-Assad, is one of the greatest unpunished war crimes of the 21st century. Syria and Ukraine are connected as victims of Russian wars and a weak Western response. The Kyiv Post hosted a June 18, 2018 conference "Bringing Peace to Syria & Ukraine" and will regularly write updates about the issue, with the support of Kyiv Post publisher Adnan Kivan, a Ukrainian citizen and Syrian native.*

There is a country that Russia has caused more devastation in than Ukraine this century. It's Syria.

The butcher of Damascus, Bashar al-Assad, is destroying his nation to save his power as murderer-in-chief of ruins. And he can't do it without the immoral support of Russian (and Iranian) forces. They are on a rampage again — bombing civilians and hospitals, after looking the other way, if not offering encouragement, over the years as Assad attacked his own people with chemical weapons.

If the Western world, including U.S. President Donald J. Trump, refuses to take action and ostracize the Kremlin for its destructive war in Ukraine — killing 13,000 and dismembering 7 percent of the nation — then surely it should for its actions in Syria, where more than 500,000 have been killed in the bloody civil war and at least 10 million displaced, with half of them finding refuge abroad — in Turkey, Syria, Jordan and other nations — before they stopped accepting refugees. Syria had only 20 million people before the civil war broke out in 2011.

The latest news is similarly heartbreaking. Only one province in Syria remains a stronghold for rebels opposed to Assad: the northwestern Idlib province on Turkey's southern border, which is

now closed to fleeing refugees. Idlib has an estimated three million people. Now, Assad and his allies are mounting an offensive aimed to wipe out the rebels — and, because of the indiscriminate attacks — civilians living there as well. The United Nations reported more than 500,000 people have fled the southern Idlib and northern Hama region, moving towards the Turkish border, according to Syria in Context, a reliable English-language newsletter providing weekly updates.

The people are trapped between the borders and the battles. Reuters has an excellent Aug. 23 multimedia story about the situation. The United Nations says that Russia is backing the Assad assaults, which include bombings of markets, bakeries, schools and hospitals. In typically cynical fashion, Russia is attacking in Idlib and ignoring a cease-fire agreed with Turkey. The Kremlin's flouting of cease-fire agreements is something Ukraine is intimately familiar with after nearly six years of defending the nation.

Of the roughly 16 million people left in Syria, most are living in poverty and other inhumane conditions. Syria lost its tourism industry, according to its own tourism minister, who estimated the losses at \$2.3 trillion. The year before the war,



Syrians demonstrate against Russia's interference in Khan Sheikhun, part of the rebel-held Idlib province in northwestern Syria on Aug. 27, 2019. Moscow is backing Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad in wiping out the last bastion of resistance. The violence includes attacks on hospitals, schools and other civilian targets. (AFP)

Syria attracted 9 million visitors.

The humanitarian situation is dire, not only in Idlib province. Syria in Context notes the possibility that Russia will deny refugees in the southern Syrian refugee camp of Rubkhan, near the Jordanian border, with humanitarian aid.

Lies and vile propaganda from Russia also link Ukraine and Syria.

Rather than rebels fighting a dictatorial regime, the Kremlin's propaganda outlets label opponents of Assad as terrorists, similar to Moscow's failed attempts to label the EuroMaidan Revolution as a "fascist coup" that overthrew Russian-backed Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich. They also use the same propaganda as they do in Russia's war against Ukraine — that the victims or defenders of their homeland are responsible for the violence and cease-fire violations. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov further blames the West, saying it is thwarting moves by Assad for national unity and a constitutional commission.

NATO member Turkey is the West's best hope in the conflict. It is already sheltering more than three million Syrian refugees within its borders. Turkey, Iran and Russia are considering another summit in Ankara on Syria on Sept. 16, according to Putin press secretary Dmitry Peskov.

Whatever Russia has in mind for Syria, it's not peace or rebuilding the nation.

Joseph Daher, part of the Wartime and Post-Conflict in Syria Project, offers some pretty depressing statistics, writing for the Carnegie Middle East Center: The cost of rebuilding Syria, should the war end, could approach \$400 billion, in a country with a gross domestic product that declined to \$17 billion and where now an estimated 90 percent of the population lives in poverty.

It's impossible to say how this horror show will end. Syria, as a nation, doesn't seem to exist any more. Perhaps the best that we can do as a people is to help keep innocent Syrian civilians alive and punish those responsible for the war crimes and mass murders. To do that, the West will have to stop appeasing Putin and start isolating him further and putting tougher sanctions against him. ■



WITH DIANA KRAVETS

## What do you love and hate about Kyiv?



**Oleksii Polozhai,**  
*taxi driver:*  
"At first sight, I like everything. There is lots of greenery. Talking about the disadvantages, in

comparison to Europe, there is a lot of rubbish in the streets."



**Oksana Hrebenyk,**  
*Ukrainian philology student:*  
"Kyiv has a special atmosphere. I like the fact that you can take coffee, walk

with your friends in whatever direction you want, and you will see picturesque landscapes and beautiful architecture absolutely everywhere. I think I can't say anything bad about Kyiv for now."



**Vira Filonenko,**  
*pensioner:*  
"I don't like the dirt, it's terrible. The good thing is that the city is growing

and the old buildings are being restored. However, if anything is built, it usually takes a very long time. Overall, the disadvantages prevail."



**Liudmyla Kuiu,**  
*professor at the National Medical University:*  
"I like nature and the people in Kyiv.

I do not like, though, that not everyone here respects the culture and pollutes the streets. You should love your city so that it truly becomes a European capital."



**Vitalii Klemchuk,**  
*student, faculty of Computer Systems Automation:*  
"I like that Kyiv is currently developing. However,

I don't like these post-Soviet buildings and the maintenance of them."



**Oleksii Nekhin,**  
*salesman:*  
"As a person who recently moved here from a small town, I can say that I don't like

Kyiv as a megalopolis. However, there are many beautiful girls, a lot of places to visit, a lot of options where to work or go in the evening. On the other hand, it takes a very long time to commute."

# If Ukraine wants investment, solution is clear: fix courts



MYKHAILO  
ZHERNAKOV

*Editor's Note: The following op-ed was originally published by the Atlantic Council and is republished with permission.*

Ukraine's courts may get a much-needed facelift soon. The president recently submitted a bill that would relaunch the most vital parts of judicial reform. In particular, the High Qualification Commission of Judges (HQCJ) that failed to clean up Ukraine's dirty courts is set to be relaunched.

The country's judicial system remains one of the least trusted public institutions and a major obstacle to foreign direct investment. For years, civil society harshly criticized the HCJ and the High Council of Judges (HCJ) for greenlighting untrustworthy judges to the highest judicial positions and impeding the reform process. If these authorities are properly restarted, Ukraine has a chance of finally fixing its judiciary and creating a competitive environment for business.

But the process must be done right this time. After the EuroMaidan Revolution that deposed President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014, efforts to reform these bodies failedre-



Activists wearing monster masks symbolizing corrupt judges protest against the appointment of tainted judges in front of the Supreme Court on Sept. 13, 2017. (Volodymyr Petrov)

sulted in a flawed selection process that made these bodies more dependent on the president and his administration.

The good news is that Ukraine can choose good judges, and we should do it again. The selection of judges to the specialized Anticorruption

Court was a big success, especially compared to the alternatives. The "renewed" Supreme Court contains at least 44 untrustworthy justices. What made the anticorruption court process so different? Independent, international experts had a right to veto bad candidates.

Now is the time to scale this model to the rest of the judicial system. However, we cannot make six international experts stay in Ukraine for several more years to vet thousands of Ukrainian judges. What we can do is include the international community in the selection of the HCJ and the HQCJ the same way we did with the Anticorruption Court. If we manage to select members of these judicial governance bodies that are at least as good as our new anti-corruption judges, there will be no more need for direct international involvement.

Eighteen prominent Ukrainian NGOs agree: our number one priority is to relaunch the HCJ and HQCJ with the participation of independent, international experts; half of the members of these selection bodies should be professional lawyers, journalists, and human rights experts recommended by civil society.

Both President Volodymyr Zelensky and his Servant of the People party have expressed support for involving international experts in the process. We must ensure that they do what they say, and we need the West to help us hold them accountable.

The road ahead will be hard, and we see at least three challenges.

First, parliament needs to pass the right legislation. There has been little public discussion of the bill, and every tiny detail matters. The slightest inconsistency regarding the selection process of the two judicial bodies may result them being captured by untrustworthy politicians again, and another reform opportunity wasted. There's another worrying sign: The composition of the commission responsible for the development of the reform that the president just appointed is controversial. It is highly doubtful that the

incumbent judges and HCJ members who are well represented on the commission will bring much change.

Second, the president's silence to a recent scandal involving notorious courts and judges is alarming. Weeks have passed since the National Anticorruption Bureau (NABU) revealed tapes in which judges of the District Administrative Court of Kyiv allegedly plot corruption schemes and put pressure on members of parliament, the ombudsman, the Constitutional Court, and other authorities in order to get the desired decisions, including appointment of pliant members to the same HQCJ, they seek. However, both the president who rarely hesitates to comment on the misdeeds of public officials and his administration have remained silent.

However, the biggest controversy is the apparent lack of will to change the composition of the High Council of Justice, a constitutional body that has the final say in selecting, disciplining, and dismissing judges. The president's bill does not provide for the effective renewal of the body (half of the commission tasked with the dismissal of its untrustworthy members consists of the HCJ members themselves). Moreover, the ongoing contest to the High Council of Justice to fill the president's two seats is not going smoothly either. The commission under the president recently shortlisted ten of 49 candidates. A few of the ten are judges and lawyers known for their independence and strong support for judicial reform. However, the most famous whistleblower judge, Larysa Holnyk, surprisingly did not make the final cut. No explanation was offered.

These could be signs that at least some parts of the president's office will resist cleaning up the courts as society demands.

However, if Zelensky and his team want to attract foreign investors and achieve 40 percent economy growth as the new Ukrainian Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk vows, there can be no half measures. The HQCJ and HCJ should be relaunched with the participation of the international community, and civil society has to have at least half of the seats on these bodies. The District Administrative Court of Kyiv should be liquidated, and the effective reassessment of judges should finally result in the dismissal of hundreds of untrustworthy judges.

Finally, the West has to unite behind these ideas and demand real change. There has been too much praise for ineffective "judicial reform" over the last five years. Now is time to change Ukraine's courts, and we can make it happen, so long as our Western friends speak out loudly and forcefully at the right moments.

Mykhailo Zhernakov is the head of the board of the DEJURE Foundation, a coordinator of the Public Integrity Council, and a former judge in the Vinnytsia District Administrative Court (2012-2015). He tweets @mzhernakov. ■



## Untouchable no more

Lawmakers take selfies as they vote to lift parliamentary immunity on Sept. 3, 2019. Lifting immunity is a groundbreaking constitutional change that Ukrainian politicians have been promising for over two decades. The constitutional amendment was passed with an overwhelming 373 votes in favor. The majority of political factions supported the amendment, including the Servant of the People faction, European Solidarity led by former President Petro Poroshenko, Batkivshchyna, Voice, and independent lawmakers. The only faction that didn't support lifting immunity was the pro-Russian Opposition Platform - For Life. The lawmakers will lose their immunity from prosecution on Jan. 1, 2020. In the past, corrupt lawmakers have often abused immunity to escape punishment for crimes they committed. Previously, to prosecute a lawmaker, the authorities first needed to receive parliament's permission and lawmakers had to vote to lift their colleague's immunity. (Photo by Volodymyr Petrov)

**Reformer of the week****Oleksandr Kunitsky**

Oleksandr Kunitsky is the only member of President Volodymyr Zelensky's Servant of the People party who publicly opposed the re-appointment of Arsen Avakov as interior minister on Aug. 29.

He abstained from voting for Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk's Cabinet because of Avakov. The appointment of Avakov was part of a package vote for Honcharuk's Cabinet.

"I'm decidedly against Avakov continuing to head the ministry," he said on Sept. 4.

Unlike Zelensky, Kunitsky refused to compromise with someone accused of being one of the pillars of Ukrainian corruption for the alleged sake of the greater good.

The costs of such a compromise may be devastating for Ukraine's police, which is still lawless and unaccountable. They will also be pernicious for the police investigations into the murders of and assaults on about a hundred activists, in which there is no progress.

Avakov's alleged usefulness for Zelensky or any of his alleged upsides do not nullify the solid corruption charges against his allies and the video footage that implicates both him and his associates in graft, although he denies the corruption accusations.

Anti-Corruption Prosecutor Nazar Kholodnytsky closed the corruption case against Avakov's son Oleksandr last year as part of a political bargain with the powerful minister. Until Avakov and Kholodnytsky are fired, Zelensky's promises to fight corruption will sound as insincere as his predecessor Petro Poroshenko's.

— Oleg Sukhov

**Anti-reformer of the week****Arsen Avakov**

The re-appointment of Arsen Avakov as interior minister on Aug. 29 is one of the momentous decisions that may derail Volodymyr Zelensky's presidency and his ambitious reform plans.

The continuation of Avakov's tenure is a symbol of Zelensky's compromise with the old corrupt elite. It is also at odds with the demands of his electorate, which has clearly backed replacing the whole discredited government with new people of integrity.

Avakov's appointment is likely payback for his independent position during the April 21 presidential election, when he investigated alleged vote buying and voting fraud in favor of ex-President Petro Poroshenko, Zelensky's main competitor.

But this does not exempt Avakov from responsibility for his alleged corruption, sabotage of police reform and failure to investigate high-profile cases.

Unfortunately, Zelensky's Servant of the People party voted almost unanimously for Avakov's appointment, turning into a blind tool of the president. There is a fear that the Verkhovna Rada may thus transform into a rubber-stamp parliament instead of checking and balancing the president and speaking truth to power.

Surprisingly, those who voted for Avakov include some lawmakers with a reformist background, including Anastasia Krasnosilka, a former expert at the Anti-Corruption Action Center, as well as Dmytro Natalukha, Sviatoslav Yurash and Ruslan Stefanchuk.

They backed a compromise with someone accused of being a symbol of Ukrainian corruption, apparently hoping that it would allow them to do something good later. But it may well turn out to be a deal with the Devil.

As long as Avakov is in power, there will be no police reform, and all law enforcement reforms will be jeopardized.

