

INVISIBLE

BATTALION

2.0

WOMEN VETERANS
RETURNING TO
PEACEFUL LIFE

About Institute of Gender Programs

Institute of Gender Programs is an organization established in 2016 to protect rights and interests of servicewomen and women veterans. We implement our mission through advocacy, human rights protection and educational projects for women engaged in the security and defense sector. Through the Invisible Battalion project which consisted of a survey and a documentary under the same name we were able to expand the list of official positions in the military available for women. One of the achievements of our advocacy campaign was the adoption of the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Several Laws of Ukraine to Ensure Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men during Service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Other Military Formations”.

Institute of Gender Programs is the founder of the Women Veterans Movement and implements projects related to active engagement of women in peace-building processes: from local communities to security matters in the global society. Within the frameworks of the project “Ambassador: Veteran Diplomacy”, Ukrainian women veterans visited the NATO Headquarters, the Parliaments of Canada and Wales, and the 63rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and participated in other key international events and discussions of the main challenges for the global security.

About UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system’s work in advancing gender equality.

'INVISIBLE BATTALION 2.0': WOMEN VETERANS RETURNING TO PEACEFUL LIFE

(Sociological Research)

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ACRONYMS

| | |
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| ATO | Anti-Terrorist Operation |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CRSV | Conflict-related sexual violence |
| EU | European Union |
| FGD | Focus group discussion |
| JFO | Joint Forces Operation |
| MoD | Ministry of Defense of Ukraine |
| MoH | Ministry of Health of Ukraine |
| MoI | Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine |
| MoSP | Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine |
| MinTOT | Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine |
| NAP | National Action Plan |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization (North Atlantic Alliance) |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| PTSD | Post-traumatic stress disorder |
| SSU | Security Service of Ukraine |
| UAF | Ukrainian Armed Forces |
| UMCP | Unified Medical Care Protocol |
| UN | United Nations |

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| UN SCR 1325 | United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 |
| UWF | Ukrainian Women's Fund |
| WPS | Women, peace, security |
| KPKVK 2101080 | "Medical care, rehabilitation and providing resort treatment for personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, veterans of military service, and members of their families, and for war veterans" |
| KPKVK 2301400 | "Securing medical measures under specific state programmes and comprehensive programmatic measures" |
| KPKVK 2501470 | "Resort treatment for war veterans, people covered by the Laws of Ukraine "On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection", "On Victims of Nazi persecutions and the handicapped" |
| KPKVK 2505150 | "Measures for psychological rehabilitation, social and professional adaptation of the participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation and providing resort rehabilitation for injured participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation" |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender-transformative policies are critical levers of change to integrate the values of gender equality into society and across institutions. In periods of social turmoil and military conflict, it is important to integrate and consider the interests and needs of all citizens who are engaged in conflict resolution and the restoration of peace in the country. Therefore, the security, defence and law enforcement institutions' gender awareness and recognition of women's contribution in peace keeping and peace building is vital to lasting social change.

As of 2017, women constituted 10.6% in the Armed Forces of Ukraine,¹ and more than 55 thousand women (25 thousand of whom are service personnel), serve or work in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.² With recently enacted law such as Law # 2523 "On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Concerning the Provision of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Throughout their Service in the Ukrainian Armed Forces and Other Military Formations", adopted in September 2018, Ukraine has taken significant leap to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to military service. Alongside the legal measures, Ukraine has also embarked on a journey to improve the reintegration system and processes for the military personnel. However, these efforts often remain gender blind, without insights in to the differential realities and challenges between the women and men veterans. This study is therefore aimed at shedding light on their situation, post-military life and challenges in the transition to civilian life after the military service as their situation continues to remain precarious, with little support for their transition to peaceful life.

"'Invisible Battalion 2.0': Women Veterans Returning to Peaceful Life" sociological research was commissioned as part of UN Women's support to Ukraine in implementation of UN SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, the landmark resolution that reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, as well as the consequent Resolutions.³ The study builds on the advocacy efforts of the women veterans' movement, through the 'Invisible Battalion 1.0', the first phase of the advocacy efforts to sensitize the women and men

of Ukraine, about the critical and under-acknowledged contributions of the service women in the country.

The participatory and evidence-based study was conducted by Institute of Gender Programmes to support the empowerment of Ukraine's women's groups, who are playing a prominent role in advocacy for democracy, human rights and gender equality. This study summarizes the legal and normative frameworks guaranteeing women veterans' peaceful reintegration, illustrates how women veterans are using the services offered by the Government of Ukraine to enable their reintegration and the challenges thereof, and proposes a roadmap to strengthen women veterans' access to services for a quality post-military lives, and how they can be better served based on these insights. The findings inform an awareness raising and advocacy campaign about the reintegration and rehabilitation needs of demobilized women and advocate for improved services and upholding their rights.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The review of the available legal and scholarly materials, the interviews and focus group discussion with the women and men veterans, quantitative opinion poll study, as well as review of the social media content demonstrates the gaps in adoption of comprehensive and gender-responsive reintegration strategy for the women veterans that are aligned with the international commitments and their nationalized plans and programmes. Even though the recently adopted State Target Programme on the Physical, Medical, and Psychological Rehabilitation and Social and Professional Re-Adaptation of Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) Participants considers some gender-sensitive measures, its designing and development did not include consultations with the demobilized women and men, leaving out their voices and concerns. Also, the Action Plan for the implementation of the programme does not include a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework and costing. The analysis of the data shows the below highlights:

