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'No one in the world feels safe...'

President Volodymyr Zelensky gives a rousing speech at the United Nations as an assassination attempt on his close aide Serhiy Shefir confounds the authorities

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky concluded a two-day visit to New York, highlighted by a Sept. 22 speech before the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The trip, however, was overshadowed by the Sept. 22 assassination attempt on Zelensky's top aide and close friend Serhiy Shefir. An assailant struck the car carrying Shefir with 12 bullets from an automatic weapon, injuring his driver. Shefir was uninjured and gave a press conference later in the day.



See story on page 2



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Zelensky exhorts UN to do better, calls agency a 'retired superhero'

Editor's Note: The full text of President Volodymyr Zelensky's Sept. 22 speech to the United Nations is available on the president's website at president.gov.ua

By Oleksiy Sorokin
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President Volodymyr Zelensky called for the United Nations to more actively stand up to Russian aggression and common global threats like COVID-19 that disproportionately hurt less powerful countries.

In his Sept. 22 speech to the UN General Assembly, which concluded his two-day trip to New York, Zelensky said the UN charter needs to be "revived" because "no one in the world feels safe anymore."

"Today the UN is like a retired superhero who has forgotten what he could do. He considers himself a burden, a weak, frail, useless old man, whose life was in vain," said Zelensky from the stand.

Zelensky's criticism put the capstone on his two-day quest to shed light on Russia's continuing illegal occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and the Kremlin's human rights violations there, and in the eastern Donbas, where Russia has also been waging war since 2014.

Russia's renewed crackdown came soon after Ukraine brought 30 international delegations to the Crimea Platform summit on Aug. 23 in an attempt to build international support to call for Russia's withdrawal from the peninsula.

"The fact that the UN has ignored the (Crimean) Platform for solving the problems of international law and occupation is some new, unapproved principles," said Zelensky.

On the UN sidelines, Zelensky held face-to-face meetings with U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the leaders of the UN, NATO and the European Union.

The deterioration of even basic human rights in occupied Crimea was the first issue on his list, yet the president also took time to discuss trade, military partnership and future official visits.

Returning Crimea

Zelensky was openly upset that the UN had recently turned a blind eye to the Russian occupation of Ukrainian territories.

In the past month, Russia increased attacks on activists in Crimea. In mid-September, Russian occupation authorities arrested over 60 Crimeans within several



President Volodymyr Zelensky addresses the 76th United Nations General Assembly in New York on Sept. 22, 2021.

days. Most of them are Crimean Tatars known for their support of Ukrainian territorial integrity.

Some of the activists arrested by Russian authorities in Crimea were those who attended the summit. Kyiv sees the attacks as Kremlin's retaliation for the Crimea Platform.

One of those under arrest is Nariman Dzhelyal, deputy head of Mejlis, the representative body of Crimean Tatars, who attended the summit.

Zelensky demanded the release of Dzhelyal and all other political prisoners.

"Dzhelyal was illegally detained in Crimea. Russia accuses this political scientist, prominent journalist, TV presenter, teacher of law and history of trying to blow up a section of the gas pipeline," said Zelensky. "Here is the price of freedom, here is the price of fighting for your rights, for human rights."

Zelensky asked the UN to intervene and support the release of 450 Ukrainians illegally held hostage by Russia in Crimea and elsewhere.

He also gave the list of 450 Ukrainian political prisoners to Johnson during their meeting. Zelensky had provided a similar list to U.S. President Joe Biden during their meeting at the White House on Sept. 1. Back then, the list was shorter.

Zelensky had a similar message for UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres during their meeting on Sept. 21. The president said Ukraine counts on UN support to end

Russia's occupation of the peninsula. "Achieving the ultimate goal of the Crimea Platform — the return of Crimea — will restore respect for the UN Charter," Zelensky said.

Zelensky's meeting with Erdogan focused on the construction of housing for the Crimean Tatar people, the indigenous population of the peninsula, and the assistance in negotiating the release of Crimean Tatar political prisoners.

In turn, Erdogan said that Turkey will never recognize the Russian occupation of the peninsula.

"We have and always will support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, including over Crimea," said Erdogan.

Teaser meetings

Zelensky also used his short meetings with foreign leaders to schedule future official visits and list the questions up for future debate.

He also met the Ukrainian diaspora and heads of business associations to improve ties and pitch the idea of investing in Ukraine.

"I think you are our best ambassadors. Because you are defending our state, our sovereignty, territorial integrity abroad," Zelensky told the members of the Ukrainian-American community.

Zelensky's second visit to the U.S. within a month began with a face-to-face meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Key questions on the agenda were the preparations for the upcoming EU-Ukraine Summit scheduled to take place in Kyiv on Oct. 12.

Zelensky also thanked the European Commission for green-lighting the allocation of the second \$700 million assistance package to Ukraine days before the New York meeting.

The first installment was granted in December to "provide macroeconomic support during the COVID-19 pandemic." The second installment was unfrozen after Ukraine launched its much-awaited judicial reform.

Yet, Ukraine's judicial reform is currently stuck in limbo with Ukrainian judges being allowed to sabotage the reform of their own courts.

After von der Leyen, the president met Erdogan. The Turkish president is also scheduled to visit Ukraine soon to take part in the 10th meeting of the Strategic Cooperation Council held annually during Zelensky's presidency.

The meeting is expected to take place in early 2022.

According to the Turkish pro-government Daily Sabah newspaper, the two leaders signed a military framework agreement and discussed the expansion of bilateral military partnership and the implementation of a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

"Turkey sees Ukraine as a key country for ensuring stability, security, peace and prosperity in our region," Erdogan said according to the newspaper.

Turkey is currently one of Ukraine's top military partners, providing investments, ships and drones.

However, the FTA talks between the two countries began in 2011 and have been declared a "nearly done deal" in 2018, 2020 and 2021, with no results.

Zelensky's meeting with Johnson has also been a preview of the president's upcoming official visit to Glasgow on Nov. 1 to take part in the UN Climate Change Conference.

Zelensky and Johnson discussed the Ukraine-U.K. Free Trade Agreement launched on Jan. 1 as well as the energy partnership against the backdrop of Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline poised to cut Ukraine out of the gas transit market.

According to Zelensky, bilateral trade between the two countries increased by 70% since the start of the FTA.

"In less than a year since the launch of the agreement, we already have concrete results of Ukrainian-British cooperation," Zelensky said.

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An assassination attempt leaves Ukraine's authorities perplexed

By Thaisa Semenova
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Police are on the hunt for whoever tried to kill Serhiy Shefir, a close friend and adviser to President Volodymyr Zelensky, on the morning of Sept. 22.

Shefir's car was struck by a volley of automatic gunfire while driving along a forested stretch of road near Lesnyky village outside of Kyiv. Shefir escaped unscathed, but his driver was injured and hospitalized.

It was the most brazen attack on a high-profile Ukrainian political figure in over a decade.

Zelensky and his administration were blindsided by the shooting. "Who is behind this, frankly, I do not know," Zelensky said on Sept. 23 from New York, where he was attending the United Nations General Assembly.

David Arakhamia, head of the president's ruling Servant of the People faction in parliament, said that Russia could be behind the attack, something the Kremlin denied.

Zelensky said that trying to get his attention by shooting his friend's car is "weak" and promised a "strong response."

The attack came a day before



A photo released on Sept. 22, 2021 by the Ukrainian National Police shows the bullet impacts on the car of Ukrainian President's Chief Aide, Serhiy Shefir, outside Kyiv.

parliament passed the president's anti-oligarch bill in the final reading. Some of Zelensky's advisers sug-

gested that the two events could be connected.

Speaking after the shooting, Shefir

said he believes the attack was meant to rattle his boss.

"In my opinion, the goal was

to intimidate the highest echelons of power but Zelensky cannot be intimidated," he said.

Police report

According to Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova, Shefir was ambushed while his car was passing two villages outside Kyiv. Shefir was the sole passenger of an unarmored black Audi belonging to the TV production company Kvartal 95.

Serhiy Shefir, his brother Borys and Zelensky co-founded Kvartal 95, which laid the path to Zelensky's stardom and, eventually, his election as president in 2019.

At around 10:20 a.m., a burst of gunfire erupted from the nearby woods. The car was struck by at least 12 bullets. Three bullets hit the driver but Shefir managed to duck and avoid injury. In spite of his wound, the driver hit the gas and sped five kilometers to the parking lot of a nearby supermarket, where Shefir called for an ambulance and summoned the police.

"The gunfire was intended to stop the car. If it stopped after 50 or 100 meters, the consequences would have been unequivocally tragic," Interior Minister Denys Monastyrsky

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Advertisement

lifecell: how Ukrainian business gets most from data analytics

For the past decade, the mobile phone has become one of the most integral parts of everyone's daily life and hence – the pivotal source of delivering and gathering information. "Data is a new oil" – is a common expression for describing the modern business development paradigm. However, an immense amount of data generated by subscribers of mobile operators brings little value without the correct use of analytic techniques. For several years lifecell Ukrainian mobile operator has been accelerating data to value for its business enhancement and the digital transformation of other companies. lifecell Big Data solutions provide businesses with the right insights at the right time and contribute to improving their customer experience, operation efficiency, and fraud prevention system. The operator's most in-demand products in Ukraine are credit and marketing scoring and numerous fraud prevention services.

Letting the numbers speak for themselves

The number of companies using Big Data-based products has grown significantly lately. In August 2021, the total amount of lifecell customers who use Big Data services increased by 82% (vs August 2020). lifecell data analytics solutions are popular among financial companies the most. The number of such customers has risen by 220% since last year. They generate more than 50% of the total lifecell revenue from data analytics.

Transforming Data into Value

lifecell has extensive expertise in building credit and marketing scoring models for businesses.

Credit scoring from a mobile operator is a considerable tool for banks and credit organizations for creditworthiness evaluation and making well-informed credit decisions. Parameters analyzed by lifecell credit scoring models:

- Age of a mobile number – helps predict a potential borrower's availability for contact and detect a fraudster. lifecell system checks how long the phone number is in use. It also spots SIM cards activated immediately before the loan request – then, there is a high probability that the borrower will not stay in touch in the future.
- Telco services usage – evaluates the stability of service usage by identifying the frequency of telecom services consumption. In particular, lifecell checks the following criteria: swings in the usage pattern (e.g., this month a subscriber used mobile services – next month he did not); types of services used the most (e.g., only incoming calls or only outgoing calls or SMS, frequency of Internet usage, etc.).
- Payment pattern – identifies the reliability of potential borrowers by analyzing the regularity of payments for



mobile operator service packages. lifecell system checks the mobile number for payment delays and high-cost services consumption, etc.

- Social circle – helps to understand whether there are connections with "preferred" or "unwanted" borrowers.
- Analysis of movement – helps to predict occupation type by identifying home-work-home pattern or working in taxi or courier service as well as being imprisoned.
- Other features – define model and cost of a subscriber's mobile phone; how often a subscriber changes it; how many unique phone numbers pass through his device.