— Oleg Sukhov



# Ukraine's Friend & Foe of the Week

*Editor's Note: This feature separates Ukraine's friends from its enemies. The Order of Yaroslav the Wise has been given since 1995 for distinguished service to the nation. It is named after the Kyivan Rus leader from 1019-1054, when the medieval empire reached its zenith. The Order of Lenin was the highest decoration bestowed by the Soviet Union, whose demise Russian President Vladimir Putin mourns. It is named after Vladimir Lenin, whose corpse still rots on the Kremlin's Red Square, more than 100 years after the October Revolution he led.*

**Ukraine's Friend of the Week****John Whittingdale, U.K. Member of Parliament**

Ukraine needs reliable European allies who support its reforms and aid it in improving its governance and reforming its judiciary.

But it also needs strong partners, who are willing and capable of confronting Russia on the international stage — at the G7, the United Nations Security Council and the Council of Europe — and who are willing to stand with Ukraine in solidarity in the face of Kremlin aggression on a daily basis.

In Europe, the small but stoic Baltic states are solid. Sweden is a reliable and strong friend, while Poland is, for most part, stands firm with its Ukrainian neighbor.

France, Germany and Austria are outwardly supportive of Ukraine but are somewhat compromised by the much-criticized Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which will pump Russian energy (and influence) into the heart of Europe. Italy is, for now, completely unreliable.

The United Kingdom, even though it is leaving the European Union, is still arguably Ukraine's most important (and most powerful) ally in Europe, partly thanks to the committed lawmakers and diplomats who tirelessly built that relationship and ensured that Ukraine remains a priority partner for the U.K.

In ensuring that Ukrainians remain a constant priority for London, and in building that strong bilateral partnership, one member of parliament stands out above the others: John Whittingdale.

Currently chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ukraine in the U.K. House of Commons, Whittingdale, who is a frequent visitor to Ukraine and regular observer of Ukrainian elections, has been a committed advocate for the country for his entire parliamentary career, which began



in 1992, a year after Ukrainian independence.

And today, the proof is in the pudding: the U.K. provides an extensive amount of practical support to Ukraine. It currently spends about 35 million pounds, or about \$45 million, each year on some 70 different projects throughout the country. British funding and expertise can be found everywhere in Ukraine — from military support, good governance, law enforcement and judicial reform to humanitarian aid, education, culture and social inclusion.

While Whittingdale definitely stands out as a champion for Kyiv in Westminster, regularly engaging the U.K. prime minister of the day and various government ministers on issues related to Ukraine and Russian aggression, he is not alone.

On Aug. 23, Zelensky awarded four U.K. politicians with the Ukrainian Order of Merit for "outstanding achievements" in promoting bilateral relations between Britain and Ukraine. They were Pauline Latham, Mick Antoniw, Stewart McDonald and John Whittingdale. There are more who are deserving of such recognition: Sir Michael Fallon, Mark Pritchard, Bob Seely and Sir Roger Gale, to name a few.

But when it comes to Ukraine supporters in Westminster, Whittingdale leads the pack. On Sept. 3, amid the swirling chaos of Brexit, Whittingdale was again on his feet in the U.K. parliament to put yet another question to the prime minister about how Britain would oppose Russia rejoining the G7.

For his indefatigable support of Ukraine and his obvious affection for the Ukrainian people, John Whittingdale is a real friend to the country and deserving of (finally) receiving our Order of Yaroslav the Wise.

— Jack Laursen



Order of Yaroslav The Wise

**Ukraine's Foe of the Week****Du Wei, Chinese ambassador to Ukraine**

When it comes to building Ukraine's future, we are not convinced that China is the right partner.

Ukraine's future is in Europe and integrated with the Euro-Atlantic alliance, not deeply entangled with another Communist autocracy that enslaves its people, occupies and brutalizes its neighbors.

More broadly, there are plenty of reasons to suspect that China (a vital, strategic partner and military ally to the dictator in Russia) cannot be trusted when it comes to Ukraine's security and territorial integrity.

Last year, a senior advisor to former Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman spoke bullishly with this journalist about Chinese investments into Ukrainian infrastructure: "If China wants to come here and improve our ports and railways and build our roads, why would we stop them?"

There are plenty of people in Pakistan, Malaysia, Cambodia and other countries waking up to the downsides of the controversial Belt and Road Initiative who can explain why Chinese investment should be treated with extreme caution.

Experts and Ukraine's NATO allies have already expressed strong concern and opposition to the attempted Chinese takeover of the Motor Sich aerospace company — which appears vital to an ongoing Sino-Russian next generation military helicopter project.

The Chinese Ambassador to Ukraine, Du Wei, for his part claims to have little knowledge of the details of this deal. But we at the Kyiv Post think he is not being entirely honest. We know that he has attended at least some of the previous talks in Kyiv, alongside former trade minister Stepan Kubiv and executives from Beijing Skyryzon Aviation, the state-owned company attempting to buy Motor Sich.

This deal would help the Chinese air



Order of Lenin

force significantly improve its warplanes.

It poses a threat to Ukraine, Europe, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and NATO, and it must be stopped.

Beijing's investments in Ukraine are significant, but the broader picture is one of China's deep push into all of Europe, where it is investing heavily in every country from Bulgaria to Norway.

In the last 10 years, experts say that Chinese companies have invested at least \$318 billion into Europe, representing a relentless advance into the continent, which would be made even easier with improved access through Ukraine.

China claims to be somewhat neutral in Russian-Ukrainian war, which has claimed more than 13,000 lives. But it has certainly been no friend to Ukraine. In fact, unlike Japan, China has not only refused to adopt Western sanctions against the Kremlin, but significantly increased its trade with Moscow, negating their intended effect.

At the end of the day, China is a brutal, Communist regime which violently represses, tortures and executes its own people. It is tightening its chokehold on the semi-autonomous region of Hong Kong, slowly colonizing parts of Asia, threatening Taiwan and Japan and, in Tibet and Xinjiang, it is relentlessly persecuting native minority groups.

China and Russia are two sides of a rusted, rotten coin, the preeminent anti-democratic forces of this century and Du Wei represents Beijing here in Kyiv. He is no friend to Ukraine and deserving of the Order of Lenin, a real award which was the highest decoration bestowed by officials of the Soviet Union.

— Jack Laursen

# Ukraine frees MH17 suspect amid plans for prisoner swap

BY OKSANA GRYTSENKO  
GRYTSENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

The Kyiv Court of Appeals on Sept. 5 released Volodymyr Tsemakh, a fighter for Russian proxy forces in eastern Ukraine who is considered a likely witness or suspect in the 2014 downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17.

Less than an hour after Tsemakh walked free, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Ukraine and Russia were "approaching the final stage" of negotiations relating to a significant prisoner swap.

Tsemakh could have been the last obstacle preventing a prisoner exchange that has been in the cards throughout the last few months.

The release of Ukrainian prisoners has been one of the main promises of President Volodymyr Zelensky, who discussed it with Putin on the phone and wears yellow bands with the names of Russia's prisoners on both wrists. Zelensky said he would wear them until the prisoners return home.

As of now, only seven Ukrainian political prisoners have been released from Russian jails following negotiations since the beginning of Russia's war in 2014. There are at least 120 Ukrainian political prisoners kept in jails of Russia and Russian-annexed Crimea. There are also at least 130 military servicepeople and civilians imprisoned in Russian-controlled parts of the Donbas.

While no official exchange lists are available, human rights activists and lawyers say they will include about 30 people from each side. Most likely, there will be 24 Ukrainian sailors who were captured in the Black Sea near Crimea and also about 10 other Ukrainian political prisoners, including the Crimean filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, sentenced in Russia to 20 years behind bars.

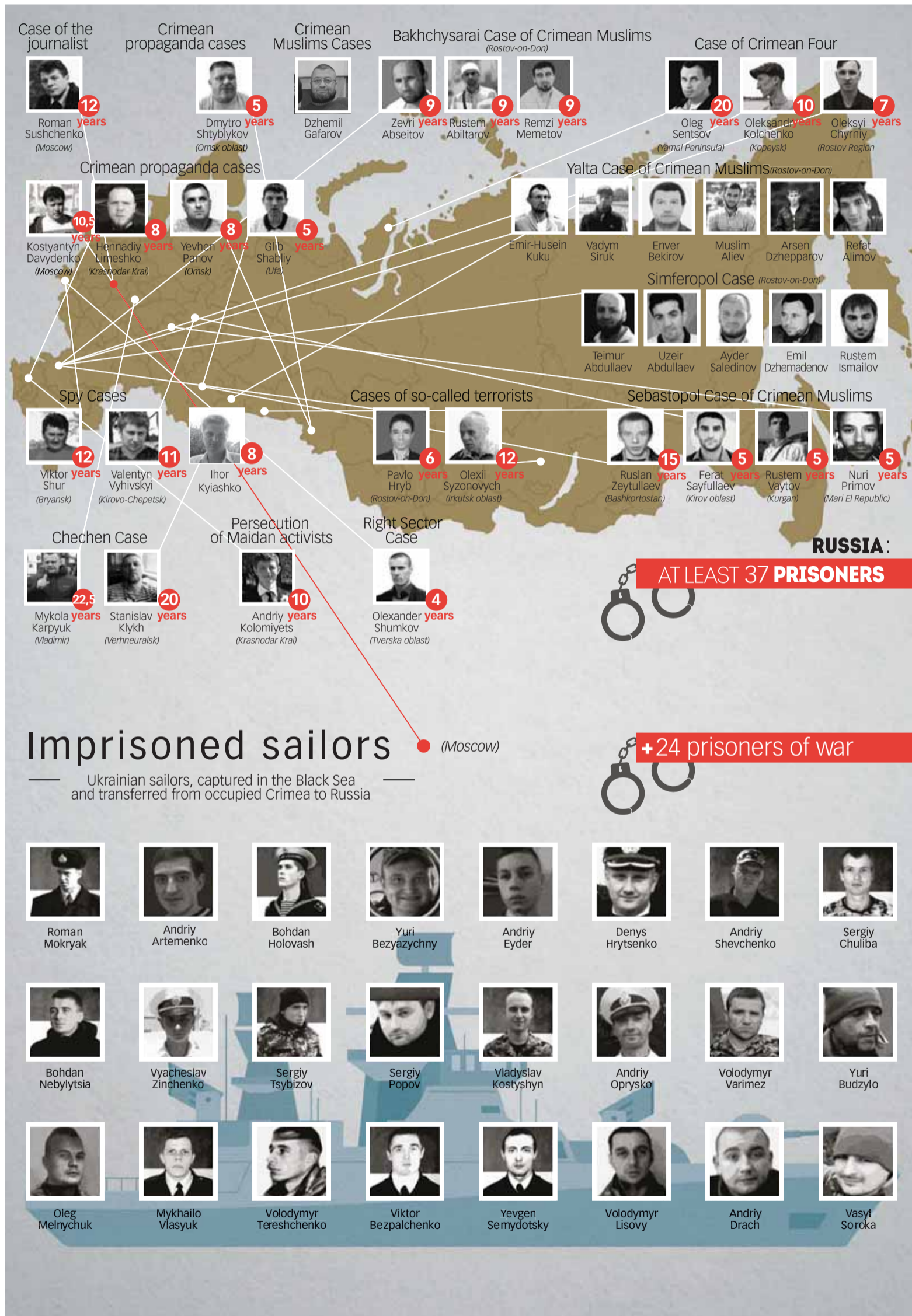
But many in Ukraine are questioning the cost of the exchange. The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) arrested Tsemakh following a daring operation in late June. He was seized in the Russian-controlled city of Snizhne in Donetsk Oblast.

According to Bellingcat, the international open-source investigative team, Tsemakh was the commander of a separatist air defense unit based in Snizhne and was a key witness or even a suspect in the downing of the Malaysian Airlines airplane over eastern Ukraine, which killed 298 people in July 2014.

Several observers claimed it could undermine Ukraine's relations with its international supporters, especially the Netherlands, whose prosecutors had asked the Ukrainian authorities not to give Tsemakh to Russia.

For the families of the captives, however, Tsemakh's release provides hope that they could soon see their loved ones again.

Many Ukrainian prisoners are in grave mental or physical condition. Some have been sentenced to more than 20 years of incarceration. The youngest Ukrainian political prisoner is just 19 years old. ■



Russia is imprisoning 120 Ukrainians. They include people who protested against the Kremlin's annexation of Crimea, opposed Russia's war against Ukraine or are just seen by Russia as Ukrainian nationalists. Of the total, 24 are members of the Ukrainian navy captured by the Russian Federal Security Service, or FSB, in the Black Sea in November, while another 68 of them are Crimean Tatars, the indigenous people of Crimea. They are widely persecuted by Russian authorities. (Source: Media Initiative for Human Rights)

# UKRAINIAN PRISONERS

## Persecution of human rights activists, bloggers, civic journalists

(pre-trial detention centers and colonies in occupied Crimea and in Russia)

Persecuted for political motives in occupied Crimean and in Russia – at least **120**

Among them Crimean Tatars – **68**

Among them got the sentence – **35**

Hostages and prisoners of war, who are kept in occupied areas of Donbas - at least **130**



### Crimean propaganda cases

The 1st wave of arrests



The 2nd wave of arrests



The 3rd wave of arrests



The 4th wave of arrests

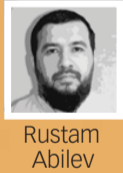


Case of painted monument



Tablighi jamaat case

Case of imam



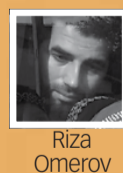
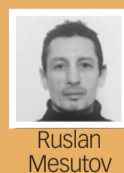
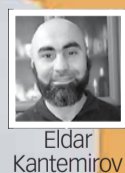
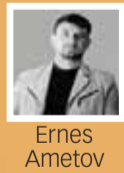
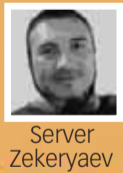
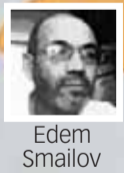
Case of Crimea blockade



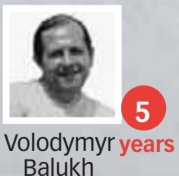
### Ban on leaving the Crimea

- Suleyman Kadyrov
- Mykola Semena
- Valeriy Bolshakov
- Fazyl Ibragimov
- Musa Abkerimov
- Eskander Emirvaliev
- Arsen Yunusov
- Eskander Kantemirov
- Artem Gerasymov
- Taras Kuzio
- Vitaliy Kuharenko
- Lilia Tatarisova
- Redvan Suleymanov
- Sergiy Filatov
- Bekir Dehermendzhy
- Asan Chapukh
- Kazim Ametov
- Ruslan Trubach
- Renat Suleymanov
- Talyat Abdurakhmanov
- Sayran Mustafayev
- Ali Asanov
- Mustafa Dehermendzhy

### Crimean Muslims Cases



Case of activist



Persecution of Maidan Activist



Internet case



Cases for checking

- Dmytro Dolgopolo
- Anna Sukhonosova

### TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED CRIMEA:

AT LEAST 26 PRISONERS

\* Under home arrest

# Trial shows seamy side of Yanukovych's US lobbying

BY ASKOLD KRUSHELNYCKY  
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WASHINGTON — A high-profile American lawyer, Gregory Craig, who was paid by cronies of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych for an investigation they hoped would hush criticism of the imprisonment of opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko, was acquitted on Sept. 4 of charges he had lied about the work to the U.S. Justice Department.

