



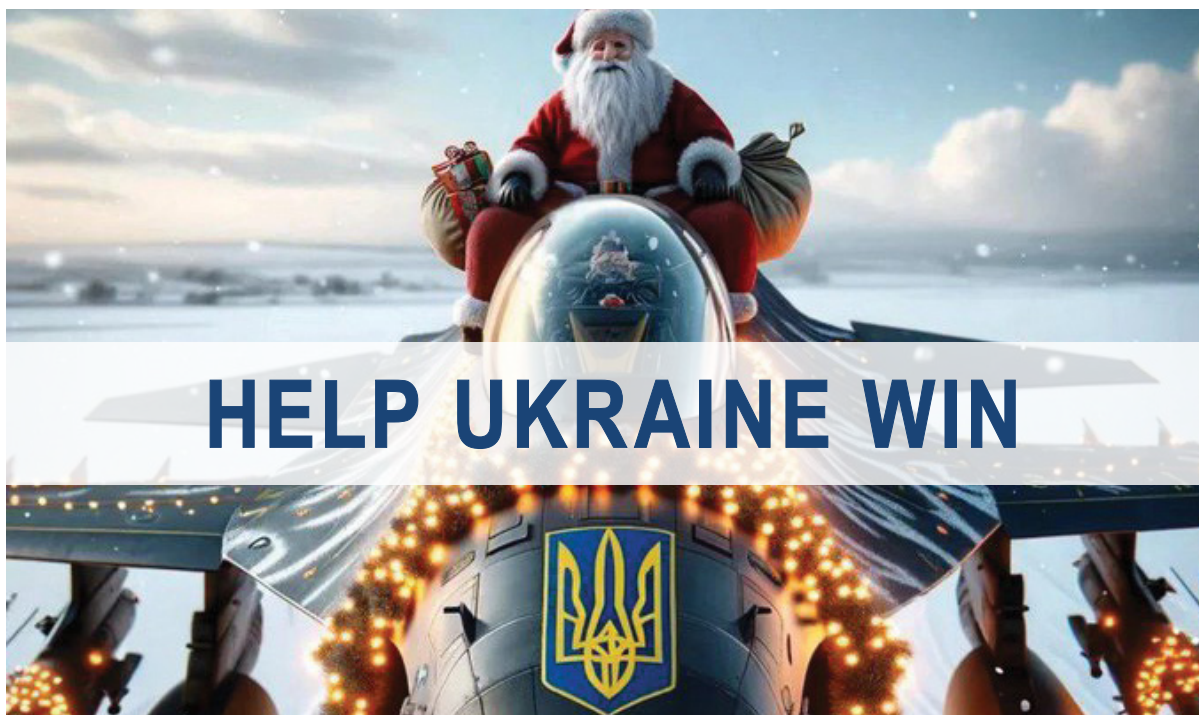
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HROMADA'S 2023 DONORS & CHRISTMAS DISTRIBUTION REPORT

Dear friends!

We express our sincere gratitude to all of you who participated in the annual charitable Christmas campaign of Hromada for gifts for the orphans of our fallen Heroes!

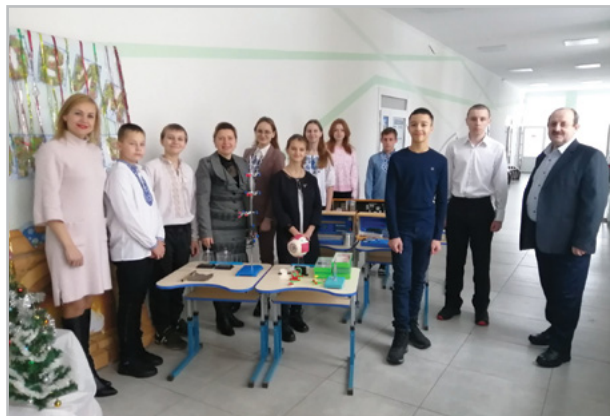
With our joint efforts, we were able

to provide financial assistance to 457 orphans, provide Christmas gifts to 650, and purchase school equipment and woodcarving equipment for 153. We also financed a course of medical rehabilitation for 13 children. It is also planned to purchase embroidery ma-

chines in the city of Lutsk.

A total of **\$52,000** worth of assistance was provided to **1,260** children. In times of war, this is extremely valuable and important support.

Volunteer **Lyudmyla Kravtsova**, support for kids - **\$25,500** (Christmas



gifts for 457 children);

Khmelnyskyi, **Charitable Fund "PODYKH NADIYI NATSIYI"**, Christmas gifts for 500 orphans of fallen Ukrainian Heroes – **\$3,000**;

Sumy, **Nonprofit Organization "Kindness Without Borders"**, children rehabilitation – **\$3,000** (13 children / 7-month rehabilitation);

Sumy, **Nonprofit Organization "Kindness Without Borders"**, equipment for school Boromlya village – **\$5,000**;

Charitable Organization "Maydan Hidnosti", school equipment for village Grushka, Ivano-Frankivsk region – **\$3,000** (90 children);

Stryi, **Ngo Constellation Korostiv**, equipment – **\$3,500**.

Planned for January 2024:

Lutsk – **\$4,000** – equipment (Embroidery machines) for children's education course;

Ivano-Frankivsk – **\$5,000** Christmas gifts for 150 children.

We are sincerely grateful to our volunteers in Ukraine, namely **Maria Medyukh, Lyudmyla Kravtsova, Ruslan Telipskyi** and **Ihor Kuzyshyn** for their volunteer work and dedication to a good cause.

We are grateful to everyone who participated and especially grateful to

the generous donors whose names are listed below! Without your support, we would not have been able to fulfill many of the children's dreams and surprises!

Every donation is an extremely important support in times of war. Hundreds of donors, too numerous to mention here, show the importance of contributions from \$5, \$20 to \$50 and \$100.

Stay with us in 2024, let's do good together!

Thank you donors!

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SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Vitaliy Portnykov | Notes for December

SUCH A TOUGH YEAR



The year 2023 ends with the realization that Russia's war with Ukraine is turning into a long-term war of attrition, and at the same time with the decision to begin negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the European Union. This, in fact, defines our "sweet and sour" time – when such different events are happening simultaneously. Could we have thought until recently that the issue of Ukraine's accession to the European Union would be resolved during a grueling war?

A recent article in *The Economist* by the commander of the armed forces, General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, and an article in *Time* magazine dedicated to President Volodymyr Zelenskyi have unexpectedly become a kind of Rubicon in Ukrainian society's perception of the war. If until recently it could be argued that a large number of citizens believed that a quick end to hostilities was realistic, now it can be said that more and more people are thinking about the prospect of a long war, a war of attrition.

This war fits into the plans of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Russian leader seems confident that what he could not achieve in three days can be achieved in three years. Or in 13, because the Russian economy is rapidly being put on a war footing, and the population approves of Putin's goals of restoring the so-called "historic Russia".

The main question, of course, is what Ukraine and its allies should do in such a situation. General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi has proposed a plan to turn a positional war into a maneuver war, but this requires adequate logistics and new weapons from Western allies. Only time will tell to what extent the West will be willing to listen to these requests. But for now, we can identify a certain crisis in the aid process. The U.S. Congress has not yet approved

the package of aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan proposed by the president; consultations between Republican and Democratic congressmen are ongoing, and it is not yet possible to say what compromise they will be able to reach and when the vote will take place next year. And the capabilities of the Ukrainian army and the viability of the Ukrainian economy and state as a whole will depend on the amount of American aid.

And there are difficulties from the point of view of European partners. Ukraine has unexpectedly faced a blockade of its borders by Polish airlines, allegedly unhappy with competition from their Ukrainian counterparts. This protest, which is not so numerous, has already had an impact on the Ukrainian economy. At the same time, the Polish government, which lost power in December to the opposition forces that won the recent parliamentary elections in Ukraine's neighboring country, was in no hurry to solve the problem – the history of the farmers' protest, which was used by the Polish authorities for electoral purposes, was repeated. If earlier such actions raised legitimate concerns about how Ukraine's European integration process would proceed in the future, now we can talk about problems that are already occurring today.

And this once again reminds us of the difficult situation in which Ukraine finds itself in the 22nd month after Russia's massive attack. This situation was, of course, foreseeable, and a few months after the conflict began, observers noted that as the war continued, external interest would diminish with each passing day, and new conflicts would inevitably emerge, which, unfortunately, would attract the attention of the civilized world. And the war in the Middle East, which – very unusually for this region – is not short but lasts for months, has become a good illustration of the truth of this thesis.