- In Ukraine, **there is a system of reintegration of male and female veterans to civilian life**, which provides a wide range of medical services, psychological rehabilitation, social benefits and guarantees. However, it is **very difficult to access reintegration services** for veterans due to existing hardships in receiving combat participant status, excessive bureaucracy, corruption, and lack of coordination between departments and institutions, that are engaged in the provision of reintegration services. Some of interviewed women, mentioned that they had been refused in getting services and referred to different institutions (medical institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defence) due to the absence of the official status of combat participant or veteran with disability, discrepancies in the documents, or other bureaucratic reasons. A lack of coordination amongst the service providers compromise the accessibility to services. For example, prior to receiving the medical care, a combat participant veteran may need to visit several medical facilities to determine the location he or she is entitled to receive care. This situation is even harder for the veterans who sustained injuries or disability due to the war. Excessive bureaucratization of the granting the certificate of a combat participant or of a person with disability caused by the war hinders their access to receiving reintegration services.
- With the presence of the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, **there is a lack of system, showcasing feedback from the services recipients**, thus providing no opportunity for assessment of effectiveness of the services provided. During individual interviews, respondents (both women and men) mentioned dissatisfaction with the quality of provided services. Women respondents stated that civilian doctors lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with the military and with wounds, obtained on the frontline.
- There is no practice of conducting needs assessment exercises, when information about the needs of male and female veterans is collected to inform the reintegration and rehabilitation programmes. The lack of comprehensive approach to needs assessment of demobilized women and men, makes **the system of reintegration rather gender-neutral than gender-responsive**.

During the meetings with the experts from civil society, working with the demobilized men and women, it was made clear that **gender perspective should be integrated when designing and providing reintegration and rehabilitation services**. For instance, it was underlined that programmes of psychological reintegration should consider the differences in gender roles, social expectations from women and men in civilian life and differences in perceptions by women and men of themselves in civilian life after the war.

- Another hardship faced by demobilized women and men is **lack of employment opportunities in peaceful life**. Women respondents underlined the **biased attitudes towards female veterans by employment centres staff**, the lack of understanding of peculiarities of the veterans' psychological condition and as a consequence, lack of communication skills for interaction with veterans. Among the hardships related to employment, absence of appropriate jobs, low wages, lack of professionalism of the employment service staff, lack of funds for starting businesses, lack of knowledge for starting new businesses were highlighted. For those women, whose workplace was secured during their military service, misunderstanding at work with colleagues upon return from the frontline was also mentioned as a challenge in reintegration.
- With regards of **social protection services for the demobilized persons**, women mentioned that receiving official status of combat participant can be problematic, especially for those women, who served in volunteer battalions. Also, **low awareness of available services for veterans among women veterans** and service providers themselves was mentioned as a challenge in reintegration. There is a **demand for clarification of legal aspects of benefits and opportunities for veterans**. The social protection systems for veterans requires **both concerning its structure (particularly its adaptation to the needs of women veterans) and concerning the quality of services being provided**. During focus group discussions, female participants discussed how they can receive the land allotment, which they have a right to according to the law, and the challenges thereof. This implies that not all women veterans are well informed about what they are entitled to or the procedures to receive it.

- Focus groups discussions and individual interviews proved that demobilized women are interested in public activism and **development of all-Ukrainian movement of women-veterans**. However, difficulties in communicating with civilians due to the **biased attitude** of employees of medical institutions and social services, the stigmatization of male and female veterans (also in media) is widely present in Ukrainian society. Veterans (both men and women) mentioned that they feel changed attitude towards them for the worse. Civilian people do not understand the hardships they went through, belittle veterans' motivations for being at the front and often express their criticism for taking the decision to participate in military operation. **Women respondents reflected on lack of social respect towards them by the society and community**, thus facing stigmatization and often humiliation by the society and service providers.

The survey of the media representation of women veterans and the servicewomen found only a little more than a dozen media materials about their situation or contribution, some of which written by women veterans themselves after their return to home. Not a single material addressed the topic of the accessibility of benefits and services that women are entitled to, on status of women veterans, legal provisions and whether women have equal access to these opportunities compared to men. Also, the study reaffirmed the findings of the 'Invisible Battalion' about the lack of media coverage about the infrastructure for women's services in the ATO. The media coverage also demonstrates exoticization – turning service women into an object of admiration, and stereotypical depiction of women's reproductive roles. There is limited discussion about insufficient protection of reproductive roles and the access to reproductive health related services for women veterans. The study finding highlight the need to work with the media on conflict and gender sensitive media and reporting.

There is also a positive phenomenon captured in the opinion survey conducted with the 2026 individuals (1111 women, 915 men) from 109 localities of Ukraine. The findings of the opinion survey show that more than half of the respondents support the idea of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in Armed Forces in Ukraine. Also, close to 60% of the respondents support the idea of providing women with the same opportunity as men to study military science. While a

significant majority (17%) supports conscription of only men into the military, 62% supports the enlistment of both men and women. There is an overwhelming support of the public, i.e. 75% of the respondent support that State should secure the reintegration of servicewomen and servicemen in their transition to civilian life.

Overall, the study revealed that female veterans face various difficulties in their reintegration. First, they may not be aware about their rights and available services for them, especially those residing in remote locations. Those women who know their entitlements, have to overcome number of hurdles when accessing reintegration services. Corruption, lack of coordination between service providing institutions to veterans, excessive bureaucracy and lack of necessary infrastructure in low-populated areas, over-complicate the process for getting the benefits and social welfare they are entitled to. In addition to the difficult access to the reintegration services and their low quality, women veterans state about stigmatization they face from civilian people, including from the service-providers, which lack skills and knowledge on to how to communicate with demobilized persons, especially those with emotional disorders.

The recommendations, resulting from the study are shaped as the roadmap for improving the protection for women veterans – combat participants and persons with disabilities caused by military conflict. It is important to include the proposed recommendations, when designing and drafting the next national action plan on implementation of UN SCR 1325 or during the development of a comprehensive gender-responsive reintegration programme for both male and female veterans.

BACKGROUND

Following a research initiative to analyze women's participation in the ATO, which identified hostilities and discrimination against women in the armed forces, as well as good practices in integrating women in the defence sector and ensuring their human rights in 2016, a group of women veterans and gender equality activists launched “the Invisible

Battalion” advocacy campaign with the support of UN Women and the Ukrainian Women’s Fund. The nation-wide advocacy campaign against discrimination of women in the security and defence sector and for acknowledgement of the important role of women in the ATO and in the security sector was informed by the results of the same-name study. It included a variety of visibility events around the country, including the presentation of the sociological research, photo exhibitions with women in armed forces, and a 2016 Invisible Battalion calendar which won the Grand Prix at the National Festival of Social Advertising.