Although Craig was found not guilty by a jury in federal court at the end of a trial which began Aug. 12, the case raised the lid on a grubby world where lawyers, political spin doctors, lobbyists, and others eagerly grab lucrative fees for working on behalf of unsavory or downright tyrannical regimes or individuals.

## Pinchuk pays

There was testimony at trial that Ukrainian billionaire oligarch Victor Pinchuk provided the money to try to dampen Western criticism of Yanukovych for the political persecution of Tymoshenko, who was jailed in August 2011 and not set free until Kremlin-backed Yanukovych fled to Russia at the height of the EuroMaidan Revolution on Feb. 22, 2014. Pinchuk did not respond to requests for comment.

Craig, 74, and the international legal firm he worked for until last year, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, came to the attention of prosecutors in the fallout from the investigation by U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential race and whether there had been collusion between the Kremlin and the campaign of Donald Trump, the eventual winner.

Mueller had focused much of his investigation on Paul Manafort, the



Ousted former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych and oligarch Victor Pinchuk, founder of the Interpipe company, take part in the opening ceremony for Pinchuk's Interpipe Steel metallurgical plant in the city of Dnipro on Oct. 4, 2012. (UNIAN)

public relations operative who was credited with rescuing Yanukovych from political oblivion after he lost his 2004 presidential bid when the initial results were overturned because of massive electoral fraud engineered by the Yanukovych camp.

Manafort briefly found work as Trump's campaign chief. He was forced to leave after his role for Yanukovych surfaced and a Ukrainian journalist revealed documents listing millions of dollars in payments to Manafort that he had not declared to U.S. tax authorities. The Mueller investigation led to Manafort being convicted of evading U.S. taxes. He

was found guilty at two trials and is currently serving a seven and a half year prison sentence.

Manafort groomed Yanukovych's political image, and even literally his appearance, advising him on clothes and haircuts to drop his Donetsk-gangster persona to make him electable in the 2010 presidential race, in which he beat Tymoshenko by 3.5 percentage points.

## Show trial

After he came to power, Yanukovych arranged for the arrest, trial and imprisonment of his defeated rival, sparking outrage in the West. Manafort tried to ease the mounting pressure on Kyiv by hiring Skadden, for \$4.6 million, to produce a report to whitewash Tymoshenko's show trial. Craig led the team that compiled a report in December 2012 that justified the conviction.

Yanukovych supporters even set up a bogus "independent" think tank, the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine, which paid European politicians who later claimed they did not know of connections to Yanukovych. Craig's willingness to take part in Manafort's efforts raised eyebrows when Skadden's involvement came to light. He was regarded as an eminent lawyer who served two presidents, including Barack Obama, as a White House counsel.

The charge leveled at him was that he had deliberately misled U.S. Justice Department officials who enforce rules about complying with the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), which requires people working as lobbyists for foreign countries to register that fact.

Mueller's investigations into Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections caused alarm at how much concealed foreign influence was at work in the American capital. That

led to FARA becoming a powerful instrument to crack down on people concealing that they were working for foreign governments.

Craig was not accused of violating FARA itself but of lying to avoid registering as a foreign agent. The charge revolved around the extent to which Craig had tried to get the report publicized by media, including the New York Times, a role that prosecutors claimed strayed from a legal investigation into the realms of lobbying.

## A setback

His acquittal may mean a setback to the use of FARA to combat malevolent foreign influence in the U.S.

Craig's defense was that he had not sought to deceive in two letters and a meeting with Justice Department officials six years ago. One of his lawyers, William Murphy, said: "Mr. Craig is not the kind of person who would lie to a U.S. government agency, not after a 50-year career based on character and trust."

But prosecutors described one of the letters as a "masterpiece" of lies and half-truths which displayed "contempt for the FARA unit." They alleged Craig concealed his role in providing the report for media use because that would have required FARA registration.

They said Craig did not want to register because he thought it could hamper him and the other Skadden team members getting future government work. The prosecution also alleged Craig did not want to endanger his or the firm's reputation by disclosing that Ukrainian oligarch Victor Pinchuk had paid the firm \$4.15 million to conduct the report.

Craig told the judge and jury that his work for Yanukovych was legal and did not involve advocacy

on behalf of the Ukrainian government. He said: "I did not lie.....I did not withhold or conceal any information."

Pinchuk did not appear at the trial. But witnesses and court documents indicated that he paid \$4.15 million of the fee received by Skadden. Craig flew to Kyiv for breakfast at Pinchuk's house to discuss payments.

At one point, Pinchuk told Craig that Yanukovych's office had not yet authorized him to pay half the fee as an advance. Craig threatened to pull out of the project. Manafort promised to get the money, which was transferred to Skadden via a Cyprus account in Manafort's name.

Craig said: "It was Pinchuk's money but it was transferred through Manafort."

## Kyiv Post editorial

Initially, the Ukrainian government claimed it was only paying Skadden a \$12,000 fee — the legal limit for outside contracts. But an editorial in August 2012 in the Kyiv Post called that sum "ridiculous," saying that would pay for only 12 hours of Craig's work at Skadden's going rate.

That, according to court documents, embarrassed Manafort into saying Skadden was being paid \$1.25 million and Craig submitted a new invoice for that amount although his firm had already received more than \$4 million from Pinchuk. Manafort asked Craig to backdate the invoice to before the Kyiv Post's editorial, entitled "Skadden stink" was published.

The Kyiv Post asked Pinchuk why he agreed to pay for the investigation and did he think it is acceptable to use his wealth to try to influence or obscure the truth in matters of justice. No reply was received.

Pinchuk previously paid for American investigative company Kroll to look into the alleged role of his father-in-law, President Leonid Kuchma, in the murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze in 2000. The resulting report was labeled by many as an attempt to whitewash Kuchma.

## Skadden's services

Skadden has apparently developed an appetite for servicing the needs of Ukrainian oligarchs with opaque sources of wealth. Its London branch has been acting for Ihor Kolomoisky, former owner of Ukraine's largest bank, PrivatBank. The Ukrainian government nationalized it in 2016 and was forced to inject \$5.5 billion in public money to replace funds that went missing under the stewardship of Kolomoisky and his business partner, Gennadiy Boholyubov.

The new Ukrainian government-appointed owners of PrivatBank opened legal actions in the English courts to freeze the two oligarchs' funds as part of the effort to retrieve billions of dollars for the state.

Skadden earlier this year agreed to a settlement with the Justice Department that allowed the firm to avoid prosecution by registering under FARA and paying some \$4.6 million. ■

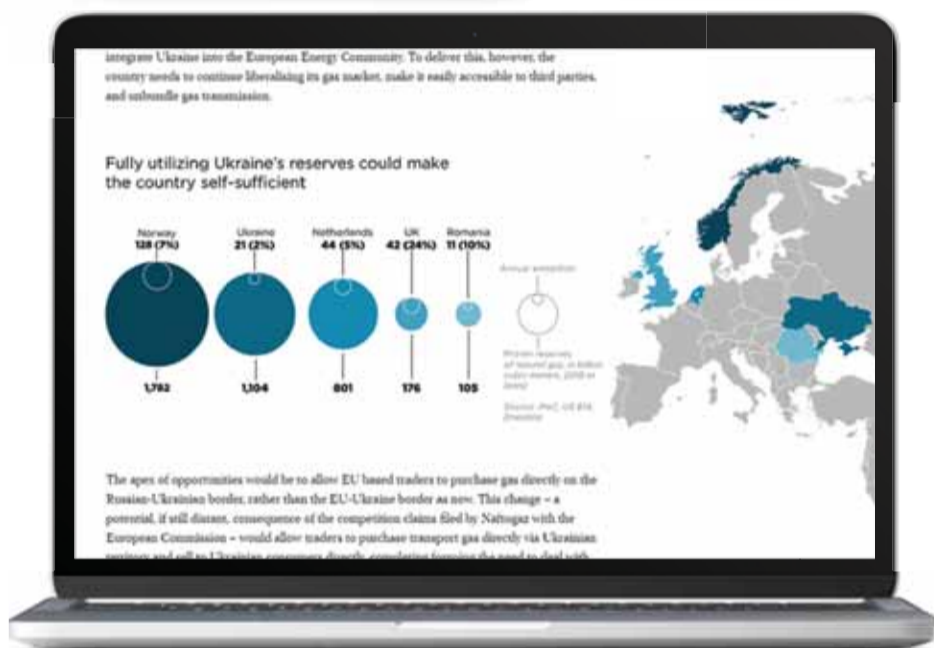
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LEGAL QUARTERLY is coming out on September 27

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## 'It: Chapter Two'

Pennywise the Dancing Clown returns 27 years after a group of kids, known as the Losers' Club, defeated "It." Now adults, the members of the Losers' Club have to reunite and go back to their hometown to face their deepest fears and stop It once again. Based on the horror novel by the legendary U.S. writer Stephen King, the new film is the conclusion to the "It" film trilogy. Directed by Andy Muschietti, the film stars Swedish actor Bill Skarsgård as Pennywise and James McAvoy, Jay Ryan, Jessica Chastain, Isaiah Mustafa as the protagonists facing him. "It: Chapter Two" will be released in the U.S. on Sept. 6, and screened in Kyiv cinemas in English on Sept. 10.

**"It: Chapter Two." Multiplex (Lavina Mall, SkyMall, Atmosphere, Komod). Sept. 10. 7 p.m. Hr 90-250**

### Friday, Sept. 6

#### Classical music

**Opera Vera** (opera music by Verdi, Puccini, Giordano). Ukrainian Radio. 7 p.m. Hr 80-150

#### Live music

**Jazz Arsenal: Urban Gypsy & Olga Chernyshova** (gypsy jazz covers). Mystetskyi Arsenal. 7 p.m. Hr 250-450

#### Clubs

**Portfavor: Udda, Kreida, Kiddmisha and others** (electronic dance music). River Port. 9 p.m. Price to be announced

**Crobot Muzik: N-Ter, DJ Xed, See Jay and others** (electronic dance music). Otel'. 11:30 p.m. Hr 200-250. Visitors must be over 21

**Judaah, Myn, Sariim, Jana Woodstock** (electronic dance music). Closer. 11:55 p.m. Hr 300-350. Visitors must be over 21

#### Miscellaneous

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyan Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Anatomic Atlas** (opening of the exhibition of textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Free

**Silence** (opening of the exhibition of paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Free

#### Movies

**Untouchable** (documentary). Zhovten. 1:10 p.m. Hr 55

**The Pursuit of Happiness** (drama in English). America House. 6:30 p.m. Free. Bring ID

#### Shows

**Jazz Koktebel Festival. Day 1.** 4 p.m. Trukhaniv Island. Free

**Com Truise** (electronic music). UBK. 7 p.m. Hr 650

**The Vyo & Dymitr Czabanski** (reggae, ska, dancehall). Tiki Surf Cafe. 7 p.m. Hr 250

**Zanias** (electronic music). Mezzanine. 8 p.m. Hr 350

**Jonathan Livingston** (pop). Caribbean Club. 8 p.m. Hr 400

**Advantage Project** (jazz). 32 Jazz Club. 8 p.m. Hr 400

**Tabula Rasa** (rock). Docker Pub. 10 p.m. Hr 125-1,400

#### Theater

**Manon Lescaut** (lyric drama in Italian). National Opera. 7 p.m. Hr 50-600

### Saturday, Sept. 7

#### Classical music

**Vivaldimania: Vivaldi, Bach** (vocals by Olha Tabulina, Natalia Sikorska on harpsichord). St. Catherine Church. 6 p.m. Hr 150-250

**Vivaldi. Seasons** (by Kyiv Metropolitan Orchestra). Architect's House. 7 p.m. Hr 245-475

**Mozart, Mendelssohn Bartholdy** (by Academic Symphony Orchestra, Ingrid Fuzjko Hemming on piano). National Philharmonic. 7 p.m. Hr 80-400

#### Live music

**Botanica Jazz** (covers by Old Fashioned Band). Gryshko Botanical Garden. 7 p.m. Hr 300-450

**AC/DC tribute** (by The Jack band). Docker-G Pub. 9 p.m. Hr 100-125

#### Clubs

**Soft Touch: Alex P, Horhe, Why Bro and others** (electronic dance music). River Port. 11 p.m. Price to be announced

**Mathew Jonson vs. Dandy Jack** (electronic dance music). Closer. 11:55 p.m. Price to be announced

#### Miscellaneous

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyan Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr

25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative

Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

**Cheese Market** (cheese by Ukrainian producers). Vsi Svoi D12. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free

**Kyiv Beer Festival** (festival featuring about 60 beer producers, food courts). Platforma Art Factory. 11 a.m. - 11 p.m. Hr 120-170

**Literary Kurazh Bazar** (charity market with books of various genres, topics, and formats - paper, electronic, audio, and Braille). VDNH. 12 a.m. - 11 p.m. Hr 150. Free for pregnant women, children under 12, retirees, people with disabilities and war veterans

**Kyiv Jazz and Whisky Festival.** VDNH. 3 p.m. - 11 p.m. One-day ticket - Hr 200, two-day ticket - Hr 300

#### Movies

**Untouchable** (documentary). Zhovten. 1:10 p.m. Hr 65

**Bias** (documentary in English). America House. 2 p.m. Free. Bring ID

#### Shows

**Jazz Koktebel Festival. Day 2.** 4 p.m. Trukhaniv Island. Hr 300, Hr 500 for a two-day pass

**Nik Barrell, Sliding Holders, Alexey Yarovenko Band** (blues). Docker-G Pub. 8 p.m. Hr 100-125

**Motorolla** (rock). Docker Pub. 10 p.m. Hr 125-1,400

**Elevation Trio** (jazz). 32 Jazz Club. 8 p.m. Hr 400

#### Theater

**The Barber of Seville** (opera in Italian). National Opera. 7 p.m. Hr 50-600

### Sunday, Sept. 8

#### Classical music

**Symphonies of the Universe: Brahms, Rossini** (by Kyiv Virtuosi orchestra). National Music Academy. 7 p.m. Hr 200-550

#### Live music

**Speakeasy Jazz** (the golden age of jazz hits). Caribbean Club. 7 p.m. Hr 180-600

#### Miscellaneous

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyan Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and

retirees

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

**Cheese Market** (cheese by Ukrainian producers). Vsi Svoi D12. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free