This means that the Ukrainian state and our allies must prepare not only for the continuation of a long, exhausting war, but also for the fact that Ukraine will not be in the center of attention. And that means finding both military solutions in conditions of relative stability on the front lines and non-standard political solutions. By

political solutions, I mean not so much waiting for some kind of "negotiations" – I am sure that the Kremlin does not need negotiations with Ukraine at all – but searching for security models that could localize the war and create conditions for its end in the foreseeable future. This means accelerating Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration and creating conditions for real – not declarative – security guarantees. One of the options was proposed by former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who suggested that Ukraine be admitted to NATO as soon as possible, but that Article 5 of the Washington Treaty be extended to the territory where no military action is taking place. Although we cannot say that Kyiv, Washington and the capitals of other NATO countries agree with the former Secretary General's proposal, the most important thing is that the search for integration options continues.

So is the search for options for integration into the EU. Moldovan President Maia Sandu, who may be offered to start negotiations on joining the EU along with Ukraine, suggested that integration should take place "in stages," meaning first the territory under the control of the legitimate authorities, and then the region actually controlled by Moscow, Transnistria. And if we agree with this approach, it may be relevant for Ukraine and later for Georgia. After all, the question remains whether the integration process will be successful if Russia continues to control parts of the territory in Ukraine, Moldova or Georgia.

Meanwhile, we will have to answer this question, and many others related to Russia's war against Ukraine, next year. Is Ukraine – and our Western allies – ready for a protracted war? Do we have the potential to do so – mobilization, economic, political? Is it possible to influence the moods of the countries of the "global south" that continue economic cooperation with Russia and thus give Vladimir Putin the opportunity to count on further militarization of the Russian economy? And if we understand that there is no real way out of the war and that the negotiation process does not seem possible, how should we act in this situation?

Much will depend on the common



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position of Ukraine and its neighbors. After all, the continuation of the war will affect the situation in Central Europe more seriously than in the West or South of the continent. Moreover, we understand that Russia is interested not only in exerting military pressure in the post-Soviet space, but also in destabilizing the situation in Central European countries, and even more so in using their public sentiment to its advantage. And the role played by the Hungarian government and now the new Slovak government in blocking the decisions of the European Union all these months is a good proof that Russia is already here.

The way out of an impasse is always a triumph of common sense and joint efforts. We will be able to find a recipe, if not to stop the war, then to localize it, and we will get out of the scenario imposed on Ukraine and the West by Russian President Vladimir Putin. This will mean the political defeat of Russia and its inability to retaliate and seize new Ukrainian territories.



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SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Oles Doniy

RESULTS OF 2023. WE SURVIVED.



The year 2022 marked the beginning of the full-scale aggression of fascist Russia against our homeland, but the year ended with great optimism. Russian troops were forced to flee in disgrace from the previously occupied territories of Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions, and soon after, as a result of successful lightning operations, Kharkiv and the right bank of Kherson region were liberated, including Kherson itself, the only regional center occupied by the invaders. Ukrainians welcomed the New Year, 2023, in anticipation of their own offensive, which had been repeatedly announced by the authorities. A cup of coffee on the waterfront in liberated Yalta in Ukrainian Crimea seemed to many not a metaphor but a real prospect. Many believed in a return to the 1991 borders within 2023.

In fact, the past year has revealed other realities, so it is important to a) remain optimistic and leave no room for despair or discouragement, and b) analyze available resources, geopolitical changes, and the state of the enemy's forces, all with the aim of improving one's position, finding optimal solutions, and ultimately achieving the long-awaited victory. In school, this method was called "working on mistakes," i.e., correcting one's performance in order to get better grades. The price of our grades is the very existence of Ukraine.

The first grade that should be given, and this is the most important grade, is the best grade for our armed forces for the fact that fascist Russia did not realize its plans. One of Putin's talking heads, former formal president of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, continues to assert that the war will continue and that "Odesa, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Kyiv are Russian cities, like many others temporarily occupied". However, in the

whole year of 2023, the entire Russian armada did not occupy any of these cities.

The front line in 2023 was virtually static. In Ukraine, this fact is seen by many as a failure. But in fact it should be considered a Ukrainian success. During all this time, the fascist Russian occupiers managed to occupy the territories of only two small towns in the Donetsk region – Soledar and Bakhmut, which is about the same size as the territories liberated by our troops in the south of the country. The army occupying Bakhmut, the Prigozhin-Utkin gang, eventually revolted against the Kremlin, which ended with the execution of the two leaders of the "private military company" disguised as an airplane explosion and the actual disbandment of this fairly combat-ready unit.

If you count all the resources of fascist Russia, they are many times greater than Ukrainian resources: It is the demographic potential (140 million Russians vs. 30 million Ukrainians), the decommissioning of Soviet armored vehicles, the presence in Russia of a large number of factories producing military equipment, the availability of infrastructure undamaged by constant bombardment, and, finally, the supply of weapons from Iran and the DPRK (and probably other Asian states under the name of the DPRK). If we objectively calculate the amount of military equipment provided to us by our Western allies, it is several times less than the resources available to Russia in similar areas. The Western financial aid to Ukraine also pales in comparison to the "petrodollars" that fill the criminal Russian military budget despite the sanctions. Therefore, the decadent sentiments that occasionally infiltrate Ukrainian society and are systematically fueled by Russian propaganda should be clearly rejected as destructive and contrary to the real assessment of the situation. And the real assessment is that Ukraine performed a miracle in 2022 by tearing to shreds all Russian plans to "occupy Kyiv in three days," and continued to perform a miracle in 2023 by stabilizing the front line and preventing the aggressor from capturing the Ukrainian cities he coveted (which Dmitry Medvedev lists like a madman).

We survived. We survived another year. And that is a Ukrainian success. I have repeatedly emphasized in my articles and speeches that, unfortunately, the war may last at least until Putin's death. Accordingly, we must be able to endure this entire period. The weighted average scenario based on the biological and mathematical approach is 15 years, so we should learn to calculate our resources for such a long period. Not for "2-3 weeks", "2-3 months" or "until the end of the year", but for such a period of time.

That means we need to develop strategic thinking. And here, of course, there is something to work on. After all, if the war will last "2-3 months" or "until the end of the year," then the Ukrainian government did everything right: it convinced the international community of the need to provide Ukraine with weapons and money. In the end, the government fulfilled this function. But if the war continues for another 15 years, it is important to realize that we cannot become critically dependent on our allies for supplies. The geopolitical situation may change. Western democracies are electoral dependent countries, and the mood of the electorate is changeable and influenced by many factors. The example of Slovakia, which helped Ukraine so much in 2022, and where forces unfavorable to our country came to power in 2023, should be sobering. If the war lasts for 15 years, then efforts should be directed at restoring and strengthening our own military-industrial complex. While in 2022 Ukrainian troops outnumbered Russian troops with the use of drones, in 2023 the situation changed in the opposite direction. Volunteers and philanthropists cannot take over the function of supplying drones to the army, this function must be provided by the state, and therefore, if this function is not fulfilled, then the correction should be planned immediately. Plan and implement. Similarly, the analysis of the supply of human resources to the army and the functioning of the labor force (without which the economy cannot function) should be approached from a strategic point of view. In reality, the motivational approach is increasingly being replaced by a repressive one, which denies the very essence of the dem-



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ocratic nature of the Ukrainian state. Even the initial mistaken decision to close the borders to the free movement of men did not strengthen the mobilization resource, but instead hit both the very idea of democracy and the economy. Now the state is heading for an even greater retreat from democracy. The cancellation of the elections to the Verkhovna Rada and the presidency, which were to be held in 2023 and 2024, respectively, will raise the question of the legitimacy of the Ukrainian government in the eyes of both Ukrainians and our Western allies from March 2024.

Of course, it is possible to find optimal solutions to all important questions. How to legitimize the government, that is, to introduce changes in the electoral law and not to cancel the elections. And how to organize a global recruitment system to increase the number of Ukrainian soldiers. And how to start mass domestic production of



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weapons. All these are solvable problems, though extremely difficult, and require systematic investment of time, money and, above all, intelligence. But in "working on mistakes" we must honestly admit that in 2023 there were shortcomings in some of these issues,

some failures, and in 2024 we must begin to correct them. So that we don't have to list the same problems in the annual analysis a year from now. Ultimately, we must put intelligence at the forefront of achieving victory.