Since the launch of the first phase of the “Invisible Battalion” campaign, women veterans have been steadily mobilizing and growing, advocating to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women in combat positions in Ukraine. As a result of the collective’s advocacy efforts, in 2016, women in military became eligible to gain access to up to 100 combat positions, previously available only to men. Thus, demobilized women paved ways for women’s equal role in the Anti-terrorist and Joint Forces Operations. In addition, campaign resulted in the release of the documentary film “Invisible Battalion” in November 2017.

Through joint advocacy efforts of demobilized women, women’s groups in the military formations and members of Parliament, “the Invisible Battalion” campaign continued with the adoption of the Law # 2523 “On amendments to certain laws of Ukraine concerning the provision of equal rights and opportunities for women and men throughout their service in the Ukrainian Armed Forces and other military formations”. The second phase of the campaign continued the demand for women’s rights and needs in their reintegration. A documentary “No Obvious Signs’ was produced, having the demobilized woman as a protagonist; highlighting the hardship, discrimination, stigma and psycho-social difficulties in returning to peaceful life. The documentary won number of awards at the International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival DocuDays, including best documentary in the DocuRights category. Oksana Yakubova, the protagonist of the film No Obvious Signs, was awarded “for her willpower, courage and unfailing affirmation of the idea of equality between women and men with her own example”. To learn more about the process of reintegration and rehabilitation, experienced by women-veterans, this participatory research was conducted to gain evidence of the challenges and good practices

for both male and female veterans during their demobilization and reintegration.

The findings and recommendations of the study are based on desk research, individual interviews with both male and female veterans and focus group discussions, meetings with the experts in the field, and an analysis of the policies guiding the implementation of gender equality and Women, Peace and Security agenda in Ukraine, along with the security and defence sector reform.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research for this study consisted of a desk review and an empirical field study. The desk review included an overview of professional, scholarly national and international research, journalistic materials, the results of official requests to ministries for statistical information, and legal analysis for the reintegration of veterans. The survey used mixed methodology, including, in-depth interviews with 22 veterans (14 female and 8 male), opinion survey from 2026 respondents (1111 women, 915 men), one focus group discussion (FGD), and a qualitative content analysis of social media to triangulate the findings of the research to capture how the gender roles, expectations and norms influence the reintegration challenges and opportunities for the women and men ex-combatants.

Research regarding the legal grounds for reintegrating women veterans into society was conducted by the All-Ukrainian Advocacy Organization Yurydychna Sotnia (Legal Hundred) NGO. The research of regulatory and legislative provisions covered such documents as the Constitution of Ukraine; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions, which shape the Women, Peace and Security Agenda⁴; the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Equal Rights for Women and Men”; the Law of Ukraine On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection; the Law of Ukraine On Military Duty and Military Service; decrees of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No.337, as of

May 27, 2014⁵ and No.170 as of April 10, 2009⁶; and the Programme on the Physical, Medical and Psychological Rehabilitation and Social and Professional Adaptation of Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) participants.

The empirical research used qualitative and quantitative sociological methods. The field research was conducted in the summer and autumn of 2018. It included: designing the sample, searching for female and male respondents, interviews, interview transcription, interview analysis and report writing.

The selection of participants for the focus group discussion was designed to elicit and capture diverse responses and points of view. Ten female veterans participated in the focus group discussion, and key discussions were sparked by asking the women general questions about their needs and encouraging them to think about how to resolve them. These discussion starting points enabled the identification of differences in participants' experiences, views and priorities.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews with women veterans who had returned from service in the ATO enabled discussion of sensitive topics regarding their individual ways of returning to peaceful life. Twenty-two in-depth individual interviews were conducted with 14 female and 8 - male veterans (age 22-47, anonymously) in order to understand the similarities, faced by both female and male ex-combatants in their reintegration and explore peculiarities for rehabilitation and social adaptation for demobilized women. The veterans were able to share with interviewers what they might not be willing to tell a group of people with whom they planned on interacting with in the future. The individual interviews discussed various aspects of reintegration that respondents were willing to share, such as finding employment, their psychological state, motherhood and further prospects. The method allowed discussing the respondent's experiences and points of view to depths the respondents were comfortable with. The female respondents were recruited using snowball sampling. Male ATO veterans were interviewed for a comparison of results.

Expert interviews were used to study the problems of reintegrating women veterans into civilian life in Ukraine. 'Expert interview' refers to an interview with persons who have professional knowledge and work

experience with service personnel in the spheres of psychological and socioeconomic reintegration of people who fought in war into civilian life (e.g. public servants, civil activists, journalists and international experts).

Experts were selected based on the following criteria: at least one year of experience of working with ATO veterans; at least one year of experience in research and analytics on the status of female and male ATO veterans; or having written several journalistic articles / works about ATO veterans. The experts were found using the methods of key informants and snowball sampling. Expert interviews aimed to find out how the system of reintegrating military personnel to civilian life operates in Ukraine, including questions regarding what services are provided by governmental and non-governmental institutions, their quality and performance, compliance of this reintegration system to international standards and recommendations and perspectives for improving the system.

As part of the study the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology conducted a public opinion survey about the involvement of women and men in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in general and the status of female and male ATO veterans within the framework of its all-Ukrainian research (representative of the population of Ukraine) in September 2018. The survey studied the opinions of adult residents of Ukraine (18 and older) in 109 localities in all oblasts, except for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the territories in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts not controlled by the Ukrainian government. The survey included 2026 questionnaires (915 from men and 1111 from women).

Qualitative content analysis of materials in mass media was used to study the issue of reintegrating women who fought in ATO into civilian life. This interpretative inductive method enabled singling out categories for analysis and forming hypotheses based on an interpretation of the empirical material. This method was applicable in this situation given the lack of analytical publications on the topic. Using content analysis of publications in national online media resources enabled researchers to study how the topic of reintegrating women who fought in ATO into civilian life was covered, particularly how women veterans and their situation in society were presented to the public.