**Kyiv Beer Festival** (festival featuring about 60 beer producers, food courts). Platforma Art Factory. 11 a.m. - 11 p.m. Hr 120-170

**Literary Kurazh Bazar** (charity market with books of various genres, topics, and formats - paper, electronic, audio, and Braille). VDNH. 12 a.m. - 11 p.m. Hr 150. Free for pregnant women, children under 12, retirees, people with disabilities and war veterans

**Kyiv Jazz and Whisky Festival.** VDNH. 3 p.m. - 11 p.m. One-day ticket - Hr 200, two-day ticket - Hr 300

#### Movies

**Untouchable** (documentary). Zhovten. 1:10 p.m. Hr 65

#### Shows

**Jazz Koktebel Festival. Day 2.** 4 p.m. Trukhaniv Island. Hr 300, Hr 500 for a two-day pass

**Tartak** (rock). Docker Pub. 8 p.m. Hr 235-3,850

#### Theater

**Julius Caesar** (ballet). National Opera. 7 p.m. Hr 50-600

### Monday, Sept. 9

#### Miscellaneous

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

#### Shows

**Nataliya Lebedeva Trio & Laura Marti** (jazz). Caribbean Club. 8 p.m. Hr 150-470

### Tuesday, Sept. 10

#### Live music

**Mon Paris** (covers of songs by Edith Piaf,



## How to Dress Well

Another popular musician is coming to Kyiv to give a show here for the first time. Tom Krell, known by his stage name How to Dress Well, is famous for out-of-box experiments in his tracks. The U.S. artist mixes alternative R'n'B, ambient and experimental electronic genres. In Kyiv, he will present his most innovative release, "The Anteroom" album. The longplay consists of one long composition and reflects on the loneliness that Krell experienced over the last several years.

**How to Dress Well (ambient, pop, experimental). Closer (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.). Sept. 13. 8 p.m. Hr 550**

Dalida, Yves Montand, Mireille Mathieu. Caribbean Club. 8 p.m. Hr 150-550

**Miscellaneous**

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyas Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

**Movies**

**It: Chapter Two** (horror in English). Multiplex (Lavina Mall, SkyMall, Atmosphere, Komod). 7 p.m. Hr 90-250

**Shows**

**Simrit Kaur** (world music). Bel Étage. 7 p.m. Hr 1,250-1,950

**Theater**

**Chasing After Two Hares** (two-act ballet). National Opera. 7 p.m. Hr 50-600

**Wednesday, Sept. 11**

**Live music**

**Jazz on the Roof** (by Olga Lukacheva and Rodion Ivanov jazz band). Tsum. 7 p.m. Hr 450

**Miscellaneous**

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyas Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

**Shows**

**Paul Gilbert** (hard rock, heavy metal). Atlas. 7 p.m. Hr 690-1,490

**Thursday, Sept. 12**

**Live music**

**Jazz for Adults with Alexey Kogan**. Caribbean Club. 8 p.m. Hr 180-850

**Clubs**

**Vova Klk, Noizar b2b Trippy and others** (electronic music). Closer. 3 p.m. Price to be announced

**Miscellaneous**

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyas Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**'Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species'**

An ape in a tutu is how Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines the famous "Little Dancer" sculpture by Edgar Degas in his latest exhibition inspired by Psycho-Darwinism, a concept that combines evolutionary theories, including Charles Darwin's, with theories of psychology by Sigmund Freud. Chichkan's ape dancer is placed in a wooden transportation crate as if it traveled from afar to get to Kyiv, perhaps from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, where the original "Dancer" resides. Complementing the exhibition are images of ape-like painters – the supposed self-portraits of famous artists like Paul Gauguin and Vincent van Gogh. Chichkan, a representative of the "Ukrainian New Wave" art movement, caused a stir with his previous exhibition in the Psycho-Darwinism series in 2017. Some people filed a police complaint about "inciting religious hatred" against him when the artist painted saints as apes.

**"Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species." Port Creative Hub (10A Naberezhno-Khreshchatytska St.) Aug. 30 - Sept. 13. Mon-Fri 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Sat-Sun 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free**



Aug. 30 - Sept. 13

(Port Creative Hub/Facebook)

p.m. Free. Bring ID

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

**Shows**

**Uvula** (dream pop, surf rock). Mezzanine. 7 p.m. Hr 300

**Dz'ob** (accompanying the screening of 1929 "Essays on Soviet City" documentary). Dovzhenko Center. 8 p.m. Hr 150

**Tartak** (pop, rock, spoken word). Docker Pub. 8 p.m. Hr 250-3,150

**Friday, Sept. 13**

**Classical music**

**Brahms, Sylvestrov, Strauss** (piano concert by Christopher Park). National Philharmonic. 7 p.m. Hr 100-500

**Clubs**

**Schacke, Nastya Muravyova, S.A. Tweeman and others** (electronic music). Otel'. 11 p.m. Hr 350-500

**Miscellaneous**

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyas Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

p.m. Free

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 12 p.m. - 9 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**Psycho-Darwinism. Evolution of Species** (Ukrainian artist Illya Chichkan reimagines Degas's "Little Dancer" sculpture and self-portraits of famous painters through the concept of Psycho-Darwinism). Port Creative Hub. 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. Free

**Shows**

**How to Dress Well** (ambient, pop, experimental). Closer. 8 p.m. Hr 550

**Nataliya Lebedeva Trio feat. Laura Marti** (jazz). 32 Jazz Club. 8 p.m. Hr 400

**Saturday, Sept. 14**

**Live music**

**Jazz for Children** (live music and sand animation). Cinema House. 11 a.m. Hr 275

**Hans Zimmer. Interstellar** (by National Academic Brass Band of Ukraine). National Philharmonic. 7 p.m. Hr 110-700

**Clubs**

**Alex Savage, Femminielli Noir, Nastia** (electronic music). Closer. 11:55 p.m. Price to be announced

**Miscellaneous**

**Donbas: Black Gold** (photo exhibition by Serhii Korovainyi depicting the work of miners in Donetsk Oblast). America House. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free. Bring ID

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyas Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

p.m. Free

**Silence** (paintings by contemporary Ukrainian artists Marina Shkarupa and Igor Prokofiev). Triptych. 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Free

**Blue Monday** (paintings, graphics by Roman Mykhailov, Borys Kashapov and APL315 exploring the swinging transition from joy to struggle that modern people experience). Lavra Gallery. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Own Fashion** (market of clothes by Ukrainian designers and brands). Vsi Svoi D12. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free entrance

**Ulchnaya Eda - Wine** (market fair with wine, food court, lectures, workshops on food pairing). Platforma Art Factory. 11 a.m. - 11 p.m. Hr 120-170

**Theater**

**Akram Khan: Giselle** (ballet recording in English with Ukrainian subtitles). Multiplex (Lavina Mall). 3 p.m. Hr 190-240

**Carmen-Suite and Sheherazade** (ballet). National Opera. 7 p.m. Hr 50-600

**Sunday, Sept. 15**

**Classical music**

**Schubert, Vasks, Elgar, Britten** (by Kyiv Soloists chamber orchestra). National Philharmonic. 7 p.m. Hr 70-350 (2)

**Miscellaneous**

**New York - Ilovaik: A Choice** (an exhibition dedicated to Markiyas Paslowsky, a Ukrainian-American who died in Ukraine's east fighting Russian aggression). Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Hr 50, Hr 25 for pupils, students and retirees. Free for people with disabilities of the 1st, 2nd group, veterans and any museum employee

**Anatomic Atlas** (textile objects and applications with the use of embroidery and sewing exploring the human body by Anastasiia Podervianska). Voloshyn Gallery. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free

**Big Circle** (contemporary art exhibition exploring the transformation of non-objective art). M17 Contemporary Art Center. 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Hr 100, Hr 70 for children, students and retirees

**Own Fashion** (market of clothes by Ukrainian designers and brands). Vsi Svoi D12. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free entrance

**Ulchnaya Eda - Wine** (market fair with wine, food court, lectures, workshops on food pairing). Platforma Art Factory. 11 a.m. - 11 p.m. Hr 120-170

**Shows**

**Stoned Jesus** (psychedelic, stoner rock). Atlas. 7 p.m. Hr 250-700

**Yurcash** (punk, folk rock). Docker Pub. 8 p.m. Hr 175-2,450

**Theater**

**Carmen** (opera in French). National Opera. 7 p.m. Hr 50-600

**Own Fashion**

Around 150 Ukrainian designers will sell their clothes at Vsi Svoi's Own Fashion market, just around the time when fashion weeks are held around the world in September. The organizers say that Ukrainian brands make "clothes with a personality" that are produced in small numbers. Some of the brands the market will feature are Darja Donezz design, Sayya, Sonya Krees and Yana Chervinska. Own Fashion will also hold a special Sample Sale by Ukrainian Fashion Week where visitors will be able to buy brand new designs presented earlier this month at the fashion shows.

**Own Fashion. Vsi Svoi D12 (12 Desiatynna St.) Sept. 14-15. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Free entrance**



(Courtesy)

Sept. 14-15

**Venues**

**Classical Music**  
 ● National Music Academy of Ukraine (1/3-11 Arkhitektora Horodetsko St.) +38044 279 1242  
 ● National Philharmonic of Ukraine (2 Volodymyrskyi Uzviz St.) +38044 278 6291  
 ● St. Catherine Church (22 Luteranska St.) +38044 253 6319  
 ● Architect's House (7 Borysa Hrinchenka St.) +38050 386 7410

**Live Music**  
 ● Caribbean Club (4 Petliurya St.) +38067 224 4111  
 ● Docker Pub (25 Bohatyrskya St.) +38050 358 5513  
 ● Docker-G Pub (13/5 Ihorivska St.) +38095 280 8340  
 ● Ukrainian Radio Recording House (5B Leonida Pervomaiskoho St.) +38044 279 3344  
 ● Gryshko National Botanical Garden (1 Tymirazievskya St.) +38044 285 4105  
 ● UBK Club (Trukhaniv Island, 300 meters right of Pedestrian Bridge) 60 0202

● Cinema House (6 Saksahanskoho St.) +38044 287 7557  
**Clubs**  
 ● Closer (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.) +38067 250 0308  
 ● Mezzanine (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.) +38063 873 7306  
 ● Otel' (31 Nyzhnoiurkivska St.) +38063 618 0145  
 ● River Port (67 Nyzhni Val St.) www.facebook.com/riverportkyiv  
 ● UBK Club (Trukhaniv Island, 300 meters right of Pedestrian Bridge) +38097 771 3143

**Miscellaneous**  
 ● America House (6 Mykoly Pymonenka St.) +38063 343 0119  
 ● Lavra Gallery (9 Lavrska St.) +38044 280 0290  
 ● M17 Contemporary Art Center (102-104 Antonovycha St.) +38067 310 6631  
 ● Museum of Ukrainian Diaspora (40B Moskovska St.) +38044 280 6418  
 ● Mystetskyi Arsenal (10-12 Lavrska St.) +38044 288 5225

● Platforma Art Factory (1 Bilomorska St.) +38044 461 8810  
 ● Port Creative Hub (10A Naberezhno-Khreshchatytska St.) +38067 612 2394  
 ● Triptych Global Arts Workshop (34 Andriivskyi Uzviz St.) +38044 279 0759  
 ● VDNH (1 Akademyka Hlushkova Ave.) +38067 824 1631  
 ● Vsi Svoi D12 (12 Desiatynna St.) www.facebook.com/vsi.svoi  
 ● Voloshyn Gallery (13 Tereshchenkivska St.) +38067 467 0007

**Movies**  
 ● Multiplex Cinema (Lavina Mall, 6D Berkovetska St.) 0800 505 333  
 ● Multiplex Cinema (Atmosphere, 103 Stolychne Hwy.) 0800 505 333  
 ● Multiplex Cinema (Komod, 4A Sheptytsko St.) 0800 505 333  
 ● Multiplex Cinema (Sky Mall, 2T Henerala Vatutina Ave.) 0800 505 333  
 ● Zhovten Cinema (26 Kostiantynivska St.) +38044 428 5757

**Shows**  
 ● 32 Jazz Club (32 Vozdvyzhenska St.) +38050 462 0014  
 ● Atlas (37-41 Sichovykh Stritsiv St.) +38067 155 2255  
 ● Bel Étage Music Hall (16A Shota Rustaveli St.) +38066 971 2666  
 ● Dovzhenko Center (1 Vasylykivska St.) +38044 201 6574  
 ● Tiki Surf Cafe (12 Baseina St.) +38098 911 0112  
 ● Trukhaniv Island  
**Theater**  
 ● National Opera of Ukraine (50 Volodymyrskya St.) +38044 234 7165

# Ihor Aleksandrov murdered for investigating corruption

*Editor's Note: This story is part of a special project by the Kyiv Post, "Dying for Truth," an online database and series of stories documenting violence against journalists in Ukraine. Since 1991, when the country gained independence from the Soviet Union, more than 50 journalists have been killed across Ukraine. Most of the crimes have been poorly investigated and the killers remain unpunished. The project is supported by the Justice for Journalists Foundation. Content is independent of donor.*

BY VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA  
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As he was leaving home on July 3, 2001, Ukrainian journalist Ihor Aleksandrov told his wife it was going to be a good day.

One hour later, several men attacked and beat him with baseball bats. He later died in the hospital.

Aleksandrov, a well-known journalist and government critic in Donetsk Oblast, became the second prominent journalist murdered in Ukraine in less than a year, proving the country to be a dangerous environment for the press.

Ten months earlier, Georgiy Gongadze, the founder of independent online news site *Ukrainska Pravda*, had been kidnapped and murdered by high-ranking police officials. The brazen murder shook up the country, especially after leaked wiretap recordings suggested that then-President Leonid Kuchma had given the signal to target Gongadze, his frequent critic.

Kuchma survived the scandal, but not easily. For several months, street protesters demanded that he resign. He had to fire several top officials. He escaped prosecution but his reputation was forever tainted.