Because Ukraine needs victory!

SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Katerina Manoff | Ukrainian Roots, American Branches

AUGUST 25, 2023



This is a story I wanted to tell to the entire world, but couldn't put into words until now.

In the first weeks of the war, when my nonprofit's operations ground to a halt, I volunteered with the Ukrainian Air Force, helping with media communications. The pilots and their commanders had a crucial message to share – Ukraine's capacity to fight back against the Russian invaders depended on the ability to fend them off in the air. Air cover was essential to protect our civilians and troops, and without Western aid, Ukraine had no hope.

As our volunteer team worked to field media requests and put out statements, we struggled with the fact that neither the commander of the Air Force nor their official spokesperson could speak English well. It felt ironic – for almost two years, my nonprofit had been working to make English fluency the norm in Ukraine and facing near-universal indifference from those with the power to help. They felt there were bigger problems and English wasn't important – until it was.

The other volunteers and I asked for English-speaking pilots to interview. The answer was bleak: ***We don't have many English-speaking pilots, and most of them are already dead.***

Then, one day, the message popped up in our encrypted chat thread: We've found you someone; he's perfect. His name was Andrii and he went by the call sign Juice. He had trained in California as part of a partnership between the Ukrainian Air Force and the US National Guard. He was smart, passionate, and empathetic. He was a force of nature.

I'd never met a hero before, but from my first call with Andrii, it was clear that he wasn't like you and me. It

sounds trite, but it's true.

We generally communicated in group calls and chats, where it was all business. One day, Andrii called me directly to walk me through some fighter jet terminology. He taught me about the differences between MiG-29s and F-16s, between "fire-and-forget" missiles with radar systems and semi-active missiles. He made it all sound very clear and simple.

We went off script a bit and he told me about playing a military computer game as a teenager. In the game, Russia invaded Georgia and then took Crimea, and he thought, ***"This will actually happen"***, and with his mom's help tried to sound the alarm. Of course, no one took him seriously.

Andrii studied to become a fighter pilot. He rose through the ranks. He kept trying to urge the military into action to fight corruption and inefficiencies left over from Soviet times, to prepare for the all-out war that he felt sure would come. At one time, he opted out, resigning in protest. But when Russia invaded, he immediately returned to fight.

You may have heard of Andrii by another name: the Ghost of Kyiv. He was the man behind the myth. His greatest impact was not in the skies (though he achieved so much there), but on the informational battlefield. The interviews and TV spots our team arranged, and Andrii's later visit to Washington DC, played an important role in helping Ukraine secure essential air defense. Starting in March 2022, we pleaded together for NASAMs, Patriots, fighter jets. We were told it was impossible. But we told our story again and again, and made the impossible possible.

As time went on, the air force media team found more experienced and professional support. My nonprofit reopened, and I shifted off the volunteer project. I'd still read Andrii's messages in the group chat – incisive, funny, frustrated, irreverent. I smiled when he popped up in the news.

I thought of Andrii every time one of our "impossible" requests was granted – alas, always too slowly, always too many months after it was needed, but still, every time a small victory. NASAMs, Patriots, fighter jets.

On the morning of August 26, 2023, I was getting ready for the day. My husband was checking his phone next to me. He gasped.

I said, "Tell me."

He said, "That pilot you worked with, wasn't his name Juice?"

I think you understand the rest.

Andrii died a stupid and needless death while waiting for his opportunity to fly an F-16. He was slated to be one of the first pilots to start training on the planes.

I know my story of loss is almost banal in an ocean of such stories. But this story is about more than loss. Because the most incredible thing about Andrii is that he clearly saw the imperfections and challenges in the Ukrainian military before the full-scale invasion. ***He knew that it was flawed and he gave his life for it anyway.***

I sometimes wonder if Andrii would still be alive if the air force command was more responsive to his reform efforts or if a professional, English-speaking communications department existed before the war. And if that wouldn't have made the difference, what would have?

But it's easy to get lost in counterfactuals. Andrii did not. He was faced with an imperfect situation, and he made the brave choices, though he knew he would likely die.

Doing good is often imperfect. No matter where we live or what problems we are passionate about solving, we are faced with systemic injustice, broken political structures, corporate bureaucracies, infighting, and incompetence.

For me personally, my battlefield is the nonprofit sector. Before I started a nonprofit, I imagined this sector to be a warm and fuzzy place of do-gooders united by a desire to help others. But, much like Ukraine's Air Force, the nonprofit world can be bureaucratic, nonsensical and extremely challenging to navigate. It can be so tempting to just throw up our hands and say, ***Fine! Forget it! We'll just stop trying.***

But Andrii saw the flaws and did it anyway, because he knew it had to be done. And every day, his memory inspires me to do the same.

ДЛЯ ДІТЕЙ

Сніжинки

Микола Вороний



Білесенькі сніжиночки,
Вродились ми з води;
Легенькі, як пушиночки,
Спустилися сюди.

Ми хмарою носилися
Від подиху зими,
І весело крутилися
Метелицею ми.

Тепер ми хочем
спатоньки,
Як дітоньки малі.
І липнемо до матінки –
До любої землі.

Матуся наша рідная
Холодна і суха,
Бо дуже змерзла,
бідная,
Вона без кожуха.

Отож її нагріємо,
Устелимо сніжком.
Мов ковдрою,
накриємо
Легесеньким пушком.

Нехай зимою злючою
Вона спочине в сні,
Щоб зеленню пахучою
Прибратись навесні.

Щоб з ниви колосистої
Був добрий урожай, –
То й долі променистої
Зазнає рідний край!

* * *



UKRAINIAN NEWS

Total enemy combat losses



According to the General Staff, total enemy combat losses from February 24, 2022 to December 31, 2023 are approximately as follows:

personnel – about 359,230 individuals were eliminated,
tanks – 5,977 units,
armored personnel carriers – 11,070 units,
artillery systems – 8,464 units,
MLRS – 943 units,
air defense systems – 623 units,
aircraft – 329 units,
helicopters – 324 units,
operational and tactical level UAVs – 6,591 units,
cruise missiles – 1,709 units,
warships and boats – 23 units,
submarines – 1 unit,
motor vehicles and tankers – 11,292 units,
special equipment – 1,268 units.

US announces final \$250 million military aid package for Ukraine



On December 27, the United States of America provided Ukraine with a

\$250 million military aid package. It is the last of the funds approved by Congress this year.

The new aid package includes additional air defense equipment, artillery ammunition, anti-tank weapons, and other equipment to help Ukraine counter Russian aggression.

The United States is also providing Ukraine with additional missiles for NASAMS air defense systems, Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, and other air defense system components. The package also includes TOW, Javelin, and AT-4 anti-tank systems.

Military aid for Ukraine



The U.S. government also provided a military aid package to the Ukrainian armed forces.

The package included \$175 million worth of weapons.

Ukraine received missiles for air defense systems, additional ammunition for HIMARS, artillery ammunition, high-speed anti-radiation missiles, small arms ammunition, obstacle clearance equipment, and critical facilities protection equipment.

The package also included the provision of spare parts, support equipment and vehicles.

On Tuesday, December 12, the United States provided an additional \$200 million in assistance to Ukraine.

On December 2, **Germany** delivered new aid to Ukraine, including vehicles, artillery shells, and anti-drone systems.

According to the updated list, the armed forces will receive vehicles, drone detection systems, and artillery ammunition. In total, the new military package includes:

- four 8x8 HX81 tractors with semi-trailers
- three vehicles (trucks, vans, off-road vehicles)
- Two border guard vehicles
- Five drone detection systems;
- One mobile antenna and mast system;

- 3,840 artillery rounds;
- 25 laser rangefinders;
- 15 HLR 338 sniper rifles and 60 thousand rounds of ammunition.

Germany will provide Ukraine with new military aid – Government, December 8.

- The aid package will include:
- 1,750 155 mm.
 - LUNA NG reconnaissance drones.
 - 10 VECTOR reconnaissance drones.
 - 70 MGW automatic grenade launchers.
 - 6 Patrol Vehicles.
 - 8 Zetros trucks.
 - 100,000 first aid kits.

On December 14, German authorities delivered a new batch of military aid to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The package included a Patriot air defense system and its missiles. In addition to the Patriot, the Ukrainian military also received nine Bandvagn 206 tracked all-terrain vehicles, more than 7,000 rounds of 155mm and 40mm ammunition, and 14 drone detection systems.