Overall, data triangulation – using various sociological methods to compare the research results – enables more comprehensive analysis and elaboration of recommendations. Qualitative and quantitative sociological methods were used in this research, which enables studying the problem with both positivist and interpretative methodological approaches; that is, statistical data is supplemented with quotes from the respondents, which gives a deeper understanding and explanation of the studied phenomenon.

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1

GENDER EQUALITY IN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY AND IN THE MILITARY SPHERE:

REVIEW OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND
INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

1.1. Ensuring Gender Equality in Ukraine: Legislations and International Commitments

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and democratic state values. Gender equal relations in society establishes the value of gender equality, prevents sex-based discrimination, ensures the equal participation of women and men in decision-making and provides equal opportunities for women and men to balance their professional and family lives.

The international norms and standards shape the framework for Ukraine's commitments for equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Ukraine ratified the key international human rights treaties and normative documents, such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁷ which declares that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; International Convention on Civil and Political Rights⁸ and its Optional Protocol, according to which Ukraine is committed to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights stipulated in it; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,⁹ according to which Ukraine is committed to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set in it; Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),¹⁰ which is calling for full development and advancement of women with the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men and the other UN human rights treaties. In addition, Ukraine joined Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹¹ and adopted and localized UN Sustainable Development Goals 2016–2030.¹² Ukraine has solid national policy and legal frameworks on gender equality and women's human rights, which among the rest includes the National action plan¹³ on implementation of UN SC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) and its subsequent resolutions.

In addition, Ukraine ratified number of regional normative documents, such as Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms¹⁴ and European Social Charter,¹⁵ both adopted by the Council of Europe. EU-Ukraine Association agreement,¹⁶ signed in 2014 is binding with ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in employment, education, training, economy and society, and decision-making.

Further, Ukraine has determined gender equality as an important state policy priority to ensure further development of the country. Through these national and international commitments, Ukraine reaffirms that the democratic society is supposed to provide equal opportunities for women and men to participate in all spheres of life, including in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and in peacebuilding processes.

Article 24 of the Constitution of Ukraine¹⁷ articulates the principle of gender equality. Provisions of the above norm define that there cannot be privileges or restrictions based on gender. Equality of the woman and man is ensured through providing women with equal with men opportunities in social, political and cultural activities, in education and training, in work and remuneration for it.

The **National Human Rights Strategy (2015)**¹⁸ and the **Action Plan for implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy (2015)**¹⁹ addresses gender-based violence and how to combat it and emphasize the importance of providing equal rights and opportunities for women and men. The new **State Social Programme on Providing Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men up to 2021** concentrates on improvement of institutional mechanisms for ensuring gender equality with a comprehensive approach to overcoming institutional limitations to achieving gender equality.²⁰ Also, the first-ever **National Action Plan for the Implementation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations (NAP CEDAW)**, adopted in September 2018²¹ focuses on strengthening public servants' knowledge and skills to apply CEDAW, and protection of rights of women facing multiple forms of discrimination.

In accordance with the **Law of Ukraine On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men** (Article 1), gender equality is construed as the equality in the legal status of women and men and equal opportunities to enjoy it, which allows both sexes to participate equally in all spheres of society's life.²²

According to a Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decree, as of 17 June 2015 the Ministry of Social Policy is the authorized central executive body to ensure equal rights of women and men.²³ The Ministry has the mandate to develop the National Action Plan to implement gender equality and to coordinate the implementation of state programmes related to gender equality.



Tetiana YALOVA

Private first class

On 9 August 2014, Tetiana arrived as a volunteer medic at the hospital in the city of Shchastia. In December 2014 she became a sanitation instructor of the 12th Territorial Defense Battalion in Kyiv. On 06 July 2016 went on reserve. In March 2018 was on rotation at the Pyrogiv First Volunteer Medical Hospital.

In March 2017, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Decree assigning the **Deputy Prime Minister for EU and Euro-Atlantic Integration** with the functions and responsibilities for coordination of the state gender equality policy. In addition, the position of the **Government Commissioner for Gender Policy** was introduced in 2017. This position should improve coordination between executive bodies to practically implement the principle of gender equality into all spheres of life.²⁴

One of the greatest methodological errors²⁵ is to construe the gender approach as analogous to the sex-role approach: each sex has its own role that needs to be performed by a man or a woman. For example, girls are taught to be skillful housewives and loving mothers; boys are taught to be defenders of the country and financial providers for the family. Gender studies embrace a critical approach that refutes such opinions about the absoluteness of biological aspects (biological determinism). Biological differences between women and men are not denied, yet their role as the only explanation for gender roles is scrutinized.

The main conclusion of the Razumkov Center research *Gender Equality and Development: View in Context of the European Strategy of Ukraine (2016)* shows that “ignoring gender problems causes significant social expenses, impairs the welfare of people, affects sustainable development and good governance opportunities”.²⁶

Following the adoption of the UN Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action in its gender equality policy, the European Commission applies a double (twin-track) approach: the implementation of the gender mainstreaming policy and the initiation of special measures.²⁷ The gender mainstreaming policy provides for (re)organization, improvement, formation and assessment of political processes so that the political decision-makers take a gender approach in all spheres and stages of policymaking. Existing differences between women and men are taken into account in order to identify negative outcomes, not to support inequalities or hierarchies that have formed in the society. Special measures in the gender policy at the level of the EU include legislation, awareness-raising campaigns and financial programmes. Special measures aim to address specific problems, such as the pay gap and the lack of women's representation (e.g. in certain employment spheres).

In addition, the **Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023**²⁸ provides for the achievement of six objectives.²⁹ The government of Ukraine is progressing to meet these objectives through the State Social Programme on Equal Rights and Opportunities. According to the introduction of the Strategy, "violence against women remains one of the most pronounced expressions of the unequal power relations between women and men. It is both a violation of the human rights of women and a main obstacle to gender equality".