So when another journalist was murdered, both the public and authorities paid attention. Kuchma created an 800-person investigative task force. The murder took place in the eastern region ruled by Kuchma's loyal protégé, then-governor Viktor Yanukovich.

That investigation didn't go smoothly.

In less than a month, police arrested the supposed murderer. It was a homeless man who claimed he had attacked Aleksandrov, mistaking him for someone else. The case fell apart in court. The judge ruled that there was insufficient evidence and the suspect was instructed what to say.

The investigation of Aleksandrov's



Yuriy Veredyuk, a homeless man from Kramatorsk local cops tried to stage as the killer of Ihor Aleksandrov in 2001, reacts during a court session in Sloviansk on Jan. 28, 2002. (Ukrinform)

murder highlighted the fraudulent practices and inefficiency of Ukraine's police. Ironically, Aleksandrov's last investigations had exposed police corruption.

A second investigation of his murder was more successful. It found that a local crime boss ordered the attack on Aleksandrov for helping whistleblowers expose local police who conspired with his gang.

Five years after the journalist's murder, his killers were convicted. It took six years more to convict the police officers who tried to pass a homeless man off as the killer.

## 'Always so busy'

Aleksandrov was a prominent journalist in Donetsk Oblast.

He lived in Sloviansk, a city of 111,000 people some 670 kilometers east of Kyiv. Many years after his murder, his hometown became famous for something else: It was the first town that the Russia-backed militants occupied in spring 2014, launching a war that has since killed over 13,000 people.

In Sloviansk, Aleksandrov was the founder and a host of the independent TV channel TOR. He ran a live talk show "Bez retushi" ("No retouching"), where together with his guests — local politicians, experts, and whistleblowers — he discussed both regional and national news.

For a local TV station, TOR was big. It produced 24 exclusive programs and broadcasted not only in Sloviansk, but everywhere in Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv oblasts.

"He was always so busy," Lyudmila Aleksandrova, the journalist's widow, told the *Kyiv Post* on Aug. 23, 2019. "Ihor had a notebook where he wrote down all the tasks he failed to do today to return to them tomorrow."

More than 18 years have passed since the day she lost her husband, but she still remembers that day in all its details.

"As usual, he left for work very early, at 6:45 a.m. Ihor was upset because he didn't complete everything on his to-do list for the day before," Aleksandrova recalled. "He tried to cheer himself up by saying that that day would be a lot better than yesterday. Those were his last words to me before he left."

One hour later, as Aleksandrov entered the office building where TOR was based, two men attacked and beat him up with baseball bats.

His colleagues found him covered in blood. After four days in a coma, Aleksandrov died on July 7, 2001. He was 45 years old. He left behind a wife and two children.

In the Donbas, Aleksandrov had the reputation of a prominent critic of local law enforcement agencies and politicians. In 1999, a local court



Ihor Aleksandrov (L) talks to two former officers of the Kramatorsk Organized Crime Unit, Oleg Solodun and Mykhailo Serbin. They are whistleblowers who exposed local police in ties with organized crime groups on air in the third and last episode of Aleksandrov's live show "Bez Retushi" (No Retouching), broadcast by the Sloviansk TV channel TOR on April 13, 2001. (Courtesy of Sloviansk Score Book)

had ordered him to pay Hr 2,000 and banned him from doing journalism for five years — an unprecedented ruling that he successfully appealed — for calling local lawmaker Oleksandr Leshchinsky "the alcohol king of Donbas" on his show.

Before the murder, Aleksandrov had been working on the fourth part of an investigative series dedicated to Oleg Solodun and Mykhailo Serbin, whistleblowers from the Kramatorsk Organized Crime Unit. They exposed local police's corruption and ties to an organized crime group behind several contract killings.

The fourth episode was supposed to prove the authenticity of wiretap recordings published by Serbin and Solodun. The recordings proved that their boss Volodymyr Bantush, head of Interior Ministry's Organized Crime Unit, was close to Kostyantyn Yavorovskiy, a former cop-turned-gangster. Yavorovskiy organized the murder of a crime boss from an influential local gang, the "17th Precinct."

On the tape, a man, supposedly Yavorovskiy, said that Oleksandr Rybak, a businessman from Sloviansk and also a member of the gang, contracted him to murder Yermakov.

Rybak was known in the region for corporate raiding. Together with the 17th Precinct gang, he seized several plants and enterprises in Donbas. The companies were united under the umbrella of a holding company called *UkrLiga*.

"He was a very influential businessman in Sloviansk. People called him the 'ambassador' of Donetsk gangsters in our city," Aleksandrova recalls.

After Serbin and Solodun got the wiretapping from their source in the gang, a man named Oleksandr Kulya, they came to Bantush and told him about their findings. But instead of supporting the investigation, Bantush fired both of them. The official reason was "systematic professional misconduct and unsanctioned contacts with organized crime groups." They left law enforcement in May 1999.

But the two men didn't want to stop. They went to Kyiv, to inform the Security Service of Ukraine, known

had a close friendship with a former police officer Yavorovskiy, who was part of the so-called 17th Precinct, a powerful local gang named after a neighborhood in Kramatorsk. The gang was influential in the 1990s. Solodun and Serbin began to investigate Yavorovskiy behind their boss' back.

Their source in the gang helped them obtain the so-called "Dusseldorf Cassette" — wiretapping made by crime boss Dmytro German, who lived in Germany. The recording featured Yavorovskiy and German talking about the 1998 internal gang conflict in the 17th Precinct that led to the murder of one of the gang's leaders, Igor Yermakov.

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But the two men didn't want to stop. They went to Kyiv, to inform the Security Service of Ukraine, known

as SBU, and Prosecutor General's Office about police corruption in Sloviansk. But they say the authorities ignored them. Even the Interior Ministry's confirmation that the wiretapping was authentic didn't help.

Bantush denied all accusations in the comments to the local press. He said his subordinates had conspired to squeeze him out of his post.

## The journalist interferes

Soon, one of the whistleblowers, Serbin, was arrested and accused of drug possession. However, a court dropped the case within a year.

The other whistleblower, Solodun, feared for his life. He expected that the mafia boss they exposed would kill him. After all, in March 2000, Kulya, who gave them the "Dusseldorf Cassette," was killed in Sloviansk.

That's when Aleksandrov stepped in. He reached out to Solodun and Serbin in August 2000, after he read a story about the whistleblowers in the local newspaper *People's Will*. By that time, they had been fighting for justice for a year.

The author of the story was lawmaker Oleksiy Shekhovtsov, who represented Kramatorsk in the Ukrainian parliament. He was the only person with any power who believed Solodun and Serbin and tried to help.

Aleksandrov invited the two whistleblowers to talk about their investigation live on his show.

"After we started talking on Aleksandrov's TV show, it became too stupid and obvious for the 17th Precinct gang to kill us," Solodun told the *Kyiv Post*.

The first show featuring them aired on Sept. 22, 2000. The local police didn't react.

Aleksandrov was frustrated. To amplify the message, he organized a press conference for the whistleblowers. It worked. Many national TV stations reported on the police

# Punishment light or non-existent for those who conspired in 2001 beating death of Donbas journalist

Aleksandrov from page 6

corruption scandal in Sloviansk.

Aleksandrov was satisfied. He had a second show about Serbin's and Solodun's investigation two weeks later. During that show, the whistleblowers accused Yavorovskiy and Rybak of organizing multiple contract killings. Still, there were no comments from the authorities.

There was a different kind of reaction, though.

A couple of months later, Serbin and Solodun realized they were being surveilled and told Aleksandrov about it. He helped them again, organizing another press conference, this time in Kyiv, where they told the press about the pressure they were facing.

In April 13, 2001 Aleksandrov aired the third episode, where he talked to the whistleblowers about the "Dusseldorf Cassette."

He started working on the fourth show, trying to prove the authenticity of the tape. But he never finished the investigation. In July 2001, three months after the last show on police corruption, Aleksandrov was beaten to death in the hall of his TV station.

## Fake killer

Aleksandrov was buried on July 9, a week after the attack.

On that day, Yanukovych, the region's governor and Ukraine's future president, celebrated his birthday. A few days earlier, Yanukovych and Donetsk Oblast Prosecutor Viktor Pshonka — who would become the Ukraine's prosecutor general under President Yanukovych — promised Kuchma to personally control the investigation into the journalist's murder.

"Yanukovych invited us to Donetsk to visit him a day or so before his birthday. That's why I remember," Aleksandrova said.

By the time of the visit, she and her son Oleksiy Aleksandrov, as well as one of the whistleblowers, had already publicly claimed that Aleksandrov was killed because of his shows about corruption in law enforcement.

"Yanukovych was the first one who told me that we were wrong," recalls Aleksandrova. "He said it was just a tragic accident. The attacker was going for a different target. Later, prosecutors would stick to this version."



Former Kramatorsk police officer Kostyantyn Yavorovskiy (L) poses for a group photo with his colleagues from the 17th Precinct gang — Dmytro German, Oleg Bezzaponnyi, Igor Yermak in Spain. Yavorovskiy was sentenced to 13 years in prison for ordering contract killings, including that of Ihor Alexandrov. (Sloviansk Score Book)

It took less than a month to find the supposed killer. Kramatorsk police announced that the attack on Aleksandrov was an act of "hooliganism" that had nothing to do with his work.

They arrested Yuriy Veredyuk, a 42-year-old homeless man from Kramatorsk. Soon, he confessed. Veredyuk said a man paid him to attack a lawyer who had an office in the same building as Aleksandrov's TV station. Investigators said they had no doubts that Veredyuk was guilty.

The family and the whistleblowers didn't believe it. One of them, Solodun, gave a press conference to claim that it was businessman Oleksandr Rybak who paid to kill Aleksandrov. Rybak and his connections to the mafia were mentioned on the tapes Aleksandrov and the whistleblowers had released.

(Rybak couldn't be reached for a comment for this story. He has never commented on his role in the murder.)

Authorities didn't pay attention to Solodun's statement and went on with the case against the homeless man. In December 2001, five months after the murder, prosecutors passed the case to court, seeking an eight-year prison sentence for the man.

But Donetsk judge Ivan Korchistiy wasn't convinced. He ruled the accused not guilty and said he believed the case was staged. The homeless man was released. He had spent 10 months in pre-trial jail for a crime he didn't commit.

"It was such a shock and relief. We were so tired of that orchestrated investigation," Aleksandrova says.

Prosecutors protested but the judge ruled that they must re-investigate the case.

Soon, the case lost an important witness. Veredyuk, the homeless man initially accused of the murder, died. Later, one of the police officers working on the case was found guilty of poisoning him.

In the next two years, Security Service of Ukraine arrested 12 suspects. All of them were members of the 17th Precinct gang.

Their trial ended in July 2006. Five of them were convicted of the murder of Aleksandrov. The other seven members of the 17th Precinct were sentenced for other crimes.

Businessman Oleksandr Rybak was sentenced to 15 years in prison as the organizer of the murder. According to investigators, it cost him just \$5,000 to have the journalist killed.

His younger brother, Dmytro Rybak, got 11 years in prison for

serving as a middle-man in the murder. On his brother's request, he contracted three friends to attack Aleksandrov. In the court, he said they didn't want to kill the journalist, only to scare him. The court didn't believe it.

The two attackers, Oleksandr Onyshko and Ruslan Tursunov, were sentenced to 12 and six years in prison, respectively.

The third perpetrator, Sergiy Korytskiy, didn't take part in the attack but waited for the killers in the car. He was sentenced to three years in prison.

Former cop Yavorovskiy, who is allegedly the one speaking on the wiretap recording at the center of the scandal, got 13 years in prison for organizing multiple contract killings, including that of Aleksandrov.

Solodun said that the Rybak brothers were serving their sentences on the occupied territories of Donbas.

"I have information that Russian-backed separatists released Oleksandr Rybak and he is in Moscow now. I don't know where his younger brother is. Most likely he is with his brother," Solodun said.

None of the people convicted of Aleksandrov's murder in 2006 could be reached for comment for this story.

## Dirty cops

Aleksandrova said she was so tired after both trials that she had no strength to find out what had happened to the police officers who falsified the investigation of her husband's murder.

Bantush, the police boss who allegedly had ties to local mafia, left his post in the Kramatorsk Organized Crime Unit in 2002, and went into the private sector. He had never been investigated in connection to Aleksandrov's murder. In 2006, he started working as head of the security service of the Metinvest Group, a steel-and-mining corporation that belongs to oligarch Rinat Akhmetov. Later, he was a member of the regional councils in Dnipropetrovsk and Kryviy Rih elected on the ballot of Yanukovych's Party of Regions.

The last time he surfaced in the news was in 2017. The Chesno Civic Movement watchdog mentioned that Bantush bought 18 apartments in Kramatorsk in 2014–2016. He ended up in the report because he was the son-in-law of Donetsk Oblast Court of Appeals Judge Lyudmila Gruitska.

Bantush could not be reached for comment for this story. Solodun said his former boss still lives in Kramatorsk.

However, investigators arrest-

ed another high-profile local cop from Kramatorsk in connection to Aleksandrov's case. In January 2004, the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine started investigating Ihor Kryvolapov, deputy head of the Kramatorsk Criminal Police as a suspect in falsifying evidence in Aleksandrov's case.

He spent five years in a pre-trial detention center before the 2009 trial. During that time, prosecutors arrested three other police officers in connection to Aleksandrov's case. One of them, Colonel Oleksandr Herasymenko, was a suspect in poisoning Veredyuk. Herasymenko denied that charge in an open letter published by several Donetsk Oblast media at the time. He said his case was falsified by the Prosecutor General's Office.

In February 2009, the Zaporizhzhia Court of Appeals released Kryvolapov and three other police officers from prison due to a lack of evidence against them. However, three years later, they were arrested again. In March 2012, a court sentenced Kryvolapov to seven years in prison for falsifying evidence and witness testimony in Aleksandrov's case.

Herasymenko was sentenced to 13 years in prison for poisoning Veredyuk, the Prosecutor General's press service reported. Two other police officers, Albert Vinnychuk and Serhiy Shlomin, were sentenced to eight years in prison for assisting Herasymenko. They promised Veredyuk an apartment and a car for a confession in Aleksandrov's murder.

In January 2013, a court released Kryvolapov from custody on time served both in pre-trial detention and prison. Furthermore, in October 2018, Kryvolapov won a case against Ukraine in the European Court of Human Rights.