Germany also received eight Mercedes-Benz trucks and eight Zetros tractors, as well as four trailers for 8x8 HX81 tractors.

The United Kingdom will send two Sandown-class minesweepers to Ukraine. They will be transferred from the UK Royal Navy.

This was announced by the press service of the Ministry of Defense on December 11.

According to the statement, two Sandown mine countermeasures vessels (MCMVs) will be transferred to the Ukrainian Armed Forces to enhance Ukraine's ability to operate at sea.

"Strengthening the maritime capabilities of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including countering the threat of Russian naval mines, will help restore Ukraine's maritime exports," Defense Secretary Grant Shapps said.

The Ukrainian Armed Forces also received new Martlet multi-purpose guided missiles from the United Kingdom.

The Estonian government has approved a new military assistance package for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. It will include weapons worth 80 million euros.

Ukraine will receive a "large number" of anti-tank missiles for Javelin systems, as well as machine guns, ammunition for light weapons, various vehicles and ships, and diving equipment.

On December 16, the Ukrainian

Armed Forces received several million rounds of ammunition and several thousand shells for portable short-range anti-tank grenade launchers from **Lithuania**.

Also, Lithuania also handed over about a thousand folding beds to Ukraine.

It is worth adding that the country is actively training Ukrainian military personnel, providing medical treatment and rehabilitation, expert advice, and allocating funds to international funds for Ukraine.

On December 20, the Government of Lithuania provided the Armed Forces of Ukraine with a new military aid package. The Armed Forces received field equipment and tens of thousands of dry food rations.

Ukraine received a batch of Krab self-propelled howitzers from **Poland**. The weapons were transferred from the warehouses of the Polish Army. Specifically, Poland handed over 18 units of Krab howitzers to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Another 56 units will be delivered in the future. The timing of the transfer of this batch has not been specified.

Polish authorities have also transferred PT-91, T-72, Leopard 2 tanks and MiG-29 aircraft to Ukraine. In addition, deliveries of Rak self-propelled mortar systems and 100 Rosomak infantry fighting vehicles are expected.

The Dutch government has delivered a batch of Role 2 modular medical support systems to the Ukrainian border guards.

The Ukrainian side received three mobile hospitals of this type. The complexes are designed for 36 hospital beds and are adapted for use in the cold season.

In addition, the Netherlands provided Ukraine with 6 Toyota Land Cruiser vehicles modified for medical evacuation.

Norway will provide the Ukrainian Armed Forces with an additional batch of NASAMS air defense systems.

The total cost of the assistance package is 335 million kroner (about \$30 million).

At a meeting on Thursday, December 7, the Defense Committee of the **Bulgarian** Parliament supported the provision of portable air defense systems (MANPADS) and systems (MANPADS) and anti-aircraft missiles of various types.

Bulgaria will provide Ukraine with unusable, obsolete or surplus man-portable air defense systems and anti-aircraft missiles free of charge.

The Logistics Department of the Ministry of Defense has a list of defective equipment, but it is necessary to assess how much of it can be given away. The missiles in question are Soviet S-300s of the 5V55R(K) variant.

The South Korean government has delivered a consignment of specialized demining equipment to the Ukrainian Emergencies Ministry.

The humanitarian aid package consists of 10 demining machines manufactured by the Croatian company DOK-ING.

It is noted that the equipment is already in Ukraine. In the near future, the machines will be distributed among the SES units involved in humanitarian demining of the de-occupied territory of Ukraine.

The Argentine government intends to transfer two Russian MI-17E transport helicopters to Ukraine.

This agreement was reached during the visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Buenos Aires to participate in the inauguration of the newly elected President of Argentina Javier Milea on December 10.

It is known that one of these helicopters has been out of service for two years due to problems with the supply of parts from sanctioned Russia.

The United States offered to transfer the helicopters to Ukraine, but the previous Argentine government refused.

Financial aid for Ukraine



Ukraine has received the third tranche of approximately \$900 million from the **International Monetary Fund**. The tranche came under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program.

Minister Sergiy Marchenko noted that the IMF assistance will help finance priority state budget expenditures in a timely manner and ensure macroeconomic stability under martial law.

In total, Ukraine has so far received about \$4.5 billion of the \$15.6 billion provided under the program.

The World Bank is providing an additional \$1.34 billion to Ukraine, which will be used to pay pensions, teachers' salaries, assistance to internally displaced persons, and other priority budget expenditures.

The bulk of this financing package – \$1.086 billion – comes from the Government of Japan. Grants have also been provided by the United States, Switzerland and the Ukraine Recovery, Transition and Reform Fund (URTF).

The United Kingdom announced that it would provide 37 million pounds (43 million euros) in financial assistance to Ukraine.

According to the UK government, Ukraine will receive a winter humanitarian aid package of £29 million (€34 million) and an additional £7.75 million (€9 million) to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

Germany will provide additional funding for grenades to Ukraine.

German authorities have approved a framework agreement with a French company to produce an additional batch of ammunition for Ukraine.

Under the agreement, Ukraine will receive 68,000 155-mm high-explosive shells. The terms of the delivery have not yet been disclosed.

However, it is known that the total cost of the batch will be 278 million euros.

The Danish government is preparing to provide Ukraine with a new financial aid package worth 1 billion euros.

The relevant statement was made by Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. She stressed that the government will soon present its plan to the country's parliament.

At the same time, Frederiksen did not specify which initiatives – military, financial or humanitarian – would be financed.

The Swedish government will provide Ukraine with a winter humanitarian aid package worth SEK 1.4 billion (about EUR 124 million).

The funds will be used to support the population of Ukraine against the backdrop of winter attacks by Russia. The bulk of the money, SEK 900 million (EUR 80 million), will be spent on energy, housing, health and transport.

A further 500 million kroner (almost 54 million euros) will be used to purchase heating equipment and repair Ukraine's power grids.

Norway will provide Ukraine with additional financial and humanitarian assistance totaling \$800 million.

This was announced by Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre at a joint press conference with Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Oslo on Wednesday, December 13. According to Støre, the money will be used to pay the salaries of nurses, doctors, teachers and other employees, as well as for various social projects. This will bring Norway's aid to Ukraine to \$1.8 billion by the end of the year.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that Tokyo is ready to provide additional funds to support Ukraine, namely \$4.5 billion.

This was reported by Kyodo News, citing the words of the Japanese Prime Minister.

As noted, Kishida, who presides over the G7 this year, said at the summit of the Group of Seven leaders that Tokyo is ready to allocate an additional \$4.5 billion to support efforts to restore war-torn Ukraine.

EU adopts 12th package of sanctions against Russia



On Monday, December 18, the EU Council approved the 12th package of sanctions against Russia.

The document provides, among other things, for a ban on imports of natural and synthetic diamonds, and even jewelry with diamonds processed or produced in Russia. The ban will come into effect on January 1, 2024.

The United States and the Group of Seven (G7) countries have also joined the ban.

In addition, the EU has required European companies to include in their contracts a ban on the re-export to, and transit through, Russia of certain technologies and dual-use goods. The provision applies to goods used in Russia's military industry as well as items found on the battlefield in Ukraine.

The EU has also imposed additional restrictions on imports from Russia of cast iron, copper wire, foil, pipes and

banned imports of liquefied propane.

It is noted that the document also establishes a mechanism for strengthening control over the oil price ceiling – in the event of a sale of tankers to any third country, the company must notify officials in Brussels.

It should be added that the US House of Representatives has approved a bill to ban the import of low-enriched uranium of Russian origin, which will be in effect until 2040.

It should be noted that the necessary majority of congressmen voted in favor of the bill banning the import of Russian uranium.

The bill provides for a ban on imports of low-enriched uranium produced in Russia into the United States 90 days after its enactment.

Assistance from the EU



In December, Ukraine will receive the last €1.5 billion of macro-financial assistance from the European Union in 2023.

"In the coming days, we will disburse the last €1.5 billion for Ukraine this year, which was agreed as part of the so-called macro-financial assistance package for 2023. This will be disbursed in the next few days – 1.5 billion euros," said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

According to her, this tranche will help finance Ukraine's needs in early 2024. It is also important to build a small but important bridge (to new financing – ed.), she added.