Ukraine has not yet ratified the **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention)**,³⁰ which the Strategy refers to as the "most comprehensive international instrument to tackle violence against women and domestic violence in its many forms".

The **Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**, in their recommendation to member states on gender equality standards and mechanisms,³¹ reasserts the importance of adopting methodologies for the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy, including gender budgeting and gender-based analysis/gender impact assessments. Thus, Ukraine has several areas to work on for full-fledged implementation of its declared value of gender equality.

1.2. Regulation of Equal Rights and Opportunities in the Military Sphere: National Perspective

In May 2015, the Government of Ukraine adopted the Strategy of National Security of Ukraine,³² including the goals of affirming human and citizen rights and freedoms; ensuring the quality of economic, social and humanitarian development; ensuring Ukraine's integration to the European Union; and meeting the conditions for entering NATO.

In February 2016, Ukraine adopted the **National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, peace, security" up to 2020**.³³ UNSCR 1325 and national action plans for its implementing aim at strengthening the role of women as equal partners in conflict resolution and in peacebuilding in countries afflicted by conflict, war and security issues. In September 2018, Ukraine adopted an updated version of the National Action Plan to account for Ukraine's experiences in implementing UNSCR 1325 in the

midst of decentralization, to incorporate the recommendations laid in the Concluding Remarks of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and to update the list and mandates of government agencies tasked with National Action Plan 1325 implementation.³⁴ The plan was adopted following independent mid-term evaluation of National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, peace, security”, conducted in close cooperation by the office of Deputy Prime Minister EU and Euro-Atlantic Integration with the technical support of UN Women. Changes include the analysis of combatants’ access to available services and a survey of the needs of female and male veterans with an offer of services according to the results of the analysis. **The Strategy for Prevention of and Response to Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV Strategy)**, was endorsed in November 2018, which further strengthens the alignment with the NAP1325 and details out clear understanding of CRSV, strategy for prevention, protection and response, and strategies for survivors’ access to justice.

NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council policy for implementing UNSCR 1325, as part of the Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process (PARP) includes a Partnership Goal on Gender Perspectives (G0013), which includes recommendation on “the removal of legal barriers to women’s equal opportunities and meaningful participation in defence and security institutions; the establishment of a network of gender advisors within MoD and the Ukraine Armed Forces (UAF); institutionalization of gender awareness training for all defence and security personnel; building the capacity to collect and report sex-disaggregated data; and integrating gender expertise in the planning, execution, and evaluation of operations”.^{35,36} In addition, NATO gender policy provides for integrating gender-based approaches to activities such as planning, operation, mission, education and training, taking into account gender aspects in NATO policies and programmes in all spheres and at all levels.³⁷

The Ministry of Defence was the first government institutions of Ukraine, which established the Working Group for implementation of 1325, and corresponding action plan was developed. Since 2017, the sectoral action plans have been adopted and implemented by the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National police, the State Border Guard Service, the State Emergency Service and the

National Guard. The **Women, Peace and Security working group, created by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine**,³⁸ is actively working on changing attitudes towards women in the army. On 6 September 2018, the **Law of Ukraine #2523 "On Amendments to some laws of Ukraine on providing equal rights and opportunities of women and men during active service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military institutions"**³⁹ was adopted. As Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security and Defence, Ivan Vinnyk, pointed out, "this law is about gender equality of women and men during their service in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Overall, the essence of this law is that we do not segregate people into men and women, and, in fact, all people enjoy the same rights as they serve".⁴⁰ According to gender expert Olena Suslova, "the complication is, the society still holds on to the stereotype that portrays woman only as a victim of conflict, one who passively suffers all troubles caused by forced relocation, and physical violence, an attribute of war, but not a person able to take proactive actions or to facilitate resolution of the conflict as a negotiator, a servicewoman, etc".⁴¹

The international community has drawn attention to resolving issues of sexual violence in armed conflicts. This was recognized also through Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad receiving the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize "for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflicts".⁴² In Ukraine, the state, NGOs and mass media pay little attention to the topic of rape and sexual violence in the armed conflict in the East. As Lesia Pahulich and Olha Vesnianka point out, "organizations do not have sufficient resources and capacities to help women who suffered from sexual violence; the government does not provide funds and does not pay attention to development of the system of social, psychological and health care services for rehabilitation and support of victims of rape in the armed conflict".⁴³

A problematic sphere for women in the military is access to military education. For example, motorized infantry brigade press officer Polina Kravchenko was denied entry to the training programme for officers at the Petro Sahaidachny National Ground Forces Academy because she is a woman.⁴⁴

Eugenia Kovalenko⁴⁵ studied the issues of women's access to military education in her 2017 bachelor's thesis in sociology. She mentions



Tetiana TARAN,
call sign **Barbie**
Volunteer

Since September 2015, served as a paramedic in the "Hospitaliery" Battalion in the village of Shyrokyne. From December 2017 to May 2019, served as paramedic in the 5th Special Volunteer Battalion of the Ukrainian Volunteer Army in the Assault division.

in her thesis, 'Women who have motivation, proper education and knowledge should have full rights for self-actualization in the military sphere. In addition, giving women access to military education will facilitate improvements in the quality of the military personnel and in interpersonal relations in military educational institutions. It is advisable to remove limitations for women's admission to military educational institutions and to remove limitations on military positions for women. In particular, a domain that is absolutely closed for women in Ukraine is military lyceums and advanced military and physical training lyceums. In higher military educational institutions, women face limited access to a number of military vocations, which does not guarantee them future employment due to some military professions being banned for women'.

Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro Atlantic integration of Ukraine, said, "without introducing a gender component, a full-fledged reform of the military education is impossible".⁴⁶ The politician also discussed the two-year project of introducing gender education implemented by ten universities. "We launched an important project, focused on unification of gender education in the security and defence sector. It is about development of textbooks for various military and police agencies, preparation of curricula / professional development programmes / retraining of professors (trainers), who work in educational institutions in the security and defence sector".