The court ruled that Ukraine must pay him 20,000 euro for moral damages for violating his rights in the course of the investigation. The court said the investigation was too long, Kryvolapov's arrest in pre-trial detention was unjustified, and he had faced a campaign of slanderous coverage in the media.

But that wasn't the last time a Donetsk Oblast journalist would be killed for investigating the mafia. In November 2014, journalist Oleksandr Kuchynskiy and his wife were killed at their dacha outside Sloviansk.

Kuchynskiy was the editor of the Criminal Express newspaper and had written two books: "Chronicle of Donetsk Banditism" and "Anthology of a Contract Killing." ■



The cover of "The Sloviansk Score," a book covering the Sloviansk and Kramatorsk mafia and their ties to local police, written by journalist Serhiy Garmash, former Organized Crime Unit officer Oleg Solodun and ex-lawmaker Oleksiy Shekhovtsov in memory of journalist Ihor Aleksandrov. It was published in 2017.

# Zelensky wants sweeping changes in many areas

Agenda from page 3

## President's deadlines

**Sept. 15**

- Finance Ministry submits the 2020 budget plan to parliament.

**Oct. 1**

- The government submits bills on lifting a ban on farmland sales and on the private farmland market.
- The government drafts a new list of state companies to be exempt from privatization.
- Banks lower customer loan and mortgage rates.
- The bills on legalizing casinos and amber mining are submitted to the parliament.
- The parliament passes the law on concessions and the law on the lease of state and communal property.
- A law on the new State Service for Financial Investigations is submitted to the parliament.
- The parliament splits the functions of the financial services regulatory body between the National Bank and the Securities Commission.

**Nov. 1**

- The parliament passes a law on inland waterborne transport.
- The parliament passes laws on financing and pricing for road construction and repairs.

**Dec. 1**

- Parliament lifts a ban on farmland sales.
- The Cabinet submits a list of 500 state-owned enterprises to be sold via ProZorro. Large state companies must have privatization plans.
- The government signs sharing agreements on gas and oil production and exploration with the winners of subsoil auctions.
- The parliament passes laws on legalizing casinos and amber mining.
- The government starts a public awareness campaign explaining the reforms in the housing and utilities sector.
- Parliament passes the law on the new State Service for Financial Investigations.
- The State Customs Service is relaunched.

**Dec. 31**

- The Infrastructure Ministry prepares a restructuring plan for Ukrzaliznytsya that allows privately-owned locomotives on its tracks.
- New members will be appointed to the High qualification commission for selection of judges. It will vet and hire 2,000 new judges to the courts of first instance.

**Jan. 1, 2020**

- The parliament passes a new law on the stimulation and protection of foreign investment.
- The Energy Ministry prepares lots for open tenders for oil and gas exploration permits.
- New Labor code is approved.
- New staff is hired to the most corrupt agencies responsible for inspecting businesses and issuing permits.
- The customs service launches "one stop shop" system.
- The government approves the plan for deregulation and issuing various state permits in electronic form; 30 most popular government services will be provided to citizens and businesses online.
- The Infrastructure Ministry holds pilot tenders for the concession of Olvia and Kherson seaports.

**Spring 2020**

- Audit of UkrOboronProm is completed.

**April 1, 2020**

- The first privatization tender takes place.

**Jan. 1, 2021**

- The State land registry is updated with data on all agricultural land plots in the country.

## E-government



nesses online on a single portal for e-services.

### Reduce paperwork — by Oct. 1, 2019

The government also wants to reduce the use of paper in exchanges between various ministries and agen-

cies and increase their efficiency by moving paperwork online. Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers Dmytro Dubilet said the complete transition to digital paperwork is a goal for the next year or two, but the process has to start by Oct. 1.

### E-identity — no hard deadline

The government must audit all state registries, verify and update data on all citizens and assign e-identities to them. This is a prerequisite for the creation of the State Demographic Registry and holding elections and census counts online.



### E-services — by Jan. 1, 2020

By January, the government has to approve the plan for deregulation and issuing state permits electronically. Moreover, the top 30 most popular government services have to be provided to citizens and busi-

## Defense



"Defense Plan," a strategy for repelling Russian aggression.

Newly appointed Defense Minister Andriy Zahorodniuk said that state policies should focus on the average military serviceperson.

### Stop corruption in defense industry

The government also announced important deadlines at Ukroboronprom, the state-run military production giant mired in corruption and inefficiency. The organization's new director general, Aivaras Abromavicius, promised to select a new manager for the Ukroboronprom "for the first time via a competitive contest rather than through political arrangements" by the end of 2019.

According to Abromavicius, the organizations transformation should result in Ukraine's arms exports increasing by a factor of five, from nearly \$400 million in 2018 to \$2 billion by 2025. Missile and aircraft manufacturing will get top priority.

However, the first key step to that is a competitive audit of Ukroboronprom, which should be completed by spring 2020, according to Serhiy Kryvonos, deputy secretary of Ukraine's National Defense and Security Council. Additionally, Ukroboronprom's management should be forced to undergo lie detector tests.

*Editor's note: See a detailed story on the proposed defense reforms on page 18.*

### Westernize military

In the defense and security sector, Zelensky has supported the continued military buildup and westernization of the country's Armed Forces following NATO benchmarks. He described his priority as building a "powerful, combat-ready army" and ordered the government to "propose changes to legislation necessary to create a strong force," as well as a

## Changes to parliament

### No sooner than February 2020

Ukrainian parliament on Sept. 3 voted in the first reading on several constitutional changes. Now it is up to the Constitutional Court to approve them. After that, the parliament will take the final vote on them — but due to the procedure, it has to happen at the next session, which starts in February. One of the biggest changes was already made: the parliament

also rules that the parliament is to be elected only on the party lists, and not as independent represen-



tatives in single-member constituencies. It reflects the legislation that was passed several months before, cementing this electoral system by adding it to the Constitution.

### Dismiss lawmakers for truancy

When this amendment is adopted, lawmakers will be dismissed for missing over a third of parliamentary committee meetings in one session without a good reason, such as a sick leave.

The same will apply to lawmakers who will be caught voting for their

absentee colleagues — something that has been a common practice in the Ukrainian parliament.

### Give the people the right to initiate bills

Ukraine's constitution allows lawmakers, ministers and the president to draft laws and present them for a vote in parliament. This constitutional amendment proposed by Zelensky will also give this right to the people. However, the exact process by which the people will propose legislation is yet to be determined. The president's representative in the Constitutional Court hinted that a proposed legislature will need to attract a certain number of signatures to be presented in parliament.

### Parliament to get advisory bodies

Two constitutional amendments will give the parliament the right to appoint special commissioners and to create advisory bodies. Currently the parliament has only one commissioner, on human rights.

### Decrease the number of lawmakers

The parliament will consider the amendment on decreasing the number of lawmakers from 450 to 300 people. The same amendment

# A London outpost of Ukrainian culture

BY ANNA MYRONIUK  
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**LONDON** — The director of the Ukrainian Institute in London, Marina Pesenti, gave the Kyiv Post a glimpse into how the diaspora organization she chairs manages to successfully promote Ukraine in the United Kingdom without state funding, while Russia does the same thing with generous sponsorship by the Kremlin.

The Ukrainian Institute was founded in 1979. It is located in an affluent section of London, with neighbors including embassies, the Ukrainian one, among them and only five minutes away. The Victorian building where the institute is based regularly hosts Brits at events devoted to the Ukrainian history, culture and politics.

“We’re trying to present Ukraine as an exciting and complex country and we are not shying away from complicated topics,” Pesenti told the Kyiv Post.

## No propaganda

The mission: Explain Ukraine to the non-Ukrainian audience. Telling the truth is the best way of doing so, believes Pesenti, a former journalist with BBC World Radio. Her four years as the institute’s director has proven that the truth is not only the best approach, it’s key to selling out events, she said.

“We should encourage debate, not push a propaganda line,” Pesenti said.

Sometimes the institute’s work is criticized.

In October 2018, the institute invited Daria Mattingly, a historian who researched the role of Ukrainian perpetrators of the Holodomor, the Josef Stalin-orchestrated famine that killed nearly 4 million Ukrainians to ruthlessly suppress their drive for independence.

“Strangely I got some comments on our social media saying ‘shame on you,’ that ‘you are trying to portray Ukrainians as killers of their own people,’ these kinds of things, you know. You cannot be 100 percent sure that everything you do will be welcomed by all segments of the Ukrainian community,” she said.

Since September 2018, the institute held 19 events, attended by thousands of people. “We do feel that we are doing something important that has to be done.”

## New narrative needed

Ukraine made headlines in 2013, when the EuroMaidan Revolution broke out and, 100 days later, toppled Kremlin-backed President Viktor Yanukovich on Feb. 22, 2014. It’s time to move on, she said.

“I think the problem for Ukraine is that it has to think of really a coherent narrative about itself. There was a very distinct narrative which came about after Maidan, that Ukraine is a country with deeply embedded European values, it is a victim of Russian aggression. And also, a country with a very strong civil society. But then after a certain time, the narrative wears off.”

## Big on events

The institute promotes events on



Marina Pesenti, director of the Ukrainian Institute in London, stands in a hall of the building where the institute is based, and where dozens of guests gather to hear insights about Ukraine in London on July 20, 2019. (Anna Myroniuk)

Ukrainian-Jewish relationships, Ukraine’s identity, cinematography, politics, and the country’s struggle for survival under the Soviet regime.

Pesenti suggests promoting Ukraine softly, through various cultural elements such as food, cinema and arts. She’s constantly thinking of new formats and ideas.

“You know, when the war is in its sixth year, we have to think of new angles. People just get tired of it,” said Pesenti, referring to Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine, which has killed 13,000 people and left 7 percent of the nation’s territory under Kremlin control.

In April, Pesenti organized a talk on war songs and Ukrainian identity in Donbas.

## Cultural diplomacy

Russian cultural organizations constantly promote their country in the UK with massive events at the most prestigious venues. “The Russian cultural presence is enormous here and I think it would be a mistake for us trying to compete with them.”

In 2017 Russia held a bunch of events in London marking 100 years since the Russian Revolution, the coup against Tsar Nicholas II. One exhibition exalting the arts of the revolutionary period was hosted by The Royal Academy of Arts. A lot of times the Russian exhibits appropriate Ukrainian artists and cultural achievements as their own. This theft of Ukrainian identity has been going on for centuries, including fabrications and distortions of the history of Kyivan Rus, World War II and countless other topics.

In Russian eyes, Kyiv-born painter Kazimir Malevich and Chernihiv region-born film director Oleksander

Dovzhenko are theirs, not Ukrainian in origin.

To match Moscow’s might, Ukraine needs time and money.

“It is a question of how strong the cultural infrastructure inside the country is. We have to have some state programs and funding to support these key cultural institutions if we really plan to do some big exhibitions.”

## Seeking money

The institute’s team: Four staff

employees and one volunteer. They do not have a permanent office and hold events at the premises of Saint Sophia Society, a Catholic organization located in an ancient building at one of the richest boroughs in central London. The building also hosts book club gathering and rehearsals of a Ukrainian Molodiy Theater.

The institute has to crowd-fund money for its survival — the Ukrainian Catholic University, based in Lviv, is its major benefactor. In the 2017–18 financial year, it raised

about \$85,000, 10 times more than a year before. It also tries to earn money selling tickets to events and running a Ukrainian language school of 20 students.

“It is a bunch of people — a diaspora that lost the language and would like to learn it again, people who are married to Ukrainians, people who professionally need Ukrainian for their work. And maybe the fourth group is British eccentric people who just want to do something quirky,” said Pesenti. ■

# Defense Ministry faces tough reform challenges

BY ILLIA PONOMARENKO  
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With the appointment of Andriy Zagorodnyuk as defense minister on Aug. 29, Ukraine's security sector has begun a new chapter.

For the first time, a top defense official was appointed Western-style: from a pool of purely civilian managers, rather than from the old post-Soviet general pool or the ossified political establishment.

The new Defense Ministry now faces a tremendously long to-do list of reforms, many of which should have been accomplished long ago. In nearly all areas — from state procurement and rearmament to social security for personnel — the new ministry will have to deal with numerous problems and years of stagnation.

Moreover, Zagorodnyuk's ministry will likely be the one to report to the nation on the accomplishments of the 2020 NATO-style military reforms. The final deadline for this reform is now just 16 months away.

Time is running out, but the good news is that the Zelensky team has all the leverage necessary to bring about key changes: it has full control of the Defense Ministry, the General Staff, and the parliament.

From now on, the potent new Defense Ministry has no excuse for failure.

## From civilian life

Zagorodnyuk, 41, has built a career in the oil production business. Since 2005, he had led the Discovery Drilling Equipment company, producing various drilling machinery in Ukraine.

Following the outbreak of Russia's war in Donbas in 2014, he became a civic activist and volunteer providing to Ukrainian combat formations deployed in the country's east. He was known for providing the Ukrainian fighters with potbelly stoves and armored cash transit vehicles reequipped to function as battlefield ambulances.

In 2015–2017, he also chaired the Reform Project Office, a group of nearly 40 civilian volunteers advo-



Ukrainian naval sailors march on Khreshchatyk Street in downtown Kyiv as part of the Ukrainian Independence Day celebrations on Aug. 24, 2019. (Volodymyr Petrov)

cating numerous improvements in the military such as better food supplies, e-procurement and unified medical databases for military personnel.

Zagorodnyuk's former subordinates told the Kyiv Post that the new defense minister is a principled advocate of Westernization in the military.

"Andriy has always had a clear vision of army reforms," says Anastasiya Lukashevych, a former senior communications officer with Stratcom Ukraine, a non-government organization that partnered with the Reform Project Office.

"In particular, in terms of army supplies, he relied on the experience of NATO nations. He trusts the opinion of experienced foreign advisers, which was not always the case for the Defense Ministry leadership at the time," she says. "Andriy was always advocating transparency at the Defense Ministry, a full shift to electronic accounting systems. Because sometimes, a problem is not caused by a deficit, but rather

by maze-like logistics and a lack of understanding of what resources are available."

Zagorodnyuk has a finance degree from Oxford University and he worked for many years in business, so his communication style differs from that of traditional military leaders, Lukashevych notes.

In July 2019, Zagorodnyuk was appointed to the 5-member supervisor board of Ukraine's defense production giant Ukroboronprom and also became a non-staff adviser to President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Against expectations, the president opted to choose Zagorodnyuk to head the Defense Ministry, and not Ivan Aparshyn, a retired colonel and veteran ministry bureaucrat perceived by many as Zelensky's likely appointee.