Marketing scoring helps to ensure that every interaction is relevant to a particular customer enabling businesses to provide personalized customer treatment, prevent churn and improve marketing performance. lifecell marketing scoring models focus on analyzing subscriber income and behavioral characteristics: stability of payment for telecom services, cost of services used, geolocation (e.g., how often a subscriber uses roaming, occupation type), mobile device model, the intensity of Internet traffic consumption, preferred communication channels (voice calls, messenger types), etc.

lifecell scoring models use API. The client sends the operator a mobile number – then lifecell system returns a scoring rate automatically. It is worth paying attention that there are no universal solutions: each client has its own set of parameters for scoring and different algorithms for ranking these parameters. An effective scoring model will differ even for each bank, not to mention companies from various industries.

Fighting fraud the digital way

According to the Ukrainian Interbank Payment Systems Member Association "EMA", the average amount of losses per one unauthorized transaction after SIM card hijacking amounted to UAH 12,500 in 2020. Most often, cybercriminals manage to carry out several operations like this. In such a case, the amount of the loss exceeds hundreds of thousands of hryvnias. And these are just direct financial losses but let's not put aside reputational consequences. These figures convince more and more Ukrainian companies to use fraud prevention services.

The portfolio of fraud prevention services lifecell provides to its customers is quite extensive:

- Age of a mobile number – is very actively used by banks and financial organizations both as a part of credit scoring and as a separate antifraud service (see description above).
- SIM-Counter – checks the number of SIM cards per mobile phone. The more numbers were activated with the same mobile device – the higher the possibility of fraud is. Scammers use "disposable" mobile numbers to receive loans and other financial services.
- IMSI Check – detects SIM card replacement by checking its unique IMSI number (International mobile subscriber identity). If a SIM was replaced – then there is a high probability that a SIM hijack was carried out (i.e., SIM was reissued under a scammer's name). It is a typical scheme among scammers who intend to access the bank accounts of another person or apply for a loan in someone else's name. SIM hijack is widely spread in Ukraine since the majority of mobile operator subscribers remain anonymous (see the scheme details at www.lifecell.ua).
- Call forwarding check – checks the number for call forwarding since a fraudster can activate it on his victims' device so that all incoming calls forward to the fraudster's phone number. Then the victim becomes unaware when the bank calls or sends SMS with a one-time code to confirm a transaction, and the bank does not know that it contacts a fraudster. After the fraudster's confirmation of the bank transaction – the money goes away. This service of lifecell helps to avoid such situations.

Protecting personal information

Providing data analytics services, lifecell strictly obeys Ukrainian legislation i.e., Laws of Ukraine "On the protection of personal information" and "On information". The company provides only aggregated and non-personified data and performs any scoring by mobile number only after the prior consent of a subscriber.

EDITORIALS

License to kill

On Sept. 22, gunfire hit the car of Serhiy Shefir, a chief aide to President Volodymyr Zelensky, in Lesnyky, a village near Kyiv. At least a dozen bullets struck the vehicle. The driver was wounded, while Shefir escaped without injuries.

The reasons for the murder attempt are unclear. There are many versions, including Russian involvement, political or business conflicts within Ukraine or a staged incident, coming the day before Zelensky's "deoligarchization law" was approved in parliament.

But we can be reasonably certain of this: The crime is unlikely to be properly investigated or solved. There is plenty of empirical evidence to support this conclusion.

The case into the 2016 murder of journalist Pavel Sheremet has reached a dead end. No hard evidence has been presented against the official suspects, and they have been released from detention.

The perpetrators of the 2000 murder of journalist Georgiy Gongadze have been jailed but the suspected organizer — ex-President Leonid Kuchma — has been let off the hook.

The organizers of the assassinations of many other journalists also remain unknown.

Many other murders have not been properly investigated either. These include those of businessman Yevhen Shcherban in 1996, Odesa-based mafia boss Viktor Kulivar, known by his nickname Karabas, in 1997, as well as Russian politician and fugitive Denis Voronenkov and Ukrainian intelligence officer Maksym Shapoval in 2017.

Nor do we know who organized an assassination attempt on ex-Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko in 1996.

Also, there is injustice, most recently, in the August death of Belarusian activist Vitaly Shishov in Kyiv. Authorities suspect suicide, but it looks like murder. In any case, it's a safe bet the death will remain a mystery.

What's the reason for this fiasco? It's the Ukrainian authorities' utter failure to reform the dysfunctional police, prosecutors, security service and judiciary, which are collectively more focused on collecting their next bribes and/or pressuring independent journalists and legitimate businesses.

If Zelensky were serious about his pledge to "respond strongly" to the murder attempt on his friend Shefir, he would start by dismantling and re-launching Ukraine's corrupt law enforcement. But this is not happening: his newest judicial reform attempt has been blocked already, like all the previous ones. Another blocked reform is the selection of a new chief anti-corruption prosecutor with the help of foreign experts.

Ex-Interior Minister Arsen Avakov also nipped police reform in the bud, and his successor, Denys Monastyrsky, has not shown any intention to reform anything.

This is what happens when top law enforcement officials are too busy lining their pockets, staging publicity stunts and harassing journalists and activists — they render themselves impotent to solving real crimes.

Repairing Ukraine

President Volodymyr Zelensky delivered a powerful speech at the United Nations General Assembly, taunting the organization for its blind-eye approach to key international issues.

Zelensky questioned the organization after it had ignored the Crimea Platform summit and questioned the organization's strength in terms of distributing lifesaving vaccines.

"We are all people, we are all in the same boat, but lifeboats will first be given to the first class passengers," Zelensky said in his speech. Adding that "today the UN is like a retired superhero who has forgotten what he could do."

He's not wrong.

Solving international crises was never the UN's strong suit. It's not surprising that the UN has largely abstained from getting involved in Russia's seven-year-long war against Ukraine.

The UN doesn't represent the 193 member states, rather the five key members, one of whom, Russia, wages a war against Ukraine killing more than 13,000 people in the process.

An organization where two dictatorships — Russia and China — hold veto powers over nearly every crucial international issue is doomed to fail.

Yet, this isn't breaking news. The UN has long switched to solving humanitarian issues, leaving politics, economy and war to member states.

Ukraine won't be able to reform a 76-year-old institution, nor will it be able to change how the world works.

While Zelensky seemingly always has all the right words, he must understand the UN, NATO and the European Union won't solve Ukrainian problems. But Zelensky can solve many of them.

Reforming the country's judiciary, improving the standard of living, increasing Ukrainian military capability and building an economically successful state is the only way to move forward.

The UN's inability to distribute COVID vaccines equally between member states isn't the reason why Ukraine has a dire medical sector where hospitals lack equipment and healthcare workers lack decent salaries.

Ukraine fumbled the initial COVID response and still appears to have problems in promoting vaccination among the country's population despite having enough vaccines. Ukraine has severe shortages of other crucial drugs due to problems with medical procurement.

Taunting the UN for lacking interest in the Crimean Platform, the goal of which is to return Kremlin-occupied Crimea back to Ukraine, ignores the fact that the first such event was held seven years after Russia invaded the peninsula militarily and seized the territory.

Ukraine has a spree of problems in seemingly all sectors and government officials must understand it's up to the Ukrainian people and their representatives to solve the stockpile of issues before they are kicked out of office.

NEWS ITEM:

After waiting for a very long time, President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the United States twice in September. On Sept. 1, he met U.S. President Joe Biden in the White House before heading to California to meet with tech CEOs. On Sept. 22, Zelensky visited New York and gave a speech at the United Nations General Assembly.



Get me those captive Ukrainians' votes.



NEWS ITEM:

Russia held three-day sham parliamentary elections that ended on Sept. 19. The elections were mired in fraud and saw United Russia, the party of President Vladimir Putin, win 324 seats out of 450. Besides vote fixing, Russian authorities bused over 150,000 Ukrainians from Russian-occupied Donbas to polling stations. Some of them were given Russian passports shortly before voting.

And then he called me a killer!



NEWS ITEM:

According to Washington Post journalists Bob Woodward and Robert Costa, Russian President Vladimir Putin told U.S. President Joe Biden "I'm upset you called me a killer," during an April phone call between the two leaders. Weeks before the call, when asked if he thinks Putin is a killer, Biden nodded in response to a question on whether he thinks Putin is a killer. "Mmm hmm, I do," Biden replied.

I heard you can get an official fired for \$2,000? We have a special promotion: pay \$10,000 and fire a sixth one free.



NEWS ITEM:

Speaker Dmytro Razumkov said on Sept. 20 that he "heard rumors" that lawmakers were offered between \$2,000 and \$4,000 for supporting the sacking of officials. Razumkov told lawmakers that he filed a complaint to law enforcement agencies, while his critics say that Razumkov uses the "bribe quote" to protect himself from what looks like an imminent ousting.

See these features online at Kyivpost.com

Ukraine's Friend & Foe Of The Week



Friend

Recep Tayyip Erdogan

The Turkish president can be criticized for human rights abuses, including repression of journalists, and budding authoritarianism. But he's also a principled advocate for Ukraine, telling the world at the United Nations General Assembly his nation will never recognize the Kremlin's illegal seizure of Crimea.



Foe

Sundar Pichai

The Google CEO highlighted the dangers to democracy and free speech by Big Tech. Google, in league with Apple, remove Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's "smart-voting" app under pressure from Russian dictator Vladimir Putin. Big Tech's powers need to be curbed.

Feel strongly about an issue? Agree or disagree with editorial positions in this newspaper?

The Kyiv Post welcomes letters to the editors and opinion pieces, usually 800 to 1,000 words in length. Please email all correspondence to chief editor Brian Bonner, at bonner@kyivpost.com. All correspondence must include an email address and contact phone number for verification.

Rigged vote highlights growing gulf between Ukraine & Russia



Peter Dickinson

Editor's Note: This opinion was originally published by the Atlantic Council, a Washington, D.C., think tank and is republished with permission.

Russian President Vladimir Putin appears genuinely convinced that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people.” As he made perfectly clear in his lengthy July 2021 essay “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” Putin believes the two countries remain inextricably bound together by a common past, and regards their current state of separation as a temporary and artificial aberration.

Since 2014, Putin’s “one people” argument has regularly featured in attempts to justify Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine. But while Kremlin officials are fond of emphasizing the shared history, they are largely silent over the many fundamental differences and distinctions that have come to the fore since the end of direct imperial rule in 1991.

The growing gulf was on display in recent days as Russia held parliamentary elections. Almost everything about the vote was farcical, from the exclusion of opposition candidates and the silencing of Russia’s last few remaining independent media outlets, to the stuffing of ballots at polling stations.

Grim resignation

The most flagrant fraud seems to have occurred in Moscow itself, where a carefully curated overnight dump of dubious electronic votes enabled the authorities to transform

a series of potentially embarrassing defeats into face-saving victories for regime candidates. Overall, the recent ballot looks to have been notably dirty, even by the admittedly low standards of the Putin regime.

While few in Russia are under any illusions about the nature of the regime itself or the country’s recent election, the public reaction to the vote was remarkably muted. Many Russians took to social media to express their outrage, while a few hundred people actually went to the trouble of gathering briefly in central Moscow on Sept. 20, but there was no real attempt to mobilize the wider population or fight back. Instead, the blatantly fake results of an obviously rigged election were accepted with grim resignation.