According to Lieutenant General⁴⁷ Anatoliy Petrenko, Vice-minister of Defence of Ukraine in the issues of European integration, "military universities have all conditions for women to enter, study, receive their basic officer ranks and start officer careers. Now, more than 160 girls expressed their wish to enter such institutions. Now they are future officers".⁴⁸

Although the number of women who work in the security and defence sector has increased in recent years, the number remains comparatively low. As of 2017,⁴⁹ women constituted 10.6% in the Armed Forces of Ukraine; 6.2% of the National Guard; 17.3% of the National Police and 24% of the State Border Guard Service. In 2017, 12.5% of the personnel on the peacekeeping positions were women (the personnel arrived with police and with the National Guard). More

than 55 thousand women (25 thousand of whom are service personnel), serve or work in the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which have total of 255 thousand people.⁵⁰ Of that, almost 3.4 thousand are female officers. In the central administration of the Ministry of Defence, 47% of officials are women.⁵¹

Women continue to be perceived more as some kind of ‘decoration’ of the army. For example, consider this a description of women’s presence at the 2018 Independence Day parade: “the holiday was decorated by the female military students of the Military Institute of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University and the Kruty Heroes Military Institute of Telecommunications and Information Technologies. Their integrated battalion indeed was the most beautiful”.⁵²

In a 31 August 2018 Facebook post, Member of Parliament Iryna Suslova used official data⁵³ to refute “all talks about female police and special service officers and servicewomen being freeloaders – those are typical excuses due to reluctance of men-dominated groups to admit women to their ranks”. In particular, as the MP pointed out, “this data refutes the myth about women’s work being useless”. According to 2018 data, only a small percentage of women took their three-year parental leave: 9% of women employed in the Security Service of Ukraine, 4% of women employed in the National Police and 8% – in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (including unpaid leave for caring for a child under six years of age).

Iryna Suslova continued, “in the recent four years, the dynamics is stable. In [the Security Service of Ukraine] and in the police, the number of women taking parental leave even decreased. The percentage is similar to civilian governmental agencies. Which means, there is no conspiracy by women to pump off money from the army and police using parental leave!” She concluded, “diligence and efficiency of women officers (just like that of men) is determined by personal factors, not by sex”.

Iryna Suslova also pointed out that more and more women are joining the ranks of militarized services and performing the work that until recently was considered for men only. “Our Army is a typical example of this. In 2014, the number of women in military service was 16.5 thousand, now it is already 24.9 thousand. They operate in the very center of war and show striking heroism and bear all losses and

difficulties stoically. I am proud of every woman, who, in spite of stereotypes, pursues her career in the army, police, National Guard or in [the Security Service of Ukraine], and, I hope, soon they will get rid of all denigrating gender myths”.

Studying and actual introduction of social and legal mechanisms which take into account, first of all, the needs of women veterans, can be the very instrument to allow improved transparency and efficiency in activities of all government bodies, in particular, those that deal with social security of veterans and combat participants, as well as to improve the situation with adherence to the state’s international and national commitments on ensuring the supremacy of human rights and development of civil society.

The appointment of gender advisers (experts) in the structure of government bodies is an important step in the policy of providing equal rights and opportunities for women and men. According to Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, “in Ukraine, 80% of central governmental bodies of the executive power already assigned commissioners or coordinators in charge of adherence to policy on providing equal rights and opportunities for women and men... five Ministries – Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Ministry of Education – have already assigned their advisers for gender issues”.⁵⁴

Despite the aforementioned positive changes, the state agencies responsible for social security for veterans, including female veterans, lack dedicated department advisers for ensuring the rights of female veterans (e.g. the newly established Ministry for Veteran Affairs, the State Service for War Veterans and Participants in the Anti-Terrorist Operation; territorial administrations of labour and social protection of the population; bodies of local self-government).

Several problems cause gender imbalances in military service, including:⁵⁵

- the prevalence of gender stereotypes (the Armed Forces are traditionally the most conservative institution in relation to gender equality);

- administrative/housing/logistics aspects of service for women are insufficiently regulated;
- limitations on women's social rights as to the observance of the effective legislation on motherhood and childhood (in particular, difficulties with child care due to lack of infrastructure);
- insufficient representation of servicewomen in public discourse;
- a ban on certain military professions for women.

The results of the sociological research 'Invisible Battalion' (2015), presented below, confirm the validity of these listed issues.

1.3. The 'Invisible Battalion' Campaign: Major Results and Impact on the Status of Women in the Armed Forces

A 2015 sociological study, 'Invisible Battalion': Women's Participation in ATO Military Operations in Ukraine',⁵⁶ found that the Armed Forces of Ukraine – similar to the job market in general – exhibit vertical and horizontal gender segregation. The results of the empirical study (a survey of 42 women who fight or fought in the ATO) revealed major challenges. Almost all respondents indicated that they encountered problems with their ability to make decisions in the army, largely because women are not included in the decision-making in the Armed Forces. Other, day-to-day life issues that are rarely discussed by the government include the lack of specialized health care for women, lack of proper shoes and uniform sizes and unsatisfactory housing conditions. The infrastructure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine is equipped for needs of men only and excludes from the army women's specific needs. The experts in the defence sector have a critical view about conscription for men only and suggest alternatives instead.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the **Armed Forces of Ukraine have developed a gender policy**, which is harmonized with the national gender policy. The gender policy envisages effective implementation of a gender approach in day-to-day life in the army to establish guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for people regardless of their sex. This policy may face problems with the sustainability of its mechanisms and the feasibility of implementing the declared policy of equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The 'Invisible Battalion' strategy for 2016-2017 was developed with a focus on achieving gender equality in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and in the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.⁵⁷ As Maria Berlinska pointed out, "the strategy's key idea is that women and men should be able to routinely serve in the security and defence sector, and their selection should be based on the professional criterion, and this should be the only criterion. So that it does not happen based on some gender-related criteria, but only on whether the person in question is a professional".⁵⁸

Servicewomen have stepped up to defend their rights in the Armed Forces of Ukraine. For example, in January 2016, in Kyiv, female activists advocating equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the Armed Forces marched from the Southern Railroad station to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. The event organizers named it the "March of the Invisible Battalion".⁵⁹

In addition, the sociological research 'Invisible Battalion' brought about the Decree of the Ministry Defence of Ukraine No. 292 as of June 3, 2016,⁶⁰ amending the Temporary List of Staff Positions of Soldiers and Petty Officers. This list was increased by more than 100 combat military vocations.