"There is no doubt that this appointment was the correct decision," says Oleh Zhdanov, a retired General Staff colonel. "We do not yet know if Zagorodnyuk's tenure will be fruitful. But the very principle — a civilian manager in charge of a policymaking and resource-managing ministry — is a step in the right direction toward Western standards. It is like turning a new page, an attempt to make a step away from the Soviet model that was, in fact, reinstated under (President Petro) Poroshenko."

## Transform the command

Both Zelensky and Zagorodnyuk have so far offered only very general plans for the defense sector, stressing continued military buildup in accordance with NATO benchmarks, improving social care for personnel, and combating corruption.

But the challenging part is that Zagorodnyuk's ministry will have to successfully complete one of key tasks of the 2020 reform: Introducing the position of Chief Commander (not to be confused with Commander-

in-Chief, i.e. the president), the top military officer leading the entire Armed Forces and answering to the civilian defense minister.

In addition to that, the General Staff must be transformed into a body that carries out military policies and decisions defined by the Chief Commander. The Joint Operative Command — a combined staff uniting all five branches of the military service: Ground, Air, Naval, Airborne, and Special Operations Forces — would be charged with the direct use of troops in battle.

Above all, the civilian-led Defense Ministry is supposed to ensure civilian oversight of the military, manage resources for the Armed Forces, and also assume strategic decision-making in defense.

According to Deputy Chief of General Staff Ihor Kolesnyk, this system, generally common for NATO militaries, must be successfully introduced in Ukraine by the end of 2019.

## J-structure

That's not the ministry's biggest headache. It also must complete the process of switching the Ukrainian Armed Forces to the so-called continental staff system: a standardized function structure of military staffs that is common for NATO countries.

Thus, the Ukrainian top command must assume a structure similar to SHAPE, NATO's joint military headquarters for Europe, consisting of nine functional J-elements (where J stands for "joint"): J-1 (personnel), J-2 (intelligence), J-3 (military operations), J-4 (logistics), J-5 (planning), J-6 (communications), J-7 (troop training), J-8 (resource management), and J-9 (civil-military affairs).

The new structure would not only make the Ukrainian military command fully compatible with NATO (which is one of the reform's primary goals), but also hopefully put an end

to the Soviet-style chaos in which the General Staff and Ministry of Defense have overlapping responsibilities.

This has undermined the Armed Forces' effectiveness for decades.

The new NATO-style mechanism is also expected save military personnel from overwhelming bureaucracy and heaps of senseless paperwork that had led soldiers to joke about the "Ukrainian Paper Army," a play on the World War II-era "Ukrainian Insurgent Army," which has the same acronym in Ukrainian.

Although introducing the J-structure has seen some progress over past years, the deadline — the end of 2020 — is quite near.

## Belated bills

A range of crucial legislative initiatives, bitterly neglected for years, should also be of key priority. Zagorodnyuk now has many things to discuss with parliament.

One of the bills long languishing in parliament proposes launching a brand new hierarchy of military ranks. It envisages the creation of the so-called sergeant corps, similar to the institution of non-commissioned officers in the United States military.

This reform is aimed at completely reshaping the Ukrainian military according to the American model, where commissioned officers make decisions while their sergeants implement their commands and take care of their subordinate soldiers in the unit. This system would extend to all levels of the military, from the smallest unit, a section, to squads, companies, battalions, and so on.

Since 2017, this key reform has seen little support. The previous Verkhovna Rada simply ignored it and failed to pass several bills on the matter.

The same fate awaited another key bill that would have introduced numerous amendments and improvements to Ukrainian military service regulations, which grew Soviet instructions of the 1970s. The bill would also have synchronized them with NATO benchmarks.

While Zagorodnyuk must now do his best to urge Servant of the People — the majority faction in parliament — to finally pass these key bills, he is also facing another difficult challenge: building a balanced systems of payments for Ukrainian officers and sergeants. In this new system, officers and sergeants at the same levels of command should receive equal wages as parallel specialists. They are not a chief and a subordinate, like in the Soviet system.

And because Zagorodnyuk supports transparency and combatting corruption in defense, he and the entire Cabinet of Ministers should immediately initiate bills on removing the cloak of excessive secrecy from state defense procurement. This has bred immense corruption risks for decades and way never even touched upon by the Poroshenko Administration. ■



Newly-appointed Defense Minister Andriy Zagorodnyuk addresses the Verkhovna Rada on Aug. 29, 2019. (Oleh Petراسиuk)

Taste a variety of wines and delights at Kyiv's street food festival Ulichnaya Eda on Sept. 14-15. Platforma Art Factory (1 Bilomorska St.) Hr 120-170



BY ARTUR KORNIENKO  
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## Activists want to revive Kyiv's ancient Lybid River



A young Roma family shelters near the Lybid River in Kyiv in August 2018. The 17-kilometer river runs through the capital and into the Dnipro River, but it has become polluted and has been forced underground for half of its length. It also has become shallower and narrower, but environmental activists have ambitious restoration plans that depend on strong support from Kyiv municipal officials. (Vincent Mundy)

BY VINCENT MUNDY

It was declared an ecological disaster zone in 2015, following a petition that collected more than 10,000 signatures from Kyiv residents. But now the capital's legendary Lybid River is at the center of radical plans to rejuvenate the rundown industrial heart of the city.

Over the centuries, the 17-kilometer river has dwindled. It has been forced underground for almost half its length, before becoming a tributary to the Dnipro River. Since 1935, when the Soviets deemed the river as nothing more useful than a drainage canal, it has largely been

contained within a narrow concrete channel.

According to folklore, the river was named after the princess called Lybid who, along with her three brothers, founded Kyiv in the 6th century. Legend has it that the river first began flowing from her tears on the day that Lybid realized she would never find her true love.

Now, centuries after trading ships stopped sailing along her course, the Lybid miraculously continues to flow through the heart of Kyiv. But it amounts to a filthy waterway that has become a stain on the reputation of a city awash in hastily built skyscrapers and other giant developments

that, at best, pay lip service to the environment.

But could things finally be about to change?

Civic activists have floated an ambitious green vision that could resuscitate the Lybid and regenerate deprived parts of the capital. Conceptual images unveiled by Nasha Lybid ("Our Lybid"), a non-profit organization, show the ecology of the river partially restored and riversides of wooded public parks flanked by residential and mixed-use commercial developments.

The foundation has now begun looking for investors and developers to make that vision a reality.

Speaking to the Kyiv Post beside a new hotel overlooking the river, Nasha Lybid chair Viktor Mashtabei rejected criticism of the plans as unrealistic.

"During a presentation the other day someone told us 'I expected a project such as this in Dubai, or Abu Dhabi, but Kyiv? Impossible.' But it is possible," he beamed.

The long-term plan is a tree-lined corridor to rehabilitate the whole riverside, all the way to the mouth of the Dnipro River. But at the heart of the initial proposals are a glistening glass bridge resembling a necklace

more Lybid on page 22

## Concessions, cliches haunt dissident Vasyl Stus biopic

There is one "villain" in the Vasyl Stus biopic "Censored" that Ukrainians would have wanted to have been named. But, due to legal threats, he wasn't.

In a key film scene, Stus, the Ukrainian dissident poet, faces trial on charges of "anti-Soviet activity and propaganda" in 1980.

His state-appointed attorney, Viktor Medvedchuk, does little to defend the poet and, in fact, agrees with the prosecution that Stus' actions qualify as a crime.

The court sentenced Stus to 10 years in prison and five years in exile. Five years later, in 1985, Stus died at the age of 47 in a labor camp. At the time, the Ukrainian diaspora was trying to nominate him for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

In the ensuing years, Medvedchuk grew wealthy in the media and energy businesses. He climbed the political ladder, serving once as Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma's chief of staff and leading a political grouping known as the "oligarchs' party." He is now a lawmaker with the pro-Russian Opposition Platform – For Life party and Russian dictator Vladimir Putin's right-hand man in Ukraine. He is sometimes derisively referred to as the "Prince of Darkness."

When the authors of the film excluded the trial scene naming him from the original screenplay in August 2018, Ukrainian civil society demanded its return as an accurate portrayal of Medvedchuk's poor representation of his client.

The government of former Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman backed the demand, since taxpayers paid for half of the film's Hr 38.1 million (\$1.5 million) budget. The trial scene in the original screenplay helped the film win the competition for state funding.

But Medvedchuk's lawyer publicly threatened to go to court and get the film banned if it contained any "false information" about his client.

So as "Censored" premiered in movie theaters in Kyiv on Sept. 4, the 34th anniversary of Stus' death, many watched attentively for the trial scene. It did show a Soviet court. It did

more Stus on page 20

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# Viktor Medvedchuk goes on offensive against film

Stus from page 19

show Stus demanding an international lawyer instead of “the second prosecutor” defending him. And it did show a character that resembles Medvedchuk.

“Comrades judges, I consider the qualification of the defendant’s actions to be correct,” the character says. These are the exact words spoken by Medvedchuk, according to declassified court transcripts. But the audience never hears the name “Medvedchuk.” The character is referred to only as “the defense” in the film.

The authors say they had to be careful not to change Medvedchuk’s recorded phrases in the slightest and could not use his name without his written consent.

Article 296 of Ukraine’s Civil Code allows the use of a living individual’s name in literary and other works only with his or her consent. Article 32 of the Constitution says that an individual can demand the refutation and removal of false information about him or herself. And Article 278 of the Civil Code says that, if an individual’s rights are violated in film, the court can prohibit its distribution.

In the U.S., portraying real-life individuals in fiction — politicians and historical figures, in particular — is allowed in most cases by the First Amendment to the Constitution. Last year, for example, the film “Vice” portrayed living former Vice President Dick Cheney as a power-craving villain. Cheney and his family did not sue the authors.

But clearly, it is another matter in Ukraine. Not only are the laws stricter, but also the film and distribution companies are less able to defend themselves in court. With a film industry that started to grow only in the last three years, the authors of the film simply can’t afford powerful legal defense, unlike Hollywood studios.

“With power and a good lawyer, the movie can be banned. That’s why

the film came out in the only version that it had the right to come out,” “Censored” director Roman Brovko told the Kyiv Post.

So it remains for the viewer to recognize the real person behind the character of that state-appointed attorney.

And although the authors say they made the film for the wider public, young audiences in particular, they also say that most viewers in Ukraine will guess the name of Stus’ “second prosecutor” in the film.

Medvedchuk himself repeatedly defended his conduct as Stus’ attorney, saying that he could not save the dissident and acted in the framework of the law of the times.

A legal analysis of the case by lawyers in 2016 showed that Medvedchuk did not use the available levers that the defense had and violated lawyer’s ethics by admitting his client’s offense.

When recently asked whether he will go watch the film about Stus by the Ukrainska Pravda news website, Medvedchuk said: “Why? It doesn’t interest me. Like Stus himself.”

## Rejection of Stus’ son

The film’s troubles started because of someone who was much closer to Stus. In the early stages of development, Vasyl Stus’ son Dmytro refused to consult with the authors of the film after reading the script.

“I refused to work with them, and that’s it. The screenplay is unacceptable — both for ethical and aesthetic reasons,” Dmytro Stus told Hromadske news website in August 2018.

Dmytro Stus initially refused to authorize the use of his father’s name, quotes and poems in the film. “Censored,” originally planned for release in February 2019, was in jeopardy. The Ukrainian Film Distribution company canceled the release in December 2018.

But in April, B&H Film Distribution announced that it had taken on the project and set a new release date. The screenwriter of the film, Artemiy Kirsanov, says that Dmytro Stus gave



Actor Dmytro Iaroshenko (R) plays the Ukrainian poet Vasyl Stus (1938-1985) in the biopic about the dissident in the film “Censored.” (B&H Film Distribution)



Viktor Medvedchuk



Vasyl Stus

them the rights to use the name, poems and quotes of his father after all.

But Dmytro Stus said he would not watch the film.

## What critics say

The critics have generally slammed “Censored” with negative reviews. Most have reprimanded the film for clumsy nationalistic propaganda that is, in one episode, chauvinistic toward Russian-speaking miners of Donbas, the working class of eastern Ukraine.

Most characters are lifeless and unconvincing, including the protagonist Stus, who seems like a stereotypical image of a Soviet dissident, without any individuality, critics say. The actors’ performance was mostly criticized as too theatrical and melodramatic.

“These are Soviet clichés turned inside out — like Soviet films made about any fighters against the system, (national poet Taras) Shevchenko or (Bolshevik) Russian revolutionary Kamo. We always see the same story. We are presented with some names and quotes, but there isn’t any individuality,” film critic Alexandr Gusev told the Kyiv Post.

Conversely, in one positive review shared by the screenwriters, the critic is delighted how the film tries to portray Ukrainian cultural figures, activists and dissidents.

“Stus himself turned out to be quite convincing. Sometimes in the film, one can see how a naive and kind guy turns into a tough and exhausted man,” writes Mykola Gerkaliuk, a journalist for the Vezha news website.

Historian and journalist Vakhtang Kipiani, who researched the trials against Stus, criticized the film for replacing real historical details with artistic fictions.

“The director, and it shows, wanted to shoot a thriller, but at the same time, he sacrificed the historical background, which is much more interesting and ‘cinematic’ than what he created. It’s a Soviet anti-Soviet film,” Kipiani wrote on Facebook.

A week before the film’s premiere, Kipiani released a book about the trial with court materials and his own historical articles. Medvedchuk sued Kipiani in defense of his “honor, dignity and business reputation,” demanding Kipiani refute “false information” about him in the book and calling for a ban on its distribution.

This is just one of dozens of Medvedchuk’s lawsuits concerning his defense of Stus.

“Stus is his pressure point. He actually wants to rewrite history, close everybody’s mouths, so nobody would think over his role in the trial against Stus,” Kipiani told the Kyiv Post.

“But the claim that Medvedchuk ‘killed’ Stus with his actions is senseless. He only participated in a conviction without a real trial as a small piece of the totalitarian system. He has to bear a moral responsibility for that,” Kipiani says.

After Kipiani wrote about Medvedchuk’s lawsuit on Facebook, his book sold out in online internet bookstores in a matter of hours, he says. Additionally, the author personally sold over 800 copies in four days.

Perhaps, thanks to Medvedchuk’s lawyer’s threats, more people will also go see the film.