Unthinkable in Ukraine

Such a sequence of events would be utterly unthinkable in today’s Ukraine. The last Ukrainian election to remotely resemble Russia’s recent fiasco took place 17 years ago in November 2004. On that occasion, the Ukrainian authorities deployed many of the same tactics currently favored by the Kremlin in an attempt to secure victory in what was a hotly contested presidential ballot. The electorate’s response to this widespread voter fraud was both unambiguous and overwhelming. Faced with the prospect of a stolen election, thousands flocked to downtown Kyiv in defense of their democratic rights, fueling a two-month grassroots protest movement that came to be known as the Orange Revolution.

Civilizational shift

The Orange Revolution was to prove a watershed moment in post-Soviet history. It achieved the immediate goal of forcing a re-run of Ukraine’s 2004 presidential election, which was duly won by opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko. More importantly, Ukraine’s people power uprising marked a civilizational shift that took it away from Kremlin-style authoritarianism and towards European democracy. It was the moment Ukraine decisively parted ways with Russia and set out on an altogether different trajectory.

Since the Orange Revolution, Ukraine has held eight separate presidential and parliamentary elections. All have been internationally recognized as free and fair. Campaigns are typically colorful, creative and highly competitive, with civil society scrutiny helping to ensure maximum transparency and numerous exit polls on election day offering remarkably accurate forecasts. The openness of Ukraine’s democratic system was most recently reaffirmed in 2019, when political outsider Volodymyr Zelenskyy defeated incumbent Petro Poroshenko to win the presidency by a landslide.

Ukraine’s fledgling democracy is far from perfect, of course. The country’s political system has long been hostage to excessive oligarch influence, with a handful of billionaire kingmakers controlling entire parties and owning virtually every Ukrainian media outlet of note.

Democracy vs. autocracy

Since the outbreak of war with Russia in 2014, wartime national security concerns have also necessitated a range of restrictions including bans on Russian TV broadcasts and the closure of Kremlin-linked Ukrainian media. At the same time, it is important to note that despite ongoing hos-



People vote during the last day of the three-day parliamentary and local elections in Saint Petersburg, Russia, on Sept. 19, 2021.

tilities, openly pro-Russian political parties continue to contest Ukrainian elections and hold office at both the local and national levels.

As Ukraine has consolidated its fledgling democracy, Russia has retreated further and further into authoritarianism. During Putin’s 21-year reign, the fragile political pluralism he inherited from Boris Yeltsin at the turn of the millennium has gradually given way to the Potemkin politics of today’s stage-managed imitation democracy with its loyal opposition, muzzled media and passive public. The contrast between the two neighboring countries could hardly be starker.

No voluntary reunion

While Putin continues to insist that Russians and Ukrainians are both members of the same indivisible whole, the reality is that Ukraine’s democratic political culture virtually rules out the prospect of any voluntary future reunion. A majority of Ukrainians would never willingly vote for a return to the authoritarian

past, nor would they be prepared to accept the kind of massive election fraud that has been normalized in today’s Russia.

Major differences

This leaves Putin with little choice but to continue the current conflict indefinitely. The alternative would mean retreating from Ukraine and acknowledging an unprecedented loss of influence in a country that has been central to Russia’s sense of imperial identity for more than three centuries.

Democracy is by no means the only thing that distinguishes modern Ukraine from Russia. Indeed, it would be easy enough to produce a long list of specific historic, social and cultural characteristics that make a mockery of Putin’s “one nation” mythology. Nevertheless, post-Soviet Ukraine’s democratic development remains the most prominent feature of this widening divide and the root cause of the Russo-Ukrainian War.

Peter Dickinson is editor of the Atlantic Council’s UkraineAlert Service. 🇺🇸

Volodymyr Petrov



Kivan visits Kyiv Post headquarters, meets with Swedish Ambassador Tobias Thyberg in Odesa

It was a busy week for Adnan Kivan, the construction magnate who owns the Odesa-based KADORR Group and who publishes the Kyiv Post, the newspaper he purchased in 2018. His schedule included meeting with Swedish Ambassador to Ukraine Tobias Thyberg in Odesa (right) on Sept. 17. Thyberg was also interviewed by Channel 7 Odesa, owned by Kivan. On Sept. 21, Kivan had numerous meetings in Kyiv before dropping by Kyiv Post headquarters (above) in the KADORR building on 68 Zhylianska St. He spoke about the importance of a free press in building Ukraine’s democracy.



Courtesy

Children's charity in Ukraine

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Children's charities strive to meet daunting needs

By Dylan Carter
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As Europe's second-poorest country, Ukraine relies on local and international organizations to protect disadvantaged children.

According to the Charities Aid Foundation World Giving Index, which ranks countries on how likely people are to volunteer and give to charitable causes, helping people is becoming increasingly popular in Ukraine, which saw the ninth largest increase in charitable activity compared to 2020.

Ukraine is now the 20th most charitable country on earth, just one place behind the U.S and two places ahead of the United Kingdom. The index does not measure size of donations, but rather the number of people who say they donate. While they don't have much to give, on average, nearly 43% of Ukrainians said they donated to charity in 2020.

Even so, many charities struggle to raise enough money to fully meet children's needs. International organizations have traditionally helped fill the gap. Their funding greatly increased after Russia invaded and occupied Crimea and Donbas in 2014, displacing 1.6 million people, including 734,000 children.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt the international charity sector. Many recipients of foreign aid, who rely on single-source funding from international charities and companies, suddenly experienced reduced financial support and contributions.

ChildAid to Eastern Europe, a Christian U.K.-registered charity specializing in support of children in Belarus, Moldova, Siberia and Ukraine, has identified four priority issues facing children in Ukraine today: children with disabilities, orphans, social orphans and child poverty.

Children with disabilities

According to ChildAid, the single largest area of concern in the children's charitable sector in Ukraine relates to disability and homes to accommodate children with disabilities.



Orphaned children dance and sing at a Christmas and New Year's celebration hosted by Ukrainian charity "Orphans are our children" on Jan. 8, 2020, in Kyiv's Premier Palace Hotel.

A study conducted by the Ukrainian Center for Public Opinion Research, Socioinform, revealed that almost 50% of charitable donations in Ukraine go towards helping treat or manage serious illnesses and disability.

Out of nearly 8 million children currently living in Ukraine, 167,000 are registered as suffering with disabilities, according to UNICEF, or the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

More than 70,000 children with disabilities in Ukraine live in residential care institutions, according to the Ministry of Social Policy.

According to a report by U.K. charity Hope and Homes for Children, Ukraine still struggles with the legacy of Soviet approaches to orphans and children with disabilities. The state lacks the resources to provide real care to children and instead prefers to separate them into orphanages and mental institutions.

These institutions are heavily criticized by UNICEF, which accused them of causing further harm to children, preventing them from growing

up in loving, family environments and promoting discrimination and exclusion.

The government currently provides social assistance to children with disabilities who are raised in foster homes or institutions with at least Hr 15,000 (\$561) per month, per child. This does not prevent many children from slipping through the cracks.

Financial support for children living with families is often extremely low. In the city of Sumy, a provincial capital of more than 250,000 people located 366 kilometers northeast of Kyiv, unemployed parents caring for critically ill children receive just Hr 1,769 (\$66) per month in social contributions from local authorities.

This lack of government support is often remedied by international aid.

The U.S. Christian charity "Mission to Ukraine" sends over \$800,000 a year trying to help children with disabilities at an orphanage in Zhytomyr, a city of 266,000 people located 140 kilometers west of Kyiv.

One child used to die per month at the Romaniv orphanage in the city and the children were treated like "untamed animals," Mission to Ukraine Director Steve Boles said in an interview with Syracuse University. He said his project helped lift some of the stigma for people with disabilities, making it easier for them to

attend support services and go out in the public.

Abandoned by parents

According to Leonid Lebediev, former aide to Ukraine's social policy ministry, 90% of children who leave orphanages are not prepared for independent life. Many are prone to violence, and surveys find up to 23% may end up homeless.

Not all people in orphanages have deceased parents. Many are "social orphans," whose families are unwilling or unable to care for them, according to several nonprofits. The lack of love and support may lead to developmental issues or violent tendencies, they say.

According to ChildAid, there are currently around 100,000 orphaned children in Ukraine. According to the charity, "orphans are abandoned by their own family due to lack of finances to support them, however, other reasons include alcoholism, abuse, crime, illness and poor medical health."

New Beginning, a ChildAid program based in an orphanage in Mukachevo, Zakarpattia Oblast city of 86,000 people located nearly 800 kilometers southwest of Kyiv, provides orphaned young adults with education, religious instruction and classes on personal finances, home economics, coping with problems and living outside the orphanage.

Child Poverty

According to UNICEF, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened child poverty in Ukraine, pushing about 1.4 million more children into poverty. Children in Ukraine represent 18% of the population, yet 45% of the poor.

UNICEF predicts that the absolute poverty rate in Ukraine will rise from 27% to 44% following economic pressures caused by the pandemic. This naturally has a knock-on effect across the charitable industry, worsening access and affordability of many essential services for children.

Mission Without Borders, an international Christian charity, sponsors impoverished children and their families through individual grants, helping children to attain sponsorships and vocational training, and to help families in becoming fully financially independent.

According to the charity's website, it has sponsored over 4,000 children, provided 18 students with scholarships and sent 9,000 Ukrainian families a "Christmas Love Box," which contains basic food supplies and Christmas treats for families and their young children. Over 2,500 of these boxes were received by families internally displaced by Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine.

International charities are similarly collaborating with the Ukrainian government to help ensure that government support is both effective and targeted.

UNICEF aids the Ukrainian government in implementing macro-economic policies which target child poverty at its source. It focuses on new techniques for measuring and recognizing child poverty, which aids the Ukrainian government in developing new child-centered family policies.

The charitable fund also helps the Ministry of Finance to improve existing public expenditure on children, helping prioritize economic support for children in the state budget.

UNICEF blames Ukraine's often ineffective support for underprivileged families on "a combination of welfare programs inherited from the Soviet Union...that are predominantly categorical, fragmented, often with overlapping objectives and poorly adapted to current needs."

Ukraine's decentralized reforms, supported by international organizations such as UNICEF, hope to see local authorities take charge of economic affairs, which will help tailor the needs of social services to local children. ❦



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SOS Children's Village provides vital foster families in Ukraine

By Natalia Datskevych
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Having a truly caring family, with at least one parent, is the dream of thousands of children across Ukraine.

As of 2020, Ukraine had 70,000 kids registered as orphans or children who have lost parental care, according to the Ministry of Social Policy.

An overwhelming 92% of them have biological parents, who have failed to provide them with proper care. Placed in one of 650 state-owned and largely underfunded orphanages and boarding schools, these children still don't receive proper care, education and psychological support after experiencing trauma.

To break this trend, SOS Children's Village – the world's largest non-governmental organization helping orphaned children – has been operating in Ukraine for the past 18 years.