The decision in principle on EUR 50 billion for Ukraine was reached at the EU summit, and now Kyiv expects all procedures to be completed in January.

As a reminder, the European Commission has proposed to allocate 50 billion euros to Ukraine over the next five years.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine also welcomes the Summit's decision in principle to establish a

50-billion-euro facility for Ukraine for 2024-2027. This is a clear signal that the EU's financial support for Ukraine will continue," the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday, December 15.

The ministry expects that all necessary legal procedures will be completed in January 2024, which will allow the country to receive the corresponding funds as soon as possible.

Ukraine manages to return some of the children abducted by Russia



Ukraine has managed to return eight children abducted by Russia after the beginning of the full-scale war.

This was announced on Wednesday, December 6, by the head of the Presidential Administration, Andriy Yermak, on his Telegram channel.

He said that four girls and four boys, aged between 8 and 18, had returned home.

They will soon be reunited with their families "and will celebrate the holidays in the arms of their loved ones in their homeland".

"We are grateful to the State of Qatar and UNICEF for their involvement in the process of returning deported children and those who ended up in TOT," Yermak stressed.

Also on December 14, five more children were returned from the occupation to Ukrainian-controlled territory in the Kherson region.

This was reported by the head of the military administration of the Kherson region Oleksandr Prokudin on Telegram.

"Five more children were returned from the occupation. Two of them have families. We managed to take them out with their parents. Three others are children from the category of those who found themselves in difficult living conditions. Now all of them are in a safe place and are being provided

with the necessary assistance," the statement said.

Prokudin thanked everyone involved in the children's return.

On Saturday, December 16, it became known that Ukraine had returned three more children from Russia and the temporarily occupied territories.

This was also announced by the head of the presidential administration, Andriy Yermak.

It is known that two children, born in 2008 and 2012, were removed from the temporarily occupied territories. The third child was in Russia and was reunited with his mother in Georgia. All are now at home with their families.

In total, Ukraine has managed to return 387 children abducted by Russia during the occupation.

"So far, Ukraine has managed to return 387 out of almost 20 thousand children abducted by Russia. And each return is not a statistic, but a unique special operation, and an international one at that," Olena Zelenska wrote on Telegram after participating in an event dedicated to the reintegration of deported children.

EU leaders back start of membership talks with Ukraine



At a summit in Brussels on December 14, the leaders of the European Union decided to open negotiations with Ukraine on its accession to the bloc.

This was announced by the President of the European Council Charles Michel on his X account.

He said that negotiations will soon begin with two countries – Ukraine and Moldova.

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy reacted to this decision: "A victory for Ukraine. A victory for

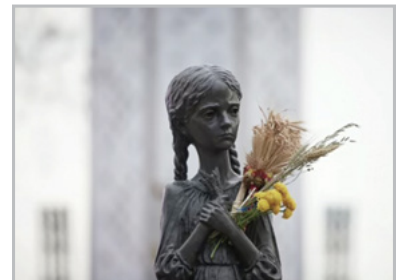
all of Europe. A victory that motivates, inspires and strengthens," Zelenskyy wrote on the social network X.

According to The Guardian, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who had opposed the opening of negotiations, left the room during the vote on Ukraine.

Later, he said that "Hungary does not change its position," adding that all other EU member states insisted on opening talks with Kyiv, and as a result, Hungary decided that the 26 countries "can go their own way while Budapest remains on the sidelines of the decision."

At the Brussels summit, EU leaders will also discuss commitments to Ukraine and ways to provide the country with continued and sustainable support.

Another State in the United States Recognizes the Holodomor as Genocide of the Ukrainian People



The US state of North Carolina has recognized the Holodomor as genocide of the Ukrainian people.

This was reported by the Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States Oksana Markarova on Facebook.

"At the end of the month of remembrance of the victims of the Holodomor genocide in Ukraine, we have news from North Carolina. On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the tragedy, Governor Roy Cooper signed a proclamation declaring November 25 as Holodomor Remembrance Day," she wrote.

HOW UKRAINIAN BUSINESS SURVIVED IN 2023

Anton Shramenko

For the second year in a row, Ukrainians have surprised the world. The ability to survive, adapt and even thrive under the most adverse conditions has been a hallmark of the Ukrainian people since the beginning of full-scale aggression. Ukrainian business has also performed miracles of survival, adaptation and development. Without being in Ukraine, it is difficult to imagine what it is like to work under the conditions in which Ukrainian entrepreneurs and companies operate. Just like watching videos of rocket attacks and bomb shelters, it is difficult to imagine the reality of life in a country at war. But in the language of facts and figures, we will try to convey at least a general picture of the transformation that Ukrainian business is going through to adapt to the extreme conditions of war.

CONDITIONS OF THE UKRAINIAN BUSINESS IN 2023

• Migration and Demographic Crisis

According to a study by the Center for Economic Strategy, 5.6 to 6.7 million Ukrainians remain abroad. The non-return of Ukrainians has a significant impact on the Ukrainian economy, which can lose from 2.7% to 6.9% of GDP annually. Along with people leaving Ukraine, there is an increase in the aging of the population. Of all those who have gone abroad, about 14% are children between the ages of 6 and 14. And the longer the war lasts, the more parents organize the education of their teenage children outside Ukraine. As we understand it, with the aging of the population, the percentage of active users of many goods and services is decreasing.

• Inflation and declining purchasing power

Ukraine's economy is now showing signs of stabilization. The National Bank improved its inflation forecast at the end of the year. It set inflation at 6%. While in 2022, inflation reached almost 27%. That is, in general, in the two years since the beginning of the invasion, inflation has been about 33%. Along with inflation, the prices of all materials, ingredients, supplies, etc. have increased. Utilities and rents ha-



ve also gone up, which is another part of the cost that is particularly noticeable for small and medium-sized businesses.

Ukrainian consumers have also become poorer and are not willing to spend as much as they used to. In the first year of the full-scale invasion, 20% of Ukrainians saved on food. Now it is more than 26% (before the war it was 12%). Only 6% of respondents have enough money for basic and expensive goods. The share of those who have enough money only for food is 24.6% (data from Forbes Ukraine).

• Destruction of Production Facilities and Temporary Loss of Infrastructure in the Occupied Territories

Many companies have lost offices, warehouses, production facilities, retail outlets, etc. Some of these lost facilities will require investment to restore, while others cannot be restored. In particular, many manufacturing facilities remain in the occupied territories. Other facilities are subject to constant airstrikes by the aggressor and there is no guarantee that "it won't come to you".

• Limited productivity due to infrastructure damage and airstrikes

According to Danylo Hetmantsev, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Finance, Tax and Customs Policy, the losses for the Ukrainian economy for a "clean day" of air alert will amount to about UAH 9 billion. Given the nominal growth of GDP, this figure may increase.

• Difficulties with imports to replace lost production capacity

"Imports were very difficult because no one planned and had free capacity, we have quite long lead times to order packaging, to get the product now, you have to plant (raw materials) a year in advance, you have to plan everything. On the other hand, the import model is generally unprofitable": a comment from a representative of an FMCG company.

• Fear of risk limits investment and supply

"There are problems of interaction with partners who trust us, whom we have not disappointed since the beginning of the war, and they are very surprised. We ask them – give us more, give us your new collections. They say, "Oh my God, what new collections, you're at war? I mean, they are afraid of some risks. We are not afraid, they are. There are such changes": a representative of fashion retail.

HOW DID THE BUSINESS SURVIVE? PLANNING APPROACHES

To survive, Ukrainian businesses must adapt very quickly to constantly changing circumstances. 29% of Ukrainian companies have changed their strategy many times since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, and 51% have changed their strategy several times. Currently, Ukrainian companies use 3 main approaches to strategy development:

1. Short-term planning
Planning for six months to one year

with monthly revisions. Urgent revision of the plan is also provided for, depending on the constantly changing situation.

2. Adaptability and flexibility of strategies

Development of several scenarios (including optimistic, pessimistic and "medium" forecasts) and rapid response to events.

3. "Anti-fragility" as autonomy in decision-making and rapid response on the ground

In the event of unforeseen factors, decisions are made as quickly as possible in departments and teams, without coordination with top management.

HOW DID THE BUSINESS SURVIVE? CHANGE OF STRATEGY

After the shocking year of 2022, 2023 can be called a "year of recovery" for the Ukrainian economy. Companies and production facilities have begun to restore or relocate production infrastructure to safe regions, optimize production processes, and establish new supply chains. In particular, in the logistics sector there was a complete or partial refusal of imports and a significant revision of suppliers.