Results of the sociological study 'Invisible Battalion' were supplemented by visual images of women in ATO. The images became part of the '**Invisible Battalion**' 2016 calendar, created by the Mex Advertising agency on the initiative of the Ukrainian Women's Fund and the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine. At the 9th National Festival of Public Service Announcement, the calendar was awarded the Grand Prix, won in the category of "State-produced Public Service Announcement," and came in second in the category of "Public Service Announcement of Funds and Charitable Organizations".⁶¹

In 2017, the Ukrainian anthology documentary, '**Invisible Battalion**', was produced about women in the conditions of hostilities in the east of Ukraine.⁶² Narrated by three Ukrainian female film directors (Iryna Tsilyk, Svitlana Lishchynska, and Alina Horlova), the documentary presented six servicewomen's stories. Although the film's protagonists differ in their life experience, age, military and civilian vocations, they all have the war in common; their stories create a panorama of

The sociological research 'Invisible Battalion' brought about the Decree of the Ministry Defence of Ukraine No. 292 as of June 3, 2016, amending the Temporary List of Staff Positions of Soldiers and Petty Officers. This list was increased by more than 100 combat military vocations.

women's status in the Armed Forces.⁶³ The film has been screened in various cities of Ukraine, in Canada and in the United States. Another documentary, '**No obvious signs**', about a woman at war and the issues of rehabilitation after ATO (directed by Alina Horlova), received four awards at the 15th International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival 'Docudays UA' 2018.

1.4. Gender Impact Assessment of the Security and Defence Sector in Ukraine: Results of the Research in 2017⁶⁴

When preparing for the adoption of UNSCR 1325,⁶⁵ civil society groups from around the world played a key role by urging the international community to unequivocally add the political gender dimension of peace and security policies to the UN Security Council Resolution.⁶⁶ As Iohana Barelkovska from the German Women's Security Council pointed out, 2000 women's organizations continue to promote gender-sensitive policies of peace and security and continue to monitor, with a critical eye, the actions of high officials in their countries.⁶⁷

In close cooperation with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, Gender Impact Assessment of the security and defence sector in Ukraine⁶⁸ was conducted from May to August in 2017 by UN Women. The assessment was conducted within the framework of implementation of UNSCR 1325 and action plans in the sphere of women, peace and security. The assessment covered five security and defence sector agencies:

- the Ministry of Defence and General Staff;
- the Ministry of Internal Affairs;
- the National Police;
- the State Border Guard Service;
- the National Guard.⁶⁹

Gender Impact Assessment showed that the leaders of the security and defence sector do not see gender equality as a part of the reform of the sector. Within the framework of institutions in this sector, coordination in implementation of action plans for the women, peace and security agenda is rather limited: security institutions lack necessary capacities and experience for advancing gender equality at strategic, operational and tactical levels; women have little or no support in developing

their capacities and leadership skills; and discrimination and sexual harassment against women are widespread in the security and defence sector. Still, affirmative actions have been introduced to expand career opportunities for women — in particular, maternity leave is included in the continuity of service.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND NATIONAL LEGAL PERSPECTIVES IN THIS CHAPTER IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING STRENGTHS TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN UKRAINIAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE SECTOR:

1. Developing further the policy of equal rights and opportunities of women and men in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
2. Drawing attention to women's status in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in general and specifically at war, advocating for the rights of servicewomen at the socio-political level.
3. Engaging women into the security and defence sector as actors for change.

THE FOLLOWING GAPS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Lack of political will to implement the policy of equal rights and opportunities of women and men in general, and in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in particular.
2. Entrenched gender stereotypes concerning the roles of women and men, including those related to war.
3. Vertical and horizontal gender segregation of the job market, particularly in relation to employment in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

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2

SOCIAL AND LEGAL PROTECTION OF FEMALE AND MALE ATO VETERANS:

GENDER ASPECTS

2.1. The Veteran's Movement and the Needs of Veterans: International Experience and Ukraine

Attitudes towards women in military and police structures are influenced by a number of factors, including political (e.g. women's involvement in politics, a country's political system and relations between civilians and the military), cultural (e.g. public discourse concerning gender and societal attitudes towards family and gender relations) and socioeconomic (e.g. economic development and engagement of women in the labour market, as well as women's access to economic resources).⁷⁰ Women's roles and participation in military and police structures is determined by strategic perspectives (in particular, of the national security system), military culture (such as attitudes towards women and men in the army and police), and by organizational structures.

In changing their status from service person to veteran, women and men face several problems that need to be resolved. In response, they established veterans' organizations that aggregate into a veteran's movement. For example, the American Legion NGO⁷¹ was established in 1919 during World War I. It has been quite successful; the United States Congress adopted a special law for them. Currently, the American Legion has over 2 million members and has 55 branches throughout the country. Other examples of veteran's organizations include the Royal Canadian Legion and the German Military Association (Deutscher Bundeswehrverband).⁷²

There is powerful representation of veteran organizations at the international level. In 1950, the World Veterans Federation⁷³ was established. Its 45 million members include representatives from 121 countries. The World Veterans Federation supports peace, monitors the observance of international humanitarian laws during hostilities and organizes charitable activities for the benefit of victims of war.