In 2010, the Austrian-headquartered nonprofit launched a foster family village in the city of Brovary, Kyiv's eastern suburb of



Foster mother Tetiana Koliada hugs a 13-year-old girl, one of six kids she takes care of in the SOS Children's Village in Brovary, Ukraine, on Sept. 21, 2021.

108,000 people. There, professional foster parents are taking care of up to 100 of children simultaneously.

"We are preparing kids for an independent life," said Olena Kripak, director of the Kyiv regional branch of SOS Children's Village in Brovary. "Step by step, so they won't be afraid to live on their own."

In 2017, the Ukrainian government declared its strategy to switch its orphanage system to a foster care model, where kids are supervised by professionally trained foster moms and dads. But not a single state foster care establishment has been launched since then, according to Kripak.

"And where is the state going to send children? The foster care system is not established, and it's badly supported," she said.

Foster care

SOS Children's Village in Brovary stands on a three-hectare land plot in a pine forest. It has 16 two-story houses, where foster parents take care of 6–10 kids on average in each building. Children who live

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President of Parimatch Foundation Ekaterina Belorusskaya: Our goal is to raise a healthy and conscious generation

Advertisement

Parimatch Foundation is an international charitable foundation whose primary mission is to bring up a healthy and conscious generation. This objective is realized through providing equal access to sports and education to all children, regardless of their physical and mental ability or socioeconomic status.

According to Ekaterina Belorusskaya, President of Parimatch Foundation, focusing on children's development and education has been an extremely ambitious endeavor for the Foundation as it requires a consistent investment of resources over a long time. However, the relevance of such a choice is undeniable: statistically, 200 million children across the world are wasting their potential due to a lack of adequate support from their parents, caregivers, and teachers. By investing in children's development, we minimize the number of those who could otherwise end up among the vulnerable populations requiring special care from society.



It's a long-term game that calls for a systemic approach for tangible results. In every country where charitable organization Parimatch Foundation operates, its team strives to adapt its global programs to the needs of the local community. In Ukraine, it is implementing three comprehensive programs – "Yes, I can," "New Physical Culture," and "Sports Mentor." Each of these programs views sports as a valuable tool for children's socialization, development of their teamwork and leadership skills, as well as overall improvement of their health and promotion of physical activity.

"Yes, I can" is the Parimatch Foundation program that supports children with disabilities and special mental health needs through their involvement in sporting activities. Within two years since the Foundation's start, more than 500 children attended inclusive training sessions in 15 cities all over Ukraine in football, floorball, rock climbing, table tennis, Greco-Roman wrestling, and basketball groups. Ekaterina Belorusskaya emphasizes that a lot of care is taken to make the training sessions

purely inclusive rather than made for children with disabilities specifically. Assessments carried out by psychologists have shown that contact with healthy children significantly improves the socialization levels of Parimatch Foundation's wards.

Also, within the scope of the "Yes, I can" program, the Foundation has allocated UAH 4,000,000 for scholarships for talented child athletes with disabilities, and every year it increases the number of scholarship holders. This socially significant initiative is implemented in collaboration with the National Sports Committee for the Disabled of Ukraine. As a result, eight PMF wards have joined the national teams in three sports: swimming, basketball, and athletics.

In 2020-2021, the Foundation donated sports gear and special inclusive equipment to the ARTEK children's camp, giving young wheelchair users an opportunity for recreation. The Parimatch Foundation team is confident that by providing children with disabilities with a barrier-free space for learning and playing sports, we help them adapt to society faster and better.

"New Physical Culture" is the program aimed at developing and promoting physical education at schools to improve physical activity among children. In 2020, the Foundation launched a free online course on the Prometheus portal, thanks to which physical education teachers throughout Ukraine can improve their qualifications and make their lessons more engaging. In total, nine theoretical modules have been made available to 11,000 registered users (and their number is growing: an average of 200-500 people are added per month). Moreover, 60% of the participants have already received completion certificates. Practical modules cover the following disciplines: running, basketball, rugby, cheerleading, step aerobics, crossfit, football, table tennis, floorball.

Also, in order to increase the expertise of Ukrainian teachers of physical education, the Foundation has organized free online conferences "Innovations in body education" and "Innovations in body education 2.0". More than 40 experts, including foreign ones, spoke during these events. The live broadcasts of the conferences have attracted around 10,000 viewers from all over the country.

To support talented and creative teachers of physical education, for two years in a row, the Parimatch Foundation has been holding the "Project Competition for Innovative Teachers": in 2020, the prize fund amounted to UAH 500,000, and in October this year, ten winners will go to the first ISF Universal Teachers Games 2021 in Croatia.

"Sports Mentor" is the program striving to give each child an opportunity to develop their talents and follow their dreams regardless of their social status. According to statistics, orphans or children from disadvantaged families lead a more passive lifestyle; they often have less knowledge about the basics of hygiene, healthy eating, and the importance of physical

activity; at the same time, they can be more prone to aggression and antisocial manifestations. It is extremely important that such children have a mentor – a person who will not only teach them physical exercises but also become a role model.

Beneficiaries of the Parimatch Foundation have access to free training in rhythmic gymnastics, sambo and jiu-jitsu. Children from orphanages and rehabilitation centers have attended basketball and ice hockey matches. For two years on end, Anna Rizatdinova, an Olympic champion in rhythmic gymnastics, has been one of the inspirational mentors for the program participants.



For two years now, each program of the Parimatch Foundation has been implemented with the joint efforts of the government agencies, public organizations, and responsible businesses for the benefit of the children. The President of the Foundation firmly believes that this very synergy allows the Parimatch Foundation programs to scale. The PMF team systematically brings the best world practices to Ukraine to improve the level of physical culture in the country. Every year it increases the number of the Foundation's beneficiaries and expands the geography of its programs' implementation to give the new generation the opportunity to be healthy and mindful and make our society a more tolerant and barrier-free place to grow up in.

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UNICEF tries to help 430,000 children in war-torn Donbas

By Asami Terajima
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Growing up within 20 kilometers of the contact line of Russia's war in eastern Ukraine, one of the first things that children learn is to be extremely careful when playing outside, as there are landmines hidden under and on the ground.

Since the start of Russia's war in 2014, at least 39 children were killed and 137 were injured due to mines and explosives in the Donbas, according to UNICEF, also known as the United Nations Children's Fund. Ukraine ranks third worldwide in the number of casualties caused by landmines and other explosive remnants of war, according to UNICEF.

About 430,000 children live near the war zone in the eastern Donbas.

Instead of enjoying a blissful care-free childhood, they had to face the realities of the war from an early age. Many of them live in poverty.

But it's important to remember that "a child is a child," Murat Sahin, UNICEF representative in Ukraine, said. Organizations like UNICEF Ukraine work in the Donbas so that children can enjoy their youth and get the necessary support.

"Whatever policy or decision that we will make, we need to put the children in front of us," he told the Kyiv Post.

Since UNICEF opened its office in Kyiv in 1997, the agency has supported the Ukrainian government with nearly \$130 million in assistance to develop health, water and sanitation, education and children's rights protection programs.

Safe schools

Sahin, who used to work as a water

UNICEF Ukraine/Twitter



Murat Sahin, the UNICEF representative in Ukraine, plays with children at a local school in Krymske, one of the most isolated settlements on the contact line of Russia's war in the eastern Donbas region.

engineer before he came to UNICEF, never thought that his career would revolve around kids.

It all changed after a devastating

earthquake struck near the city of Izmit in northwestern Turkey in 1999, killing more than 30,000 people.

The 47-year-old Turk discovered his passion to help children in need whilst doing the repair works to water supply and other services for UNICEF, an organization he wasn't very familiar with at the time.

"UNICEF was an opportunity for me to help people," he says.

Throughout his UNICEF career, Sahin traveled to more than 40 countries and worked in six – Turkey, Tajikistan, North Korea, the United States, Kosovo and Ukraine. And wherever he went, he noticed one thing in common – "children love to play (and) children love to interact." He emphasized that it's all about ensuring that investments are made before they are too late. Kids need to have access to basic human needs, from clean water to quality education.

When it comes to areas with an ongoing armed conflict like the Donbas, one of the priorities is making sure that children are able to study in a safe school environment. This has not been easy to achieve, as more than 750 educational institutions, including schools and kindergartens on both sides of the contact line, have been damaged since the war started, according to UNICEF. Nine attacks on children and educational facilities have been reported this year alone, the organization's spokesperson told the Kyiv Post.

Access to water

Sahin, who became head of UNICEF Ukraine in July, believes in the importance of visiting project sites rather than relying on published reports. He is determined not to have "a lost generation" of children.

As a former engineer, he noticed the outdated water supply system that many towns and villages rely on, running all the way from Kramatorsk to Mariupol in the Donbas. UNICEF helps provide access to safe drinking water to the conflict-affected population by supporting Voda Donbasu, the main public water in Donetsk Oblast serving around 3.8 million people on both sides of the contact line.

Another mission is to connect more areas to the centralized water supply.

Those living in remote areas like Mykolaipillia in Donetsk Oblast, where an old water tower collapsed in the 1960s, struggle the most. Despite having a hot and dry climate, the village only had a single well of drinking water, which meant that families often had to choose between washing, cooking or feeding the animals.

"Access to water is a human right," Sahin said.

In order to improve the situation, UNICEF has been working with others to upgrade the water supply

World in Ukraine: Germany



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'The children come to us very traumatized,' says Olena Kripak

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here range from one to 18 years old. Some of the fosterlings can be in their 20s if they study in universities and need support.

The village was built in 2005 when Ukraine became one of six countries, including Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa and Vietnam, that received a portion of the \$25 million raised by the international football association FIFA, a long-standing charity benefactor of SOS Children's Villages.

A team of psychologists, teachers and social workers together with foster parents start to work with a child who arrives to the village. They make plans for one year ahead on how to fill the gaps not only in education, but in their mental health if needed. Very often, newcomers are scared and don't trust people at all.

"The children come to us very traumatized," said Kripak. "Once I asked a girl if she loved anyone, and she told me 'I can't love anyone, because no one ever loved me, and I don't trust people'."

It usually takes around six months

for children to begin to open their hearts.

Foster mother Tatiana Koliada, 53, says her fosterlings don't want to go back to their biological parents because they feel that "it's better in the village and that we care about them."

The newly arrived children aren't just sent to any available foster parent.

"We make a mutual selection," Kripak said. "We have families, specializing, for example, in working with little kids, or teenagers."

Starting from 14 years, children engage in the organization's youth program. It provides career counseling and various classes to help them discover their passions.

"When they were toddlers, many kids dreamed of becoming cooks when they grow up, because they were malnourished," Kripak said.

Some companies, like logistical and IT firms, give children from the village an opportunity to be their interns, so that they can discover professions and acquire new skills.

Kripak says that those who have already left the village went on to

study in universities, or now successfully work in various fields as human resources specialists, landscape designers and more.

"They don't want to be just cooks anymore," she said.

Thanks to the organization, more than 250 children have received foster families in Ukraine.

Through other programs, SOS Children's Village helped 5,000 children and adults, mostly assisting dysfunctional families with going through crises. It also provided 80,000 children in need with food kits, hygiene products and medicine.