Most Ukrainian companies also tried to compensate for lost customers by entering adjacent categories and segments and changing their pricing policies. Some companies added products for the economy segment to their portfolio, while others moved into the premium segment. In line with the new realities of life, most companies in 2023 transformed their service portfolios. The introduction of new products or new business areas was reported by 84% of Ukrainian entrepreneurs.

Entering new markets has been important for many businesses, with 25% of companies citing foreign markets as part of their survival strategy.

At the same time, Ukrainian businesses continue to support the country and the army. 73% of companies launched new social projects in 2023, and 67% actively transferred funds to support the army.

Helping Ukraine and Ukrainians in general became a leitmotif of many businessmen's work during the war, and not all of them openly declare it, considering this approach quite natural. Some Ukrainian companies facilitated access to certain services, especially for Ukrainians living abroad. Many enterprises emphasized the production of patriotic products and services.

THE MIRACLE OF RESILIENCE

Despite the unpredictability of the situation, most companies returned to

normal operations in 2023 compared to 2022. Overall, 62% have the same number of employees as before the war, and 14% say they have even increased their staff. One in four companies has reduced its workforce.

The focus of internal policy development for managers at all levels has become teamwork, taking into account the emotional state of employees and supporting them. However, in the face of full-scale war, shelling and power cuts, the importance of continuing to work and achieve goals even under such difficult conditions is emphasized.

Here are the words of a representative of a Ukrainian pharmaceutical company: "The focus has increased on working with people, stabilizing relationships, feelings and people's condition. We have never worked so much with people before, there was no need for it, this is the biggest change. Looking at our Western partners, colleagues, they are very surprised that we are online with them in all processes, in all times, in all presentations, in all strategies, in all briefings. They are shocked that Ukrainians are not lagging behind during the war. I mean, on

the contrary, I want to highlight Ukraine for being so good.

CONCLUSION

For any businessman, the result of his activity is income. And in 2023, Ukrainian business showed an increase in it compared to the previous year – 71% of companies say they started earning more. However, the increase in income of Ukrainian businesses can not be called phenomenal. Almost half of the companies report an increase of up to 40%, while many of them have an increase of up to 10%.

The main result of the year for Ukrainian business is that it exists, adapts and develops even in the incredibly difficult conditions of war. However, the situation is rather unstable. No one knows what tomorrow will bring. Therefore, the support of Ukraine's partners in maintaining at least relative stability within the country remains critical to keeping the economy of a country fighting for all of Europe alive.

**Based on research initiated by the Ukrainian Advertising Coalition and conducted by Factum Group.*



A cafe in the center of Kharkiv is still open after a rocket attack.

CYBERWAR WITH RUSSIA

How the Kyivstar attack will help improve Ukraine's cybersecurity

Inna Mikhno

Already in late 2023, Russia demonstrated that destructive warfare can be waged with more than conventional weapons. The December cyber attack on Ukraine's largest operator, Kyivstar, left millions of people without communications. The attack caused significant damage to the country's economy and infrastructure, including disrupting ATMs and the Internet. The Kyivstar incident underscores the importance of cybersecurity in times of war, not only for private companies, but also for the population. Pavlo Belousov, a digital security expert at Nadiyno.org, spoke to Hromada about the importance of this area of protection and the impact of the Kyivstar case on the country's overall cybersecurity.

A large-scale cyber attack on Kyivstar

Pavlo Bielousov says:

Communications is an industry that is perceived at the energy level. Last year they tried to "put down" the energy sector, with which communications partially "lied down". This year we have prepared ourselves: the energy sector is better protected by air defense, and communications has a backup power supply. "Kyivstar is one of the largest mobile operators with up to 25 million subscribers (51% of the market). It is therefore logical that the impact of the attack was the greatest. I assume that all mobile operators were in the planning stage, but the opportunity arose to use access to Kyivstar. According to the preliminary version, the attack was carried out from the inside, and the event was of such magnitude because the core, the "brain center" that manages everything from billing and fixed-line Internet to data backups, was attacked. In other words, they destroyed the connections between hardware and software.

If you remember the well-known Petya virus of 2017, which was very large and disrupted the work of a large number of companies, the losses were estimated at billions. Today, the consequences for the company and Ukraine are enormous, measured in hundreds of millions. A mobile operator is not only about communication and 25 mil-



lion subscribers, but also about a lot of equipment. As a result, it means ATMs that do not work, the inability to pay for purchases, and consequently, taxes that go uncollected by the state. It also means inoperable barriers, air threat warning systems, security systems, etc. Fortunately, not everything in the military is tied to mobile communications. And, of course, it's the company's reputation and further attraction of investors.

It is worth noting that former US Secretary of State and former CIA chief Mike Pompeo will join Kyivstar's board of directors. Pompeo is a partner of Impact Investments, a newly established strategic, financial advisory and investment firm in the United States, which will assist Kyivstar's management in a number of key strategic initiatives in Ukraine.

Collapse is the goal

Many people are struck by the fact that the Russians had such access and used it so poorly, simply by shutting down the network, when they could have been monitoring or interfering with the subscribers, manipulating them. Probably, having gained such access, they were afraid of losing it and decided to do something. Or this was part of the attack, combined with missile attacks on the power system to cause a collapse.

But we were saved by the fact that we have a simplified system for buying SIM cards, where subscribers do not have to confirm their identity and enter their passport details into the electronic system. So people could buy eSIMs from other operators in two

clicks and stay connected. Stores offered free Wi-Fi access, and messengers worked. There were inconveniences, of course, but there was no meltdown. We are in the second year of the war and have already learned to have a backup connection.

Kyivstar's experience is the path to resilience

I think private companies are interested in protecting their systems. Now other companies will review their digital security policies and implement additional protection systems. Thanks to this, we will learn to be even more resilient. Will nationalization help reduce attacks if the company becomes state-owned? Of course not. Will it be more effective? Absolutely not. The telecom industry is already under control because of martial law.

Kyivstar's case shows other companies the importance of paying more attention to cybersecurity and implementing it, which will accelerate and improve the country's cybersecurity in general. Traditionally, cybersecurity costs \$100 per month, but without it, the consequences can reach thousands of dollars. We are increasingly moving from offline to online. Accordingly, the number of attacks, their quality and variety will only increase, and we need to prepare for this by investing money.

Main problems of the cyber defense industry in Ukraine

Before the full-scale invasion, people were reactive: they reacted to cyberattacks as they happened. Now, although not enough, the percentage of those who want to prepare is grow-

ing. At the same time, fraudsters are becoming more active and developing new ways to profit from cyberattacks.

There are also many questions about government institutions. Yes, they are working, informing the public and fending off some attacks, but this is not enough. They need to change their approaches, become stronger and involve more external qualified experts. And if there is any criticism of the cybersecurity situation, it should be taken as a sign that things need to improve. The goal of the state is to effectively protect citizens in this area as well. Nobody wants to live in the Stone Age without communication and the Internet.

Yes, we have cyber centers, CERT-UA is a government team under the State Service for Special Communications that is responsible for protecting and responding to computer attacks.

However, we definitely need equipment to monitor cyber activity and software to analyze this activity, which is very, very expensive. In addition, at the state level, we need to promote integration with similar structures in partner countries and consultations on advanced cybersecurity platforms. Then we will be able to respond to attacks more effectively and with fewer consequences.


This is not a one-way game where we are the only ones who need to share our experiences. Unfortunately, the enemy is conducting a lot of experiments with real-time cyber attacks in our country. And at our expense, the whole world is gaining experience that will be taken into account by other countries. But let's not forget that the enemy is also learning from this experience.

On the prospects for attacks

Centralized attacks on industries that affect the most people will continue. These include banks, mobile operators, internet providers, online stores, supermarket chains, etc. These disruptions will create a variety of problems that will affect demand and prices.

Huge, capable companies that have resource protection still get hit by these stories, so we have to rethink the importance of cybersecurity. We need to pay more attention to response, duplicate backups to media and clouds in other countries. Review approaches to monitoring superadmin access. This will at least reduce the likelihood of attacks or increase their cost, which may also eliminate the likelihood of an attack. All of these measures will reduce the impact of such attacks.

So companies should start preparing now. If we continue to have con-



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nectivity, it does not mean that we have stopped being attacked, but rather that we have learned to fight back more effectively and continue to persevere.

