



КРИМСЬКА
ПРАВОЗАХИСНА
ГРУПА



STATEMENT

on the need to ensure the rights of victims of armed aggression against Ukraine

In December 2024, the Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine was established in Ukraine through the transformation of the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine (Ministry of Reintegration). After personnel and structural changes in the government, a number of important powers, including the implementation of transitional justice principles and measures or the protection of the rights and freedoms of persons violated as a result of the temporary occupation, were entirely lost. The policy concerning victims of war lost its integrity: its individual components were distributed among ministries without proper coordination.

Earlier, in September 2024, together with over 50 organisations, we called on the President of Ukraine to help preserve the ministry responsible for supporting those affected by the war, regardless of their location. And in December 2024, we insisted that the Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine prioritise maintaining ties with those with whom the state is currently losing contact due to the war. At that time, we asked the government, when defining the powers of the Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine, to be guided by the idea that national unity and resilience are among the essential conditions for the return of the temporarily occupied territories. National unity is impossible without taking into account the interests and needs of millions of citizens affected by the war, including those who remain in the temporarily occupied territories (TOT) of Ukraine.

In early July 2025, the media spread information about upcoming changes in the Government, including the liquidation of the Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine. This decision is likely to be related to the corruption scandals surrounding the head of the ministry. However, it is also important to acknowledge the lack of a coherent vision of the state policy of national unity and the artificial narrowing of the ministry's focus to communication with Ukrainians living abroad.

We are convinced that **national unity is our key value**. The state should work comprehensively on social cohesion issues: within communities in the government-controlled areas, facilitating the return of citizens who were forced to flee abroad due to the war, and supporting and building ties with residents of the TOT of Ukraine. We don't know when our lands will be liberated, but the people who remain under occupation are citizens of Ukraine and our strongest link to the territories temporarily controlled by the aggressor state. Ukrainians under occupation need support from the state, as well as consideration of their interests and needs in the development of comprehensive state policies.

We believe that the government's **priority should be to maintain ties with those with whom the state is currently losing contact due to the war.** Therefore, the human dimension should be the key to rebooting and strengthening the ministry that should ensure the development and implementation of state policy in the following areas:

- the development of state policy regarding victims of the armed aggression against Ukraine;
- the temporarily occupied territories and the protection of the rights of the population residing there, with the aim of maintaining ties and reintegration into a unified legal, informational, socio-economic, cultural, and educational space of Ukraine;
- internally displaced persons and citizens of Ukraine who were forced to flee abroad, regarding the facilitation of the exercise of rights and freedoms, and the creation of conditions for voluntary return or integration at their new place of residence;
- social cohesion and the building of a long-term just peace, and the implementation of transitional justice approaches.

These policies are interconnected and cannot be developed by different actors without proper synchronisation. **The best solution is to combine these policies within a single ministry** responsible for developing and implementing state policy concerning victims of the armed aggression against Ukraine. **This ministry could be the Ministry of National Unity of Ukraine after its reboot**, staffing and provision with the necessary financial and organisational resources.

Another option is to retain within the government the position of Deputy Prime Minister for National Unity of Ukraine (without a dedicated ministry), with designated deputies in each ministry. After all, taking into account the interests of the affected population and reintegration are cross-cutting issues and should be considered in all areas, from education to energy. In this case, **an Office of National Unity should be established** to support the work of the Deputy Prime Minister.

We are convinced that **maintaining the focus on the reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, as well as supporting and ensuring the rights of victims of armed aggression within the Government, is critically important.** Therefore, preserving the government's institutional capacity to respond to and overcome the negative aftermath of war and occupation, as well as to build long-term strategies for reintegration and recovery, is essential for the further development of our country.

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Human Rights Centre ZMINA
Crimean Human Rights Group
CrimeaSOS, Non-Governmental Organisation
EAST SOS, Charitable Foundation
Donbas SOS, Non-Governmental Organisation
Stabilization Support Services, Charitable Foundation
Right to Protection, Charitable Foundation
GROUP OF INFLUENCE, Civil Holding