Burning out

Being a foster parent is not an easy job.

Kripak says that the team is always on the lookout for the signs of parents' burnout. When they see the signs of an extreme exhaustion in one of the employees, they offer professional psychological help.

Foster mother Koliada says she occasionally feels on the verge of quitting her job.

"Sometimes it becomes very difficult, but the psychologist really helps," Koliada said.



Olena Kripak, director of the Kyiv regional branch of SOS Children's Village, speaks with the Kyiv Post on Sept. 21, 2021 in Brovary, Ukraine.

If a foster parent burns out and leaves, it might become a tragedy for kids.

"No one wants to have two, three moms," Koliada said. "Children want to call one woman a 'mom'."

At the same time, it's becoming harder for Kripak to find new foster parents, since many are demotivated by low salaries of \$440–550 and poor state support.

"We have very few candidates," she said.

The state provides foster parents with child care expenses of \$185 per month for one child. But that is often not enough.

"When a child gets sick I need to contribute my own money," Koliada said.

Poor fundraising

The SOS Children's Village needs an average of \$2.7 million per year to pay salaries to 50 employees and to maintain their children programs, according to Olena Onyshchenko,

fund development and communications director.

The fund raises only 10% of the budget in Ukraine – most of it comes from corporate social programs of various companies.

The rest, 90%, the organization gets from either other international charity funds, own resources from SOS International Federation, which operates in 137 countries, or foreign companies.

Though helping people is becoming increasingly popular in Ukraine, according to reports, Onyshchenko says that Ukrainians need to donate more. "It is still untapped potential."

She believes that the reason Ukrainians rarely donate is the poor economic situation in general and lack of trust in charity organizations.

But according to Viktoriya Gudova, the fund's digital fundraiser, Ukrainians shouldn't rely on the government to help those in need.

"We need to support our children by ourselves," Gudova said. ☘

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WINNER GROUP UKRAINE: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A PIVOTAL COMPONENT OF THE BUSINESS

Winner Group Ukraine has been an example of an honest, transparent and socially responsible business in Ukraine for almost 30 years. For Winner, CSR, or corporate social responsibility, is a part of the company's DNA, a duty to society and evident confirmation of the seriousness we attach to the future of Ukraine. The company annually participates in a large number of initiatives and charitable projects. It is a partner of charitable foundations and takes care of orphanages.

The main objective of the company's charitable projects is to fundamentally change life in Ukraine. Today, the corporate social responsibility for Winner is not a situational involvement in initiatives, but a comprehensive work on large-scale projects, split into two areas: "Charity" and "Responsible Business".



"Charity and help for those who are in need is not just one of the company's activity areas, which is being worked on, because 'this had to be done'. For Winner Group Ukraine, CSR is an element of the strategic vision of the sustainable development of our business, part of the company's DNA. When you earn money, your responsibility is also to give. Money has

no value. Friendship, health, assistance and care is of value", John Hynansky, CEO and owner of Winner Group Ukraine, emphasizes.



Charity initiatives of Winner Group Ukraine are focused on educational initiatives and projects caring for children with disabilities and orphans, promoting the uniqueness of Ukrainian culture in the world and helping local communities. An important area is the engagement of employees in corporate volunteering, namely in blood donation, trips to orphanages, animal shelters, cleaning forests and parks, as well as collecting supplies for low-income families. The "Responsible Business" initiatives include fostering good conduct on roads to reduce the number of accidents, creating a cluster of responsible young drivers, supporting future talents in the automotive industry and a tree-planting program to compensate for the company's carbon footprint.

All of the company's projects are underpinned by two immutable principles – care and responsibility. As a leading importer and dealer of cars in Ukraine, Winner is committed to taking care of employees, customers, society, the State, the environment and future

generations by assuming responsibility for its activities and each initiative.

WHAT ABOUT 2020?

The coronavirus pandemic threw almost every business off-balance, so it is critical to becoming increasingly flexible to survive in the new unpredictable environment. Last year, Winner Group Ukraine implemented 66 CSR projects, donated 309 thousand euros to charity and engaged 181 employees in CSR initiatives.



In April 2020, the company provided free maintenance for ambulances based on Ford vehicles at official dealerships throughout Ukraine. As a result, 53 vehicles had free maintenance. The company, together with the Ukrainian Association of Football, let doctors use 26 vehicles to prevent the spread of Covid-19 throughout all regions of Ukraine. Winner Group Ukraine also helped supply 3,961 meals for doctors and provided personal protective equipment to hospitals in Kyiv region, primarily outpatient clinics in the villages of Dmytrivka and Velyka Oleksandrivka, where Winner operates, as well as to hospitals in Irpin and Bila Tserkva.

On top of that, Winner Group Ukraine attaches special importance to environmental projects that foster the preservation of the environment. The company has not only installed separate containers for waste sorting in its offices but is attempting to promote a conscious and systematic approach to waste disposal among employees. The company conducts special events to consider the topic of environment, sustainable development and the "Winner's Green Office" program. These events include I-Sessions and various eco-challenges. Within the "Winner's Green Office" program, employees sort waste into plastic (two types), paper, metal and glass, and properly dispose of hazardous wastes such as batteries and mercury vapour lamps.

Waste sorting, recycling and disposal affect not only the employees' office lives but also their domestic ones. Last year, over 16 tons of waste paper, more than 1.2 tons of polyethylene and plastic wastes, 120 kilograms of batteries, almost 47 tons of used oil and 2.6 tons of post-consumer tires were totally collected by the employees.

Winner Group Ukraine is a prime example of corporate responsibility being the pivotal component of a successful business. These are projects that create a reputational value for the brand and sustainable future for the country.

→ www.winner.ua

WINNER

Kids in Donbas need schools, water, safety from violence

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system in 58 remote areas near the frontline of the war. UNICEF and its partners have drilled 19 boreholes and 8 public water wells, in addition to installing 17 water towers that pressurize water for effective distribution while also storing extra when needed. Water purification systems have also been installed in local communities so that more families get access to clean water.

While the village councils funded part of the construction costs, the German government has spent more than \$3 million on the decentralized water supply project. The overall UNICEF funding for the initiative is close to \$1.9 million.

Referring to the early days of his UNICEF service in Turkey, Murat said, "the challenges are similar, and the solutions are also similar."

Domestic violence

Another difficulty that children in the Donbas are facing is the rising domestic violence.

Factors like increased poverty, joblessness and constant stress contrib-

Murat Sahin/Twitter



Head of UNICEF Ukraine Murat Sahin (L) fist bumps water and sanitation engineers at a water station in Mariupol, Ukraine on Sept. 17, 2021. Provided by UNICEF with the support of the German government, the new pumping station supplies water for 30,000 people, including four schools and kindergartens, as well as an orphanage.

ute to the problem, according Naira Avetisyan, Chief of Child Protection section at UNICEF Ukraine, and the pandemic didn't help.

Easier access to weapons also contributes to greater violence in domestic disputes.

Children, of course, are damaged emotionally and psychologically as victims or witnesses to abuse, Avetisyan said. "Any conflict has a long-term impact on children," she told the Kyiv Post.

Families and children living near the contact line, especially, feel the challenges because they have limited access to services.

Since 2017, gender-based violence mobile teams supported by UNICEF have been helping victims, including children. During the pandemic, they continued to operate online. In severe cases when interventions were needed, the teams took their own cars to the victims' houses.

"We have to be very careful to identify on time and intervene on time," she said. "Children are the most vulnerable in conflict situations." ❄

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WOG'S ROAD OF KINDNESS: HR 3 MILLION TO HELP SAVE THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN'S LIVES

Active involvement of big businesses and every concerned citizen in charity is becoming increasingly relevant in the modern world. Practice shows that CSR projects, initiated by market leaders, bring quick and meaningful results, which in the existing economic circumstances, would probably take years to achieve.

There are many successful examples, the Road of Kindness by WOG gas station chain being one of them. Yet another stage of the charity campaign has just ended recently, resulting in new high-end equipment being purchased for two medical institutions. Hennadiy Karlinskiy, Marketing Director at WOG, speaks about the project that helps save thousands of children's lives.

WOG has been actively helping children for a long time. At first, it gave extensive aid to the orphanages: financing repairs, purchasing clothes and toys. At a certain point, the company decided to approach the issue more comprehensively. There was an astounding statistic, especially for one particular issue: every year nearly 3,500 babies are born in Ukraine with heart failure, which develops during pregnancy. About 33% of these babies leave maternity hospitals without the slightest suspicion that they may be sick, even though they need surgery within hours or days of being born.

These children would have had a chance to live had our medical institutions had modern equipment necessary for diagnosing and operating on the small patients suffering from this condition. However, in public medical institutions the equipment that is the key to saving the lives of the little ones is usually worn out and the hospitals cannot afford to buy new expensive equipment due to critical underfinancing.

Therefore, a countrywide project titled the Road to Heart, which in 2020 got a new name – the Road of Kindness, became an entirely logical extension of our charitable activities. The initiative aims to raise funds to purchase and repair medical equipment and fulfill the needs of children's clinics and centers all across Ukraine.

I am confident that being a successful business today involves systemic business processes and comprehensive project management. This is the approach WOG has been implementing for over 15 years also in the area of CSR. You can't get involved in charity from time to time, or in response to a one-time appeal of the society. The path WOG has chosen involves consistent work in a specific area with involvement of the most reliable and transparent NGOs, charity foundations, celebrities, etc., as the partners.

Dobro.ua Charity Platform, Tvoya Opora Charity Foundation and Masha Efrosinina have been long-time partners of the project. The organizations pass an audit annually that proves

their integrity and transparency. It is a crucial factor, as WOG is fully aware of the responsibility to everybody who participates in the charity campaign.

At the same time, the Road of Kindness aims not only to help save children's hearts, but also promote participation in charity campaigns among our customers to attract a wider audience. We are acting as a platform, providing an opportunity to our customers to join the campaign and feel their direct involvement in a good cause.



Therefore, the fundraising mechanics must be clear and simple – large sums are raised thanks to the thousands of concerned people, who make small contributions that are absolutely unnoticeable to the person's budget.

Absolutely anybody can participate in the Road of Kindness! Every year, WOG produces a limited series of charity cups with a unicorn for the project. If you want to join the good cause, all you need to do is to buy a beverage in this special cup at any WOG gas station or any WOG CAFÉ. The price of the drink in this cup is only Hr 3 higher than in the usual cup. But this way, you can enjoy your favorite coffee drink and do a good deed.

This year, WOG and partners have set an ambitious goal – to raise over Hr 3 million for purchasing two high-end operating tables for the Amosov Institute and a vitally important high-end incubator for the Institute of Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology (POG).

Notably, doctors at the Amosov National Institute of Cardiovascular Surgery save around 700 babies born with heart failure every year. The majority of the 19,000 premature infants are cared for by the medical professionals at the Institute of POG. These two major medical institutions need help – they need equipment to save lives, as the doctors' skills and the desire to save lives are not enough. Their success depends on the availability of modern medical equipment.