We also need to work with the security services – they have more information and access, they have intelligence that private companies do not have. If we know about hacker groups, we can and should cooperate with Western intelligence services. Business should help government and vice versa.

Coalition of the world's most developed countries

We have global support, we have the USAID Cybersecurity for Ukraine's Critical Infrastructure Program. But there will always be a lack of support, because this industry is complex and there are not many specialists who can implement it efficiently. Cyberspace has existed for only 30 years, while the experience of other industries has been studied for thousands of years. The Internet has existed in the coun-

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tal following information about a possible leak of information and databases. The Diia web portal provides a range of online government services. The project was so successful that five countries from Europe, Asia, Africa and America wanted to buy the concept of the Ukrainian product.

About Artificial Intelligence

Today, there is a lot of talk about the advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence. And, of course, it will be used in wars. Neural networks allow for better quality of attacks, parallel attacks and increased analysis. It allows you to process larger amounts of information faster. And the Russians will use AI for both offense and defense, especially to promote their narratives, which will be difficult to distinguish from fakes.

Cybersecurity in wartime

To prevent new attacks, we need to have a "Plan B" or backup methods. If it's a mobile phone, you should have a spare SIM card with the same number from another operator and keep a positive balance on it. It will be easier for people to find you if you change the carrier code. Nowadays having a landline phone at home is also a privilege, because it is a different communication technology that can only be disconnected by cutting the wires, which is much harder for Russians sitting in Moscow. Yes, these are additional costs that we have to change our attitude towards.

It is desirable for the Internet provider to use fiber optic or Digital Subscriber Line technology. This is an investment in security and prevention of critical situations. It is better to have a backup connection and duplicate communication channels. For example, in the form of a \$10 push-button phone. Connect two-factor authentication for additional account protection that works without the Internet and cellular. We need to stop being dependent on one mobile operator. So we hope that the Kyivstar story will teach Ukrainians to switch to special applications.

Nadiyno.org experts provide free digital security advice, including to the military, which does not have a detailed understanding of technology or security tools. This also reduces the number of problems for the state. Because people protect their money that they donate for weapons, and weapons kill the occupiers and bring victory closer.

There are organizations that provide educational services on digital security. This is grassroots cybersecurity, but it is also important. People

try at the household level for about 25 years, which is very little, and we still have a lot to learn.

On December 20, the official presentation of the Tallinn Mechanism was held, which was endorsed by the foreign ministries of a number of European countries, including Canada and the United States. The Tallinn Mechanism aims to improve Ukraine's cyber defenses and help defend our right to self-defense in cyberspace.

Cyber warfare: Are we inferior to Russia?

In cyber warfare, we should not underestimate the enemy: we succeed in some things, they succeed in others. We have attacks that disrupted their projects for a month, while Kyivstar managed to fix it in 10 days. I cannot say that this is a failed campaign by Russia, because we also suffered losses. We know that the enemy also has specialists. That is why we must methodically learn not only to attack, but also to defend. Later, we will rejoice and award medals for conquering the cyber front.

The Cyber Army and the IT Army are actually volunteer organizations. And the state cannot allow such attacks without being held responsible for interference in computer networks. And yes, more attention will be paid to regulating these processes after the war. Today, the main thing is that it helps us to win. Later it will be established, sep-

arate units will be clearly formed, it will be clear who controls them and what exactly they should be budgeted for.

In particular, according to the spokesman for the IT Army of Ukraine, over 400 Russian companies have suffered losses due to the actions of our cyber army last year.

On the role of the cyber police

The cyber police have clearly defined powers. They deal with fraudsters and attacks, but they cannot do everything. Before the war, we were not well integrated into Western cyber stories. Everyone remembers the problems with copyrighted content, when Ukraine was considered almost the first country to distribute pirated movies because it was not regulated. Now the cyber police will be able to respond to such things more effectively. But now the emphasis is on the military component.

About the reliability of Diia

The Diia app itself – in fact, the design and user experience – and how the app connects to the registry and information is up to each state to decide, as each country has its own unique database of registries. Therefore, other countries will use convenient interaction with registries. And it all depends on how your information is protected in that country.

We would like to remind you that there have been several cybersecurity incidents that have affected the reliability of the Diia government por-

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learn about the types of attacks, how they work, and what kind of communication to choose. This is especially important in the Occupied Territories, where there is already protection at the level of physical existence. If a person is caught using unreliable channels, he or she will at least be tortured.

Everything is interconnected and starts with the purchase of an ordinary licensed operating system. Without it, all other efforts are in vain. It is a complex story. And there is always a lack of specialists in this area, and then flexibility and speed, because it is also about cybersecurity.

For reference: Nadiyno.org is a free digital security hotline that helps Ukrainians increase their level of security in the digital environment. The platform is also funded by the Canadian organization eQualitie.



"RUSSIA IS HERE FOREVER"

How occupied Skadovsk survives

Karyna Nikitishina

Some people forget that there are sincere Ukrainians living in the occupied territories who simply cannot leave for a safe place due to the circumstances of their lives. Sometimes the inhabitants of the occupied towns and villages are even condemned for staying in the enemy-controlled territory, as if they were satisfied with this life, while they wait for the Ukrainian army's arrival every day and feel the enormous pressure of the occupiers. Skadovsk is a resort town on the Black Sea whose beauty attracted people not only from Kherson region but from all over Ukraine. The key word here is "attracted," because for almost two years now it has not been a crowd of vacationers walking the streets of the city, but a horde of Russian military with weapons in their hands. "Hromada managed to talk to a person who has lived in occupied Skadovsk for more than a year and a half. In this interview, we do not disclose the name, personal information of the interviewee and some details of the conversation to ensure the safety of her friends and family.

Back to the 90s

The occupation started on March 9. At first, my family called me to tell me that it was not an exercise and that I had to do something urgently. But I was sick with COVID-19 and was in such a condition that I could not get out of bed for 4 days. I came out of the hospital and went to work on March 8, and on the 9th these "comrades" came to town. On April 15 they put up their Aquafresh (Ukrainian slang for the flag of the Russian Federation – ed.) Spring is a race to buy food and cash in huge lines. People panicked and emptied the shelves of stores and pharmacies. Then the "second phase" began, when people left the city en masse. And the departure of friends and family was so stressful, as if a piece of heart was torn off each time.

At first, our connection was disconnected. We didn't have Wi-Fi in our apartment, so every few days we would go out and connect to a public Wi-Fi to let everyone know that we were okay. The hryvnia began to devalue: first it was 1 to 2 (to the ruble - ed.), then 1.25, and on January 1, 2023, it was banned



altogether. People figured out how to get out of it. After that, the imposition of a Russian passport began. One day I went to the pharmacy to buy medicine for my grandmother, and there were "comrades" in uniform who stopped me: "Where are your documents? I had my identity card with me: "Why a Ukrainian one?" I told them, "I haven't had time to make it yet." They replied: "What, you don't want to be found? I wrote a statement for the police. Since I work and live in the center, I was afraid, so I applied for the documents. I had this passport for exactly one month: in October, in a filtration camp, I solemnly burned it together with the SBU officers.

Instead of an ATB store, they built their own ABC: a social supermarket turned into a store for the rich. A kilogram of ordinary rice costs 1,100-1,200 roubles, and I have never seen such prices. Farmers have a hard time: last year in Odesa watermelons cost 22 hryvnia per kilogram, and here, locally, they were left in the fields because it is much more expensive to pay for harvesting than to sell. You go to a store and everything is on the shelves and on the floor. You're eating herring and there's a cake with it; there's laundry detergent and there's meat next to it. It was completely unhygienic. In short, they were not doing anything good. It feels like life has gone back to the 90s.

How people are forced to change their citizenship

The new government is always encouraging people to do what they want in every possible way. If you don't have a passport and you have an apartment, they will take it away from you. Some

people were forced to get Russian passports so they wouldn't lose their apartments or cars. And after September 1, men still get a summons to the military commissariat in addition to their passports. Russians do not consider this illegal; for them, it is perfectly legal and even right. Those who did not want to get a passport are called "waiting men" (Homunculus Loxodontus – ed.): "What are you waiting for? Nothing will change here. You are waiting in vain. So don't bother, become a tricolor of yellow and blue". The moral pressure was very strong. When I went to Kyiv and found myself on free land, I even breathed differently.