And more people will definitely read the line in question from Kipiani’s book, which is as follows: “Was lawyer Medvedchuk afraid of the KGB or simply always a cynic and immoral character?” ■



Roman Brovko, the director of the “Censored” biopic about Vasyl Stus, speaks at the premiere of the film in Kyiv surrounded by the film crew on Sept. 4, 2019. (Volodymyr Petrov)

# Model agency starts classes in Kharkiv for people with disabilities

BY DARIA SHULZHENKO  
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When Iryna Soroka recalls the first time she took part in a catwalk show, she says it was the most exciting experience she ever had. Soroka, 24, has a congenital disability and needs a wheelchair to get around.

Until recently, her routine was similar to that of many other Ukrainians with disabilities: She worked as a freelancer and spent most of her time at home.

Now, she is among the students of Inclusive Model Agency, which says it is the first model agency in Ukraine devoted to preparing people with disabilities for a professional modeling career.

The agency started at the end of July in Kharkiv, the city of 1.4 million people located some 480 kilometers east of Kyiv. It currently educates 30 Kharkiv residents. They learn how to pose for photographers, perform in catwalk shows and prepare for the hyper-competitive industry of modeling.

"I decided to take these classes to show that people with disabilities are beautiful and we can also work in this area," Soroka says.

The students are now getting ready to participate in the upcoming local fashion week, to be held in Kharkiv on Oct. 11–12.

But this agency is not just about fashion. Its employees also help students socialize and gain confidence.

Elena Shyngaryova, the agency's founder and a founder of Creavita, a Kharkiv nongovernmental organization that supports people with disabilities, says her goals include shattering stereotypes about people with disabilities and publicizing the problems they face.

Currently, an estimated 5 percent of Ukraine's 42-million population, or 2.1 million people, have physical disabilities. Shyngaryova, who also uses a wheelchair for mobility, says people with disabilities in Ukraine are still too "invisible to society."

"Our society has no idea that we exist and many of us are active and successful," Shyngaryova says. "We aim to change this attitude."

## First catwalk shows

Shyngaryova took part in a Kharkiv fashion show for the first time seven years ago. It was the first inclusive catwalk show in Kharkiv, mixing models with and without disabilities.

"It was an amazing experience and also a turning point," she says.

Since then, more people with disabilities have taken part in local fashion shows, prompting the idea of the agency.

"Everything is changing so fast,

including the world of fashion. Now, people with disabilities can perfectly fit in the world of fashion due to their individuality and their abilities," Shyngaryova says.

In June, the team won a Hr 165,000 (\$6,500) grant in a competition run by the Kharkiv City Council to launch their project, enabling them to make their classes tuition-free for students. On July 20, Shyngaryova and Creavita's team conducted a competition to select models for their school.

## Study hard

They received more than 50 applications from all across Ukraine, far more than expected. Inclusive Model Agency was able to register 30 students, twice as many as planned.

Soroka and other agency students have classes twice a week where they learn about fashion and its history, take acting lessons and study makeup and photography. Soroka says they are taught such things as how to breathe properly and how to follow healthy diets. They go out on photo shoots together and get tips from local fashion designers, makeup artists and professional models.

Shyngaryova says they hope to help their students sign contracts with Ukrainian and foreign model agencies and pursue careers in fashion.

## Socialization

Ukrainians with disabilities face daily problems, including a lack of accessible public transport or education. Despite the hardships, Shyngaryova says it is important for people with disabilities to "step out of the shadow" and socialize.

"The more people with disabilities take part in various projects, the more society knows about them. That would really help in breaking these negative stereotypes," Shyngaryova says.

She believes that such classes give people great opportunities to fully participate in life.

"It's like a breath of fresh air," Shyngaryova says. "And the more we talk about the achievements and successes of people with disabilities, the faster society's attitudes will change for the better."

Soroka, who is determined not to let her condition keep her out of the modeling business, says that the agency really helped her to change her routine, meet new people and become more confident.

"When we communicate with different people during the courses, they start to realize that we are the same people as they are, we all are equal," Soroka says. "That is why I believe that there should be more such projects." ■



People with disabilities take part in a catwalk show during Kharkiv Fashion Week in March 2018. (Iliia Pshenychnyi)



People with disabilities learn how to perform in catwalk shows during a workshop at Inclusive Model Agency in Kharkiv in August 2019. (Iliia Pshenychnyi)

Kyiv Post in its September 13 issue will focus on

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# Lybid River dates to Kyivan Rus, but is now an ecological disaster

Lybid from page 19

of tears and a futuristic riverside cultural center that looks like a beehive eroded by waves.

Such flamboyant public infrastructure won't come cheap, but the bubbly 75-year-old Mashtabei, who looks two decades younger, is confident as they begin searching for financing. "We estimate the new park — with landscaping and tree planting and including the bridge and culture center — will cost Hr 2 billion (\$79 million). Our focus now is on finding investors."

Standing riverside next to Mashtabei, clutching a large color portfolio of conceptual designs, Nasha Lybid's lead architect, Alexander Krivenko, reveals some details of the initial works. "We are talking about the territory between Fedorov street and Yamska street, so about one and a half to two kilometers in total."

Gesturing across the Lybid as a dead cat floats by, Krivenko continues: "Currently, it is a cluttered area with many derelict Soviet-era buildings and piles of garbage. The project involves large scale landscaping, renewing the river bed and creating architecture that inspires Kyiv residents and becomes a safe, green zone for locals, families and tourists."

Nasha Lybid's vision has been three years in the works and has an impressive list of supporters. But is it enough?

Kyiv's chief architect, the Kyiv City Council, the Kyiv City State Administration and several city district authorities have backed the project. But property developers may demand that the generous amount of land currently allocated for public parkland and cultural buildings be reduced.

Mashtabei bats away the suggestion, but there are other concerns, including identifying the ownership of some of the land needed for acquisition. "We have identified the owners of most of the earmarked land and everyone we contacted is cooperative, but there are still some unknowns," Mashtabei admits.

Undeterred by the complexities and scale of the challenge, Mashtabei says he hopes the scheme will be a model for



Street artists gather to paint a section of a wall on the bank of the Lybid River on June 11, 2019. (Vincent Mundy)

other Ukrainian cities to use their own derelict and polluted waterways as a focal point for green urban regeneration.

"If our plans for the Lybid are successful, it could have a ripple effect across our country, and that's important, because we have many rivers in the same condition," Mashtabei says. "So we hope to inspire other projects as ambitious as ours."

How feasible the plans are remains to be seen. But if the experience of Kyiv architect and civil society activist Semen Polomanyi is anything to go by, then Nasha Lybid's vision may struggle to be realized.

Speaking to the Kyiv Post in the office of Zemlia, his design studio just a short walk from where the Lybid first emerges, Polomanyi praises the "utopian vision" of the project, but voices a note of caution.

After his own Lybid revival scheme recently got nixed, he is skeptical that the local authorities will

maintain support for Nasha Lybid's plans. He also is unsure whether suitable developers can be found.

"After a couple of years of serious planning and hard work, we realized that perhaps Kyiv isn't ready for the kind of environmentally friendly urban regeneration we devised and that you might see in Western European capitals," Polomanyi says.

Two years ago, his design firm submitted more modest proposals that would have rewilded a section of the river and transformed a triangular wedge of riverside property near Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (KPI) into a green urban park alongside a nearby eco-friendly, mixed-use riverside development. But the city council-owned land is occupied by an influential community of garage owners who would need to be evicted for the plans to be implemented.

Despite winning grants and several design awards for their plans and the support of some city officials, the scheme was apparently shelved in the face of vocal opposition from the garage owners.

"We submitted detailed plans for the site and we thought it was going somewhere but we never heard anything back from the authorities," says Polomanyi. His team also tried to work with developers working nearby, but with no result.

Lybid Ye, a civil society organization started by Polomanyi, and other similar associations have raised awareness of

the Lybid's plight. They set up a popular Facebook page, took donations and, with the help of many volunteers, organized Lybid clean-up days and arts and cultural events. In one spot, they even managed to install timber benches with stepped wooden seating areas. But it wasn't long before the new infrastructure was vandalized and damaged.

Even at this small-scale, efforts to improve the Lybid faced major obstacles, says Oleksandra Vdovychenko, founder of the Lybid 7 Initiative, which also took part in the efforts.

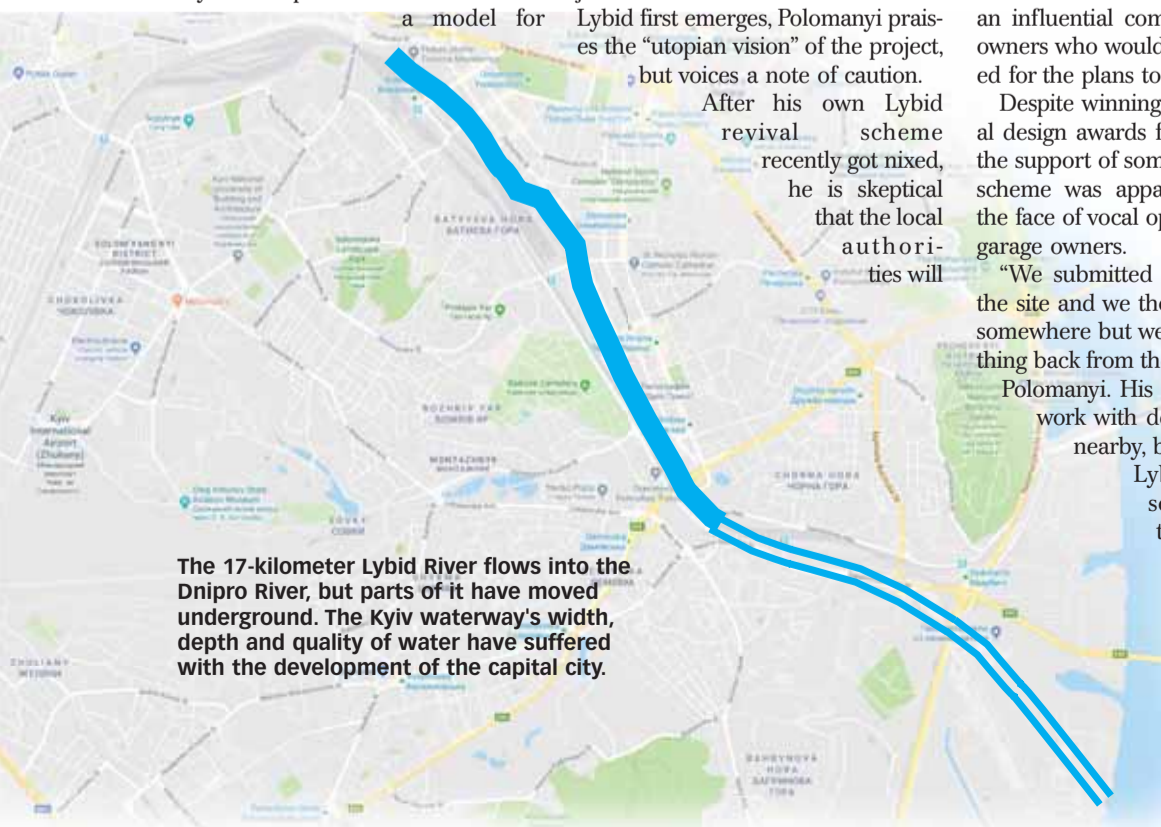
"The locals are afraid to go there and it has become a place for homeless people, alcoholics and drug addicts," Vdovychenko complains. "In addition to sewage and garbage, there is no interest from the city

administration. The mayor and council officials don't seem to care about what is happening to the water and the banks of the river."

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko directed questions about the Lybid to Petro Pantelev, deputy head of the Kyiv City State Administration. Pantelev responded in writing that "the municipality is spending Hr 20 million (\$791,000) this year to renovate the river bed completely. The project includes the reconstruction of hydraulic structures, the strengthening of the shore, the creation of a public space for recreation... and the improvement of its coastal protection strips."

Other local officials say improving

more Lybid on page 23



The 17-kilometer Lybid River flows into the Dnipro River, but parts of it have moved underground. The Kyiv waterway's width, depth and quality of water have suffered with the development of the capital city.



The torsos of mannequins are covered with trash on a stretch of the Lybid River next to the Ocean Plaza mall in the background on Aug. 28, 2019. (Vincent Mundy)

# Activists battle neglect as they seek to restore Lybid River to state of beauty

Lybid from page 22

the Lybid must be part of a broader strategy to protect and restore Kyiv's natural environment. Serhiy Gusovsky, a restaurateur and Kyiv City Council member, says he would put forth more efforts to improve the Lybid and other endangered natural and historical sites if he were the mayor.

"Of course I want to see the Lybid restored. It is a river of great cultural and historical importance to Kyiv, but to tackle this issue we need a holistic new strategy," he says. "The current mayor has tried his best, but the current city plans are more than 20 years out-of-date and this is holding us back."

"What we need is a completely new and fresh vision for revitalizing

the whole city, not only the Lybid," Gusovsky adds.

## History of neglect

But while visions and promises for the Lybid are not in short supply, the river's recent history is one of neglect and missed opportunity.

The brash \$300-million Ocean Plaza mall, completed in 2012, was built on the banks of the river next to Lybidska metro station. But although no efforts were made to consider the Lybid River in the mall's plans, the development was nevertheless approved by city authorities.

Ukrainian Development Partners (UDP Group) and KAN Development — a company partly owned by Klitschko — along with their Russian partners did, however, decide to build a gigantic saltwa-



One vision for the Lybid River in Kyiv imagines the reuse of a plot of city-owned land near Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, a parcel that is currently occupied by dozens of garages, whose owners forced the plan to be scrapped. (Vincent Mundy)

ter aquarium housing sharks in the middle of the huge shopping and entertainment center.

Just a few meters away from the shoppers and the sharks, the hulking backside of the mall casts a long shadow over the Lybid. A drunk man urinates over the river bushes and a brave family of mallard ducks forages for food among a never-ending stream of plastic waste floating slowly downstream.

Along the river's edge, countless

multicolored shreds of plastic drape from the hardy willow trees that have forced their way through cracks along the greasy concrete riverbank. Plump rats gorge themselves in heaving waste bins and scamper around the mounds of rotting detritus left by the mall's hundreds of shops, multiplex cinema and fast food outlets.

But even now a few small fish can be seen darting under the river's oily river surface. Many homeless people have also found refuge here, living

under the bridges beside the city's huge thermal heating pipes which line long stretches of the Lybid.

One of them, who only gave the name Vitalik, said that he is not expecting much from the city.

"I've lived on the Lybid for years, and you might think down and out here I don't know what's going on," he said with a smile. "But I've heard all the Lybid plans. They always make promises, but nothing ever happens." ■

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