As the organizers of the campaign, we are extremely happy that the medical institutions will get new equipment soon, because thanks to the thousands of concerned people, we succeeded in raising the required amount in just three months. With the new operating tables, the doctors will be able to perform surgeries of any complexity. The new medical equipment will improve patient safety and give people a chance for a long and healthy life. These operating tables will be used to save 300 children and pregnant women per year.

Also, the Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Unit of the Institute of POG will soon receive a much-needed incubator to care for premature babies. An incubator provides an environment similar to the intrauterine one, with a possibility to adjust automatic oxygen supply, temperature and humidity.

Our Road of Kindness is valuable not only for its end result, i.e. purchase of equipment for the hospitals. It is an essential project, as it also raises an important issue, loudly voices the concerns, informs and encourages the society to take notice of the issue. Moreover, I am confident that one of the key tasks of the CSR is to be a reliable partner of the state addressing the issues and finding solutions, and to raise the bar of transparency and openness.

The Road of Kindness Project has been running for over 15 years. Every year, thanks to every WOG customer, who joined the project, more than Hr 23 million is raised, making it possible to ensure expensive equipment repair at the medical institutions all across the country, purchase new high-end equipment for them, thus saving children's lives. A new record was set during the previous stage of the campaign, which ended in the end of 2020 – nearly Hr 3.3 million was raised. The money was used to purchase equipment for the children's operating room at the Amosov Institute, specifically anesthesia machine, patient monitor and a bedside patient monitor. The equipment has been in use for nearly a year, helping the doctors perform surgeries and save children's lives in a more efficient way.



Parliament passes law meant to curb influence of oligarchs

By Oleksiy Sorokin
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The Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, on Sept. 23 supported the second and final reading of President Volodymyr Zelensky's "deoligarchization bill" in an attempt to curtail the influence of the country's wealthy elite.

The bill was supported by 279 lawmakers. The votes mainly came from Zelensky's 244-member Servant of the People party which provided 229 votes, three over the required minimum.

The bill legally defines the word "oligarch" and imposes restrictions on anyone who meets this definition. The National Security and Defense Council, headed by Zelensky, will have its powers expanded and will draw an official oligarch registry.

Those on the list will be banned from donating directly or indirectly to political parties and participating in the privatization of state assets.

To be recognized as an oligarch, a person must meet at least three out of four criteria: direct involvement in political activities, considerable influence over media, be a beneficiary of monopolies recognized by antitrust authorities and ownership of assets exceeding Hr 2.2 billion (\$81 million), excluding media assets.

A person must either hold a top-level public office or be affil-

Oleg Petrasliuk



First Deputy Speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk (R) leads the parliament hearing in Kyiv on Sept. 23, 2021, while European Solidarity faction lawmakers — Iryna Herashchenko (C) and Mykola Kniazhytsky — protest Stefanchuk's decision to speed up the hearing of the so-called "deoligarchization law" by passing a provision to vote for amendments in bunches, cutting opposition lawmakers from the chance to stall the voting.

iated with someone in that position. All top government officials will be required to declare any non-public contacts or meetings with oligarchs.

Moreover, a person who has financed political parties, ads or protests can also be defined as an

oligarch, according to the legislation.

The influence on the media could be both direct or indirect meaning that even a person without official ownership of media outlets could still be defined as an oligarch.

Critics of the law say that the criteria are too arbitrary and will allow

the Security Council, which is controlled by the president, to decide who is an oligarch.

The vote was mired in controversy, when First Deputy Speaker Ruslan Stefanchuk, who led the hearing, passed a provision to vote for amendments in bunches, cut-

ting opposition lawmakers from the chance to stall the voting.

"Dictatorship," yelled lawmaker Mykola Kniazhytsky, representing the 27-member European Solidarity faction led by ex-President Petro Poroshenko, who can soon end up on the "oligarchs' registrar."

On May 11, Security Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov said that there are 13 people who fall under the definition of oligarch in Ukraine. He didn't mention them by name.

As of now, Zelensky's political opponent, Poroshenko, falls under the voted criteria. The European Solidarity faction voted against the law.

Wealthy businessmen Rinat Akhmetov, Ihor Kolomoisky, Ihor Palytsa, Serhiy Lyovochkin, Dmytro Firtash and Victor Pinchuk are the primary losers of the passed legislation. They hold vast assets in key sectors of the economy and have major influence through media holdings and politicians seen as loyal to their interests.

The bill was heavily criticized by Ombudsman Lyudmila Denisova and Speaker Dmytro Razumkov, whom Servant of the People faction head David Arakhamia accused of stalling the legislation. Razumkov "is deliberately attempting to bring down the deoligarchization law," said Arakhamia.

The bill will become law after Zelensky's imminent signature. 🇺🇦

Ukraine's authorities don't seem to have any idea who fired shots at Zelensky aide

page 3 →

said during a joint press briefing with Shefir hours after the attack.

Monastyrsky believes the purpose of the crime was "not to scare but to kill."

There were no cameras at the scene and the road is lined by woods, which provided good cover for the perpetrators, Venediktova said. This made it harder to track down the would-be killer.

Police don't know the motive.

Who is Shefir?

Shefir, 57, is one of the president's closest associates.

After Zelensky's victory in 2019, the president handed over his share in Kvartal 95 and eight entertainment companies to his business partners, including Shefir, who has described his main job as following the president's orders.

"I have to be there and make sure that Zelensky stays a man after becoming a politician, because very often, when one holds a prominent position, he starts to be surrounded by people only praising him and then leading him in the wrong direction," Shefir once explained.

He is also known to be Zelensky's point man for communicating with Ukraine's oligarchs.

A Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Schemes investigation series showed that Shefir attended the birthday party of notorious businessman Ihor Surkis in August 2020. Later that month, journalists from Schemes filmed Shefir visiting the house of billionaire oligarch Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine's richest mogul.

Shefir didn't confirm his meeting with Akhmetov.

"Shefir is the most private and

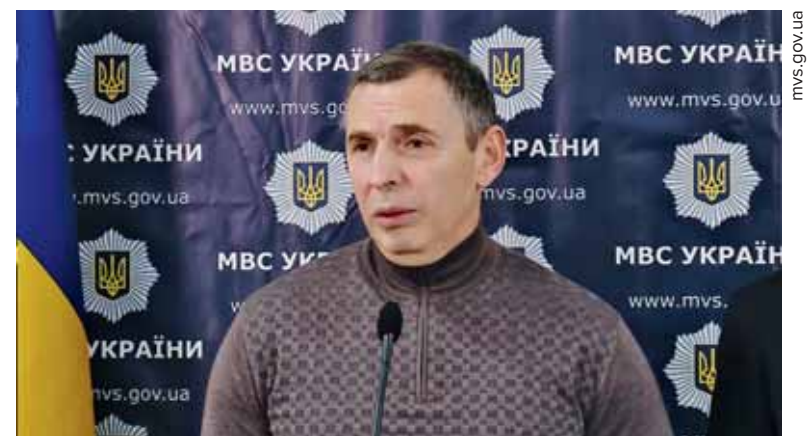
least controversial among those close to the president.

It is a well-known fact that he communicates with representatives of various forces, but he usually works on resolving conflicts. He is the so-called "dove of peace," political analyst Volodymyr Fesenko told the Kyiv Post.

Oligarch revenge?

Mykhailo Podolyak, a communications adviser to Zelensky's chief of staff, said that the attempt to assassinate Shefir could have resulted from the president's recent attempt to crack down on oligarchs.

In June, Zelensky submitted the so-called "deoligarchization bill" to parliament in an attempt to curtail the influence of the country's wealthy elite. On Sept. 23, the parliament passed the bill in the final reading. It creates a legal definition of what an oligarch is, restricts their



Serhiy Shefir, a close friend and top adviser of President Volodymyr Zelensky, survived an assassination attempt on Sept. 22 near Kyiv, but his driver was wounded when an unidentified assailant struck a car carrying Shefir with at least 12 bullets.

contact with public officials and bans them from buying privatized state assets.

However, some political experts are skeptical that the assassination attempt was linked to this bill.

"To say that Shefir was the target to disrupt the vote on the deoligarchization bill, especially since this situation only improves the chances of its adoption, is a speculation," Oleh Saakian, a political expert, told the Kyiv Post. "It looks even more cynical considering that Shefir was one of those members of Zelensky's team who opposed the law."

Fesenko, who is close to the government, said that representatives of big businesses or oligarchs are unlikely to want to remove Shefir. On the contrary, they need him to communicate with Zelensky.

"The big oligarchs are unlikely to take such a step. They tend to negotiate with the president, and not fight

this way," Fesenko said. "Moreover, I believe that if this was related to the deoligarchization law, the target should have been Oleksiy Danilov (head of the National Security and Defense Council), as Shefir wasn't a supporter of the law," Fesenko said.

In his statement, Zelensky said he believes the attack was a message to him personally.

"Here is the price of change in the state, here is the price of reforms," Zelensky said during his address to the United Nations General Assembly.

Fesenko believes that this will strongly affect Zelensky.

"Zelensky was always emotional," the expert said. "His behavior can change: He can become tougher, put less trust in some people. We have seen that he can act harshly with the example of sanctions against (pro-Kremlin lawmaker) Viktor Medvedchuk." 🇺🇦

Respeecher startup creates artificial voices for Hollywood

By Daryna Antoniuk
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When young Luke Skywalker appeared in the final episode of "The Mandalorian," a spin-off series of the Star Wars films, viewers were left speechless. Skywalker looked like his 28-year-old self, despite being portrayed by 68-year-old U.S. actor Mark Hamill, who has played the character since 1977.

To make the iconic Jedi look younger, director Jon Favreau used a visual effect called de-aging. "Something people didn't realize is that Skywalker's voice also wasn't real," Favreau said. It was artificially synthesized by Ukrainian startup Respeecher.

Respeecher's team of nearly 20 people worked for a Hollywood series from their small office in Kyiv. Ukrainian techies obtained 40-year-old recordings of Hamill's voice, analyzed them using artificial intelligence (AI) and generated young Skywalker's voice. Then they swapped the voice of an actor who read the script for the synthetic one they created.

"The fact that everyone was surprised that the voice wasn't real means that we did everything right," said Oleksandr Serdiuk, cofounder of Respeecher.

Apart from Lucasfilm, the production company behind Star Wars, Respeecher works with other big clients in Hollywood and smaller studios across the world. The startup reveals very few names due to non-disclosure agreements.

Although many startups, including the U.S. giants such as Replica Studios, Descript and Modulate, work with voice-altering technologies, only few have managed to produce a sound that satisfies the demanding film industry.

"The Respeecher's team is still ahead of the game," said Bas Godska, general partner at Acrobator Ventures, the Dutch investment fund that invested in the Ukrainian firm.

The voice-tech industry has great potential, Godska said. It is expected to grow at a 17% rate annually, attracting investment of nearly \$27 billion by 2025.

"In 3–5 years it (voice conversion) will become a common tool in post-production," said Sergii Soldatov, executive producer at Ukraine's studio Eve Production.