Everywhere you go, they demand your passport: if a child goes to school, the parents have to fill out all the documents. Next year, no one will see you in a clinic or hospital without compulsory health insurance. In order for a child to obtain Russian citizenship, it is necessary to replace its birth certificate. The Russian Federation does not accept laminated documents, so if you go to change the certificate, they will mention this as one of the reasons for withdrawing the document. Everything is done to keep as many children as possible.

I have an acquaintance who lives in a village and did not make a passport on principle. He is disabled, so they "took pity" on him: they told him not to go anywhere without a passport. Another acquaintance was kept in a torture chamber because someone had lied about him: they stuck needles in his eardrums. A month later, he was thrown out 10 kilometers from Skadovsk: "Don't even think about run-

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ning away: you've been entered into all the databases, so you won't leave here alive. He returned home on foot with broken ribs, overgrown and thin.

At the same time, there are people who are happy about the "Russian world".

A lot of immigrants have come from the hinterland, and they even look different from the rest of us. They are always making a fuss: at the passport office, for humanitarian aid, in banks. They go from house to house in the villages, checking who hasn't got a Russian passport yet. And when Oleshky and Hola Prystan were flooded, people came from there to Skadovsk. The new authorities have a plan: they come to a nine-story building, for example, and knock on every door. If the door is not opened, they leave a piece of paper with the place and time to come to provide documents of ownership of the apartment. If a person does not

come, it is assumed that the apartment is empty and occupied by Russians. Many people have occupied private houses and apartments and taken away appliances. There was no sense of security or confidence in their next day.

They have separate lists according to which they specifically searched for men who had served in the armed forces. Unfortunately, I witnessed this myself. At Easter we were visiting a friend whose husband had served. The police burst into our house with a search warrant, in April of last year. We had no time to do anything because it was unexpected. The children saw masked soldiers breaking into the house with machine guns in their hands. After that, my son was afraid to go out alone for six months. I went everywhere with him, even to the store to buy bread.

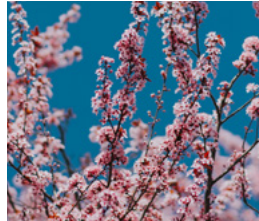
The lack of personnel was very serious: at first, a manicurist was hired as

the director of our school. People who used to work in the fields began to work in the administration and helped to fill empty courtyards with displaced persons. Before my eyes Skadovsk turned into a proverbial town: "Who was nobody, became everything". There are many cases when a person who had achieved nothing in this life began to occupy a high position thanks to the help of the new government. Serhiy Shvayko, who was an ordinary driver, became the head of the Civil-Military Administration (CMA). The VCA telegram channel is another story, as they say, for people with a strong psyche. I tried to read only the headlines, because after that there was only darkness, where they cheerfully and happily described the "wonderful" life with Russia and how terrible the "Ukrnazis" are. People became angry. When I talk to those who stayed at home, they tell me that people have gone crazy.



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— Alexei B.



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COMPASS

"Russia is here forever"

On all holidays, including May 9, they organize a performance. They set up cars on the sides of the square, bring in "dancing and dancing" buses from somewhere, and even their own spectators. Anything to get a nice video of people having fun at the event. Or to film someone saying that from now on everyone can go to the monument on Victory Day because it was supposedly forbidden for the last 9 years, which is not true. Or City Day, which used to be a warm, family-friendly holiday with lots of activities. This year I could only walk around the square. There were no more than 100 people there, including 30 armed guards. "Great," I thought, "a holiday at gunpoint! They are ostentatiously doing everything to appear to be good people. The only thing they've done is to pave the roads, and even then they're doing it in layers: probably money laundering. Or they need half a meter of asphalt because it is higher than the curb.

In the schools, brainwashing is done regularly and in very large quantities. Every Monday there is a special lesson instead of the usual one where certain problems are solved quickly; every Thursday there is a lesson on "Russia – my horizons". But the most stressful thing for me was the return of the pioneers, the new "Yunarmiya". Imagine children wearing kirz boots, protective pants and red berets, and having to attend some incomprehensible meetings three times a week. And if you don't come to these meetings, the consequences are not very good. You are required to go. I have the feeling that they want all the children to be part of this "un-army".

During the referendum, all the streets were empty. For example: a small village, 30 kilometers from Skodovsk, with up to a hundred inhabitants, maybe even less. It is reliably known that only one woman from the whole village voted. You wrote that there was a 90% turnout. There was no turnout, people were hiding. They

went around the villages with guns, going into every yard. I even had a friend who, when she left the occupation, was asked in a filtration camp where she was from and if she knew who organized the referendum. They said she was now a witness in a criminal case. Everything about them says that they are here forever. That is their main slogan: "Russia is here forever."

Why People Stay in the Occupation

Many people stay in the occupation for different reasons. Some have something to lose, others have old or sick parents. I had to stay because I took care of my grandmother, who is 80 years old. I was responsible for all her care and maintenance: I was her eyes, hands and feet. Another reason is my mother. She has nobody else but me. And maybe this reason is funny to somebody, but it's a cat. I love my cat very much. But it was impossible to take him out because he has no papers or vaccinations. ...and probably because I was very afraid. I was very

afraid of the street. I was afraid that no one would let an official go.

I left because I had no more strength to endure. I had to either "change my shoes" and work for them, accept their bizarre reality, or leave. I was under pressure from all sides. A part of the people would throw me off balance with the phrase: "Make up your mind already. What does "make up your mind" mean? I had made up my mind a long time ago. The other part that left the occupation said that if I stayed at home I must like everything. No, I don't like it. But I couldn't leave because I had no money, not to mention my mother and grandmother. Phrases like that hurt your heart. When you're under occupation, you feel like an animal: you have to do what you're told, you're afraid all the time, and above all, there's no way out. Another reason for leaving was my son – there is no future for him there. There is a vacuum. We lived in a vacuum for a year and a half.

The road was difficult, we went through Kolotylivka. It was almost 3 kilometers of gravel road, where you have to drag a suitcase, and there were abandoned things scattered around. People just threw away everything they could not carry. There were bags, TV boxes, stools, wheelbarrows... It took us a day and a half to leave. We were actually very lucky because we were not detained anywhere for a long time. But we were still scared all the time because we did not know what to expect. In front of me, they even went through my grandmother's underwear during the search. A man said to a woman, "Did you look in her socks?" "It's enough that I looked in her underwear."

The occupiers have "liberated" everything: from life, from joy, from freedom, from the right to have an opinion and to make decisions. Everything is distorted, twisted, they have some kind of sick idea of how to live. I am very happy that I could leave and I regret that I did not do it earlier. It is very, very hard for the people who are still waiting for the return of Ukraine. The hardest thing is the uncertainty.



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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

24 FEB SKOFKA – NORTH AMERICAN TOUR 2024

SKOFKA + Dovi + Kozak Siromaha

Where: City Nights, 715 Harrison St, San Francisco, CA 94107

When: Saturday, 7 PM

Ukrainian rap artist Skofka, the author of one of the most popular tracks during wartime, announces the first tour in North America.

Skofka — representative of the new wave of Ukrainian culture — is known for creating a brand new level of Ukrainian rap. He has garnered significant acclaim on Spotify, with over 440,000 monthly listeners. "Chuti hymn" a song, that he dedicated to his dead friend has been listened to on Spotify more than 10 million times and the music video has gathered over 50 million views on Youtube.

Volodymyr Samolyuk (the artist's real name) constantly makes experiments with sound and styles. He is an intelligent rapper whose main priority is to create quality music and prove that Ukrainian rap can sound cool. The rapper himself writes the lyrics, arranges them, composes tracks and sometimes even produces video clips on his own. His music is not only a reflection of his uniqueness but also a testament to their commitment to meaningful storytelling and social consciousness.

Already at the start of his career in 2020, he received recognition from the Ukrainian Music Awards: a joint track with Kalush — "Dodomu" ("Home") was nominated for "Collaboration of the Year" from Rap.

ua Awards 2021. Together with Skofka, his colleagues on the stage, with whom more than one fit was recorded, will take part in the tour: DOVI & KOZAK SIROMAHA.

Tickets: \$65 - \$85

<https://bomond.com/events/skofka-dovi-kozak-siromaha-san-francisco>

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When: Sunday, 3 PM – 5 PM

A Panel discussion on current challenges, opportunities and updates from those impacted by Russia's war on Ukraine.

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Reception 4:30-5:00 pm



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