Respeecher's team believes its



U.S. actor Mark Hamill has played Luke Skywalker in Star Wars films since 1977. To recreate his young voice in the Star Wars spin-off series "The Mandalorian," released in 2020, director Jon Favreau worked with Ukrainian startup Respeecher. Respeecher develops a technology that creates artificial voices for games, movies, audiobooks and podcasts.

chances to win a big share of this market are high. "There is no company in Hollywood that makes the same quality of sound as we do," Serdiuk said.

First steps

Serdiuk and his partner, Dmytro Bielievtsov, started to work on voice conversion, the technology that makes one voice sound like another, in 2016, when no other company offered such service, they say. At that time, Serdiuk and Bielievtsov worked as data analysts and were passionate about the possibilities of AI. Bielievtsov, a music devotee who plays four musical instruments, decided to apply his tech knowledge to work with sounds.

During one of the conferences about AI in Kyiv, Serdiuk and Bielievtsov met Grant Reaber, a U.S. tech enthusiast. Reaber studied computer sciences, machine learning and math for nearly 15 years, and he liked the idea of voice conversion. The three founded Respeecher in 2018.

Unlike most other voice-tech startups, which turn written text into speech, Respeecher trained its algorithms to process voice sounds

only. It is more complicated because it requires analyzing real people's voices, including different accents.

One of Respeecher's first big projects was generating the voice of 37th U.S. president Richard Nixon. They created it to voice an undelivered speech Nixon prepared in case the Apollo 11 mission in 1969 would fail. The clip was used in U.S. short documentary film "In Event of Moon Disaster."

"We created a highly realistic film, in a large part due to Respeecher's work," said film director Halsey Burgund, according to Respeecher's website.

Hollywood

Since its founding three years ago, Respeecher has worked on nearly 50 projects. The startup collaborated with Hollywood studios and produced commercials for big events.

For the 2021 Super Bowl, the annual championship game of the U.S. National Football League, Respeecher recreated the voice of legendary coach Vince Lombardi who died in 1970. As digital Lombardi delivered a motivational speech, his voice sounded just like it did 50 years ago.

Working on Lombardi's audio materials was hard — they were old and damaged. But the ability to convert even poor-quality sound into realistic speech is what makes Respeecher attractive to big clients, Serdiuk said.

As of today, the startup works with its clients on a project-by-project basis but Ukrainians want to make the technology more automatic, according to Bielievtsov. It could have a great impact on the film industry, Respeecher's investors said.

When an audio turns out to be flawed, it is expensive and time-consuming to bring actors back to the studio to re-record it, said Dionis Akulov, creative producer at To Be Production, Ukraine's post-pro-

duction company. With Respeecher, studios could fix the audio layer remotely.

"One day, Respeecher could become a part of a big production company," said Roman Nikitov, co-head of venture capital at ICU, the fund that invested in Respeecher in 2020.

Respeecher has already received acquisition offers, but the startup refused them. "There are still many things we want to improve by ourselves," Serdiuk said.

Despite the many advantages of the technology, some film industry experts are concerned it also could be dangerous. People could use voices without actors' permission or modify them to harm someone's reputation.

To avoid that, Respeecher gets written permission from actors whose voices are modified. It also wants to add watermarks to its audio, so that sound specialists could detect the modifications that the human ear can't recognize.

"This is a new technology, so people are scared," Serdiuk said. "But that is true for all innovations: We first see threats and then possibilities."

Investors' praise

Voice conversion is an expensive technology, according to Serdiuk. But many investors still want to put money into Respeecher. Since 2018, the startup has attracted over \$2 million.

"We can imagine how far this development will go, so it was a no-brainer for our fund to invest," Godska said.

Respeecher doesn't disclose its revenue and market value but Serdiuk said that the startup is close to becoming profitable. It hasn't yet become profitable since it reinvests all revenue in further tech development.

Investors keep supporting the



The digital image of Vince Lombardi (1913-1970), legendary coach of the U.S. National Football League, was recreated in the Super Bowl commercial in February 2021.

firm because of high-profile clientele such as Lucasfilm and U.S. television network Telemundo. "We see that their product is in demand," Nikitov said.

As of today, Respeecher's technology is too expensive for small studios. But the company plans to make it more affordable. That might also allow its usage in the translation of foreign movies.

Instead of dubbing, Respeecher can use an original actor's voice and make it speak a foreign language.

"We can make Brad Pitt speak the perfect Ukrainian or Ukrainian actor — perfect English," Serdiuk said.

The startup also works on introducing other more affordable services. It has just launched the so-called voice marketplace that sells copyrighted voices — real or artificially generated — that small companies can use in their own games or movies.

"We invest a lot in this technology," Serdiuk said. "It will help all creative businesses to compete with big studios. So we'll have the competition of ideas, not budgets." ❁



Ukrainian tech specialists Dmytro Bielievtsov (L), Oleksandr Serdiuk (C) and their U.S. partner Grant Reaber co-founded a startup called Respeecher in 2018. Respeecher creates artificial voices for big Hollywood studios like Lucasfilm, the production company behind "The Mandalorian," a spin-off of the Star Wars film series.

Kyiv Post opens nominations for Top 30 Under 30 Awards

By Elina Kent

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When comedian Roman Hryshchuk ran for parliament in 2019, he used his title as Kyiv Post's Top 30 Under 30 Award winner in his campaign.

"I did use the fact I got on the list in the election campaign," Hryshchuk told the Kyiv Post. "For many, it was a positive sign."

Hryshchuk became one of the 30 young leaders honored by the Kyiv Post's annual award in 2017 for his contribution to the development of comedy and cinema in Ukraine.

Just two years later, he got elected to the parliament with President Volodymyr Zelensky's ruling 244-member Servant of the People party. He is now a member of parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Innovation.

Hryshchuk communicates inside parliament's walls with other Top 30 Under 30 winners, who also went on to become lawmakers.

"We talked about how cool it is that we all were on Kyiv Post's list and now work together in the parliament," Hryshchuk said.

The Kyiv Post launched the Top 30 Under 30 Awards in 2016 to celebrate young Ukrainian leaders from all walks of life. A total of 150 young Ukrainians have been honored so far.

As the time to announce a new round of winners draws near, the Kyiv Post is calling for nominations. Anyone can submit a candidate until Oct. 20.

Open nominations

Our readers nominate leaders and intellectuals who bring positive initiatives to their community. Those chosen are awarded for their accomplishments in art, business, politics, technology, sports, fashion, civil activism and more.

Previous winners include Olympic medalists, artists, members of parliament, LGBTQ+ rights activists, entrepreneurs and regional leaders who are transforming their communities.

Nominations are accepted in both English and Ukrainian. Candidates may be submitted through the Kyiv Post website.

Due to COVID-19 quarantine restrictions, the award ceremony in 2020 presented prizes to the winners at a live-streamed event with no audience members.

But this year, the ceremony is returning to its offline format. Previous winners will also gather for a panel discussion on the role youth engagement plays in the development of Ukraine.

A board comprised of previous winners will help the Kyiv Post pick this year's winners, who will be announced during the ceremony in early December.

This year's winners will be given a challenge to strengthen the award alumni community. The challenge, a secret for now, will be revealed at the ceremony.



The winners of the Kyiv Post's Top 30 Under 30 award pose for a photograph after the ceremony at the newspaper's headquarters on Nov. 27, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ceremony took place with no audience.

Where they are now

The award alumni community is full of strong, inspiring leaders. For many, the Top 30 Under 30 award isn't the peak of their achievements, as they continue to reach new heights.

Mykhailo Fedorov became one of 2019 award winners as the youngest minister in Ukraine's history. At 28, he was appointed minister of digital transformation, taking charge of Ukraine's electronic government. Back then, his ministry had just revealed a brand new app called Diia, an experimental platform for the government to provide e-services.

It's no question that Diia proved to be a success. Ukraine has become the world's first country to legalize digital passports which are saved on the Diia app. In total, Ukrainians can use nearly 70 state services through the app. By August, Diia had more than five million users.

It's been especially convenient to have such online services in a global pandemic that requires social distancing and remote work. Diia also provides digital versions of COVID-19 vaccination certificates.

"At a time when conservative states are slowly transforming, Ukraine is doing it with incredible speed," Fedorov told the Kyiv Post in August.

Another high achiever of the 2019 winner class is judoka Daria Bilodid. She won the European Judo Championship at just 16, and by 17, she became the youngest judo world champion.

Two years after picking up the Kyiv Post award at 19, Bilodid won her first Olympic medal at her Olympic Games debut in Tokyo. Having won bronze, the athlete made history by winning Ukraine's first award in women's judo.

Another Olympic athlete, Zhan

Beleniuk, was the award alumni in 2018. By that point, Beleniuk had a silver Olympic medal in Greco-

Roman Wrestling. After the win, Beleniuk got offers to represent other countries for more money but

told the Kyiv Post at the time "I just belong here" and "people who have always supported and believed in me are all in Ukraine."

Beleniuk in return has supported his country in both sports and politics. He was elected to the parliament in 2019 as a member of the Servant of the People party and went on to win Ukraine's only gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics this year.

"It's every athlete's dream," Beleniuk told the Kyiv Post in September shortly after the Games.

As a member of the parliamentary Committee on Youth and Sports, the athlete-lawmaker is working to promote sports in Ukraine at all levels, helping to make the population healthier and supporting young promising athletes.

Kyiv Post's commercial director Alyona Nevmerzhytska says that the newspaper is happy to see the winners keep on doing great things.

"We hope that this award makes them more visible for government officials, for the world, and this motivates them to achieve more," she said.

Nominate your candidate for Kyiv Post's Top 30 Under 30 award at www.buffly/3105019.

TOP 10 KYIV POST exclusives online this week

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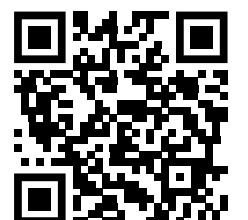
1. Ukraine to tighten quarantine measures starting Sept. 23
2. Ryanair wants to expand 'aggressively' in Ukraine, become major investor in country
3. 'Response will be strong,' Zelensky vows after assassination attempt on Shefir
4. Ukraine extends adaptive quarantine until Dec. 31
5. COVID-19 in Ukraine: 6,624 new cases, 99 new deaths, 122,906 new vaccinations
6. Editorial: Is Zelensky finished?
7. Sergii Leshchenko: Oligarchs cling to power at YES conference
8. Latexfauna, the sexy indie pop band with big heart
9. COVID-19 in Ukraine: 5,744 new cases, 101 new deaths, 118,786 new vaccinations
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Ukraine's democratic votes contrast with Russia's fixed elections

By Oleg Sukhov
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For all its flaws, Ukraine has been a vibrant democracy with relatively fair elections since 1991, in glaring contrast to the Kremlin's dictatorship next door.

Russia continues to regress into a deeper kleptocracy where elections are sham rituals. While Ukraine has had six presidents in 30 years, only one of whom (Leonid Kuchma) won reelection for a second term, Russian President Vladimir Putin has remained in power for more than two decades by jailing opponents, banning opposition candidates and, many suspect, assassinating leading critics who threaten his regime.

The Russian parliamentary elections held on Sept. 17–19 were the latest example. They saw possibly the most widespread use of voting fraud in the history of the Russian Federation since 1991.

Putin's United Russia party officially got 49.9% of the vote. But, in reality, it got only 30%, according to a mathematical analysis of the results by several independent election analysts. If correct, the Kremlin – even after squelching opposition – still needed to steal a whopping 20 percentage points.

If voting fraud is taken into account, this may constitute United Russia's worst result ever as disaffection with the entrenched authorities grows. The party got 38% of the vote in 2003.

Such unabashed vote rigging reflects the Kremlin's growing authoritarianism and signals that its leaders no longer fear public protests. Voters are fearful and reluctant

to protest. Peaceful demonstrators may end up in jail.

"It's a return to the Soviet model," Russian political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin told the Kyiv Post. "It doesn't matter how people vote. It only matters how votes are counted."

The Russian government has denied the accusations of rigging. The parliamentary election is also a rehearsal for the 2024 presidential vote – a key watershed for Putin.

In 2020, Putin held a rigged vote to approve constitutional amendments allowing him to run for two more presidential terms after his current one expires in 2024. The 2024 election will effectively make Putin, who has been in power since becoming prime minister in 1999 under Boris Yeltsin, dictator for life.

Voting fraud

Half of the State Duma, Russia's parliament, is elected according to party list proportional representation and the other half is elected according to majoritarian voting in single-member districts.

The United Russia party received 49.9% of the vote according to party lists, the official results show. The Communist Party of Russia (LDPR) got 7.5%, A Just Russia got 7.4% and the New People got 5.3%.

United Russia also won in 198 out of 225 single-member constituencies, according to the official results.

Even the rigged official results are lower than in the 2016 State Duma election: then United Russia got 54 percent based on party lists and 203 mandates in single-member districts.



Boris Vishnevsky, an opposition candidate running for parliament in St. Petersburg, poses with an election poster featuring nearly identical photos of him and two other candidates. To obstruct Vishnevsky's campaign, the candidates changed their first and last names to Boris Vishnevsky and also altered their appearance to resemble him.

Election watchdogs, including Golos, published numerous reports and videos containing evidence of ballot stuffing and other fraud. They cited many cases where observers were arrested and expelled from polling stations.

In St. Petersburg, the Kremlin also used another fraud scheme against opposition candidate Boris Vishnevsky. Two people changed their first and last names to Boris Vishnevsky and also altered their appearance to resemble him.

The Kremlin also made heavy use of Ukrainian residents of Russian-occupied parts of the Donbas, who had been given Russian passports.

Russian officials said that 150,000 people from occupied Donbas voted. Many of them were bused into Russia's Rostov Oblast, boosting the Kremlin's victory there, while others voted electronically.

Election experts Vladimir Kireev and Sergei Shpilkin published charts showing that, based on mathematical analysis of official data, United Russia would have received 30–33% of the vote if rigging had not taken place.

According to the latest opinion polls, United Russia was expected to get between 26% and 30%.

E-voting in Moscow

According to the official results at regular polling stations, opposition candidates won in a majority of districts in Moscow. However, this victory was reversed in all Moscow districts by results from the recently introduced electronic voting system.

In contrast with the traditional voting system, the results of electronic voting are virtually impossible to verify or recount. Independent observers said they had been prevented from accessing the e-voting results by the Federal Security Service, the successor of the KGB.

Opposition candidate Anastasia Bryukhanova's team on Sept. 22 published a chart of e-voting in Moscow showing an identical doubling of votes for all pro-government candidates on Sept. 19. Since there is no rational explanation of why pro-government voters would simultaneously intensify their voting for completely different candidates in exactly the same way, this clearly constitutes vote rigging, the team argued.

In other regions where e-voting

was used, the discrepancy between pro-Kremlin and opposition candidates was much smaller, which also confirmed the accusations of voting fraud in Moscow. According to the official results, the capital unexplainably handed a unanimous victory to the Kremlin despite being Russia's most opposition-minded region.

A bizarre, one-day delay in the publication of e-voting results also fueled accusations that vote-rigging took place.

Alexei Venediktov, chief editor of radio station Echo of Moscow, dealt a major blow to his reputation by backing the electronic voting results. He was the main propagandist for e-voting in Moscow and headed a group of e-voting observers set up by the city government.

Venediktov, who denied the accusations of fraud in e-voting, has been trying to curry favor with the Kremlin in an apparent effort to keep the station from being shut down by the authorities. The station still hosts some of the most anti-Kremlin speakers.

Election officials have said already that e-voting would be introduced nationwide on a larger scale in future elections, which implies that rigging would be even easier.

Navalny campaign

Putin's most prominent critic, Alexei Navalny, and all of his allies were banned from taking part in the election. All organizations associated with Navalny have been outlawed, and most of his major allies have been either arrested or had to flee Russia.

This came amid a record peak in repression as the Kremlin prepared and held the rigged election. Dozens of opposition activists and politicians were arrested and jailed, and the authorities cracked down on many media outlets, web sites and non-governmental organizations.

Navalny was poisoned in Russia and flown for treatment in Germany in 2020. German doctors said he had been poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent – a chemical weapon produced by the Russian government.

The Insider, Bellingcat, CNN and Der Spiegel published an investigation according to which Navalny had been poisoned by agents of Russia's Federal Security Service.

In January, Navalny returned to

Russia and was immediately jailed by Russian authorities on trumped-up charges.

Deprived of the chance to put forth its own candidates, Navalny's team backed the opposition candidates who they said had the best chance to defeat United Russia as part of its Vote Smart strategy.

The Russian authorities did their best to obstruct the strategy, forcing Google, Apple, Telegram and YouTube to ban apps and web pages linked to smart voting.

However, candidates backed by Navalny's team still won in two districts in St. Petersburg, as well as in some other districts in European Russia and Siberia, according to the official results.

"Navalny's smart voting campaign has become an alternative center of political influence and the second strongest political force," Oreshkin said. "The authorities had to resort to heavy rigging due to smart voting."

Dictator for life

United Russia's election results reflect a drop in its rating. It has plummeted due to an increase in the retirement age, the authorities' lackluster handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the population being tired of an administration that has been in power for two decades, according to Oreshkin.

Despite Putin's sagging legitimacy, he will probably rule for the rest of his life since revolutions or coups are unlikely under such a brutal dictatorial regime, Oreshkin believes.

Putin also appears to have learned from Belarusian dictator Alexander Lukashenko, who has so far suffered no consequences for heavily rigging the 2020 presidential election. The voting fraud triggered the largest protests in the history of Belarus but they were brutally repressed, with thousands being arrested and jailed.

Chechen despot Ramzan Kadyrov, who tolerates no dissent in the North Caucasian republic of Chechnya, has also served as a role model for Putin's increasingly dictatorial rule. Oreshkin called this phenomenon the "chechenization" or "lukashenization" of Russia.

"For now, this system is being preserved but eventually such inefficient systems collapse, like those of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union," Oreshkin said. ☺

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Bastet Holding Ltd
(In Voluntary Liquidation)
Company No. (1790277)

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 204, subsection (1) (b) of the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 that the Company is in voluntary liquidation. The voluntary liquidation commenced on 21st September, 2021. The Liquidator is Mr. Michel Andrew Brutus of P.O. Box 1136, Foret Noire, Mahe, Seychelles.

Dated 21st September, 2021
(Sgd.) Mr. Michel Andrew Brutus
Voluntary Liquidator

Kyiv Post

The Kyiv Post is seeking the public's help in recovering its **lost archives**.

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Please contact: news@kyivpost.com if you can help or Kyiv Post chief editor Brian Bonner at bonner@kyivpost.com



USAID Furthering Health System Reforms in Ukraine

Position Background:

Chemonics seeks multiple technical advisors for the anticipated USAID-funded Furthering Health System Reforms in Ukraine (FHSR) activity. The primary purpose of this project is to support the ongoing efforts of the Government of Ukraine and its civil society partners to achieve a transparent, accountable, and effective health care system that is capable of meeting the health needs of the Ukrainian people. We are looking for individuals who have a passion for helping people lead healthy lives around the world.

Chemonics International seeks applications for the following positions:

- Pharmaceutical Policy and Governance Advisor
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- Human Resources for Health Advisor
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- eHealth/Health Management Information Systems Advisor
- Private Sector Engagement for Health Advisor

Responsibilities include:

- Advanced degree in health policy, health financing, health economics, public health systems, or a related subject area preferred
- At least 8 years of work experience in or around the public health sector
- Minimum of 3 years of experience working on donor-funded projects; experience with USAID preferred
- Significant experience in key areas listed above with proven ability to achieve program target
- Strong ability and desire to work collaboratively with the government of Ukraine, international donors and local partners
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Fluency in Ukrainian and/or Russian required
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Application instructions:

To apply, submit your application and CV via this link https://ghdrecruit.formstack.com/forms/multiple_technical_advisors_usaid_ukraine_furthering_health_system_reforms by October 15, 2021. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted. The protection of your personal data is important to Chemonics. If you are located in the EU, please read our EU Recruiting Data Privacy Notice to learn how we process your personal data. Candidates will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled. No telephone inquiries, please. Finalists will be contacted.

For more detailed information please visit: <https://www.kyivpost.com/classifieds/jobs/usaid-furthering-health-system-reforms-in-ukraine>

CLASSIFIEDS

Fondant Ltd
Company No. 1431538
(the "Company")
(in voluntary liquidation)

NOTICE is hereby given, in accordance with the BVI Business Companies Act, 2004 that the above named company, is in voluntary liquidation. The voluntary liquidation commenced on 10/09/2021 and Eldon Solomon of Palm Grove House, P.O. Box 438, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands is the voluntary liquidator.

[Відповідно до Закону про комерційні компанії Британських Віргінських островів 2004 року ПОВІДОМЛЯЄМО про те, що вищевказана компанія знаходиться в процесі добровільної ліквідації. Добровільна ліквідація почалася 10/09/2021 і Елдон Соломон з Палм Гров Хауз, поштова скринька 438, Род-Таун, Тортולה, Британські Віргінські острови, є добровільним ліквідатором.]

Dated: 10/09/2021
(Sgd) Eldon Solomon
Voluntary Liquidator

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TEXT FOR 176 UAH

Contract title:
SUPPLY OF VISIBILITY ITEMS
Publication reference:
2021/S 181-467523 (EUAM-21-31)

EUAM Ukraine intends to award a contract for Supply of Visibility Items. The Contract Notice for tender is published on the Official Journal of the EU: <https://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:467523-2021:TEXT:EN:HTML>

The tender dossier is available from the website of EUAM Ukraine:
<https://www.euam-ukraine.eu/our-mission/tenders/>

The deadline for receipt of tenders is **25 October 2021 at 16:00 Kyiv time**. Possible additional information or clarifications/questions shall be published on the website of EUAM Ukraine:
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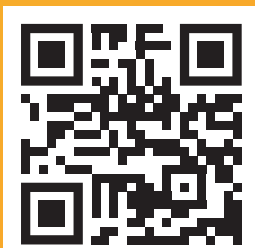
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