However, the visibility of women in the veterans' movement remains an issue. For example, in the United States, women have participated in all military conflicts, starting with the American Revolution (1765-1783).⁷⁴ Women became more visible after they participated in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2015, the Pentagon officially opened all combat vocations for women at war. Currently, women are the fastest growing group in the United States military. Further, there are about two million women veterans.⁷⁵

To promote their interests of women in the veterans' movement, women veterans have their own veterans' organizations or subsections (departments) in general veteran organizations. For example, the National Women Veterans United⁷⁶ is a network of women veterans who were (or still are) serving in the United States Armed Forces. The organization's mission is to promote women veterans' interests and to unite them, with a special focus on vulnerable groups (women with disabilities and risk of homelessness). Some states have their own women veterans' organizations, such as Women Veterans of Nevada. In addition, governmental veteran structures can have services or centres that address the problems of women veterans. For example, the United States Department of Veteran Affairs has the Center for Women Veterans.⁷⁷

Studies of the veteran's movement in Soviet and post-Soviet societies take into account the experiences of World War II and the War in Afghanistan.⁷⁸ The legal framework for regulating the status of veterans in Ukraine was established in the early 1990s due to the veterans' movement of former Ukrainian participants in the military operation of Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1979-1989. In particular, the Law of Ukraine, On status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection was adopted in 1993.⁷⁹ Based on the Article 4 of this Law, the definition of war veterans include combat participants, people with disabilities caused due to the war (war veterans with disability⁸⁰), war participants and people who participated in protection of the Motherland or in hostilities on the territory of other states. The existence of the Afghanistan veterans' movement and the lobbying for veterans' problems in the 1990s promoted society's acknowledgement of these problems. Recent veteran's movement efforts did not need to start from scratch, as certain developments were already there. Anna Colin Lebedev, researcher of the veteran's movement, pointed out that the State Service of Ukraine for War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation⁸¹ was created by a veteran of the war in Afghanistan.

There is academic interest to the topic of war veterans and disability. Military sociology and gender studies expert Natalia Danylova studies war veterans within the framework of disability and men's studies.⁸² "A career of a war veterans with disability should be divided into two categories: 'wounding' and disability. In combat operation, the soldier gets wounded. The situation of being wounded is directly linked with

physical pain and emotional shock. Disability is a social phenomenon, the experience of which is formed in peaceful life".⁸³

The notion of disability challenges the ideals of traditional (hegemonic) masculinity, where men are expected to have strength and a physically developed body. In addition, as sociologist Olena Strelnyk pointed out, disability is viewed as something general, without differentiation of peculiarities of lives and identities of women and men.⁸⁴ Women's disability draws less attention and is even less studied compared to men's disability, especially taking into account the situation of war and the condition of the veteran's movement.

The status of veterans is analysed in academic literature, primarily with regard to their legal status and rights to have benefits from the state. For example, Natalia Kulak considers the issue of the legal status of the volunteer military units in Ukraine.⁸⁵ The volunteer movement, a separate subject of interest, emerged in this war.⁸⁶

2.2. ATO Veterans: Socio-demographic Characteristics

In the late summer of 2018, the State Service of Ukraine for War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation began providing statistical information from the Unified register of ATO participants. As of 1 August 2018, the Register had entries for 12,010 women who received the status of combat participant who were protecting independence, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Ukraine and who participated directly in or in support of the ATO. In addition, 33 women are registered as people with disabilities caused by war (see Appendix A).

As Tables A.1 and A.2 of Appendix A show, women constitute 3.5% of the total number of combat participants⁸⁷ (as of 1 August 2018, the total number is approximately 345,000). Women constitute 1% of the 3,369 combat participants with disabilities.

The largest percentages of female combat participants are in the National Police (12.2%), the Security Service of Ukraine (6.7%), the State Emergency Service (6.4%), and the Foreign Intelligence Service (5.1%). The largest number of women 8,027 (3.4%) with the status of combat participant serve under the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

In terms of region, the largest numbers of women combat participant are registered in Donetska (2,280, or 15.8% of the total number of veterans), Luhanska (1,378, or 14.0% of total number of veterans), Dnipropetrovska (830, or 2.9% of total number of veterans), Kharkivska (571, or 3.7% of total number of veterans), Zhytomyrska (652, or 3.8% of total number of veterans), Lvivska (608, or 2.7% of total number of veterans) oblasts, in Kyiv city (525, or 2.9% of total number of veterans), and in Kyivska oblast (500, or 2.9% of total number of veterans). The largest numbers of women combat participants who sustained a disability caused by war were registered in Volynska (11, or 2.9% of total number of veterans), Dnipropetrovska (8, or 2.0% of total number of veterans), and Zhytomyrska (5 or 1.6% of total number of veterans) oblasts (see Appendix A, Table A.2).

Some issues of ATO veterans were studied in 2016 within the framework of the sociological research that the Department of Sociology of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University conducted on the initiative of the Charitable Fund of War Veterans and ATO Participants.⁸⁸ The study consisted of a telephone survey of approximately 1,000 ATO veterans who live in Kyiv city and Kyivska, Kirovohradska, Odeska oblasts, Rivnenska, and Zaporizka oblasts. The information collected was not disaggregated by sex. The overwhelming majority of respondents got to ATO while in military service (enlistment by contract). People without higher education and rural residents were engaged in ATO due to mobilization, not enlistment.⁸⁹

Staying on the frontlines took a toll on ATO participants' health: 53.6% of those veterans who participated in active combat responded that their health became worse because of it. Despite hard conditions, 53% of respondents intend to continue their military careers. They are predominantly city residents with higher education and those who enlisted to participate in ATO by contract.

Major issues that veterans are concerned about include financial difficulties, lack of their own housing, violations of their rights for social guarantees, unsatisfactory state policies, health issues and burdensome government agency bureaucracy when formalizing their benefits.



Olena BILOZERSKA

Lieutenant

Olena Bilozerska was a Kyiv-based journalist, blogger and civil activist before the conflict. Since 2014 she has been a sniper in the SSC Right Sector and the Ukrainian Volunteer Army. Since 2018, she is an officer of the Marines of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Cavalier of the Order of Courage of the 3rd degree.

With regards to employment, 50.4% of respondents are in military service; 33.1% are employed as civilians. More than 10% of respondents are not employed (of them, 6.4% are registered unemployed; 4.2% of respondents do not work and do not have other sources). The main reasons for ATO veterans' unemployment are lack of available and acceptable jobs (36.3%) and impossibility to work due to health problems (28.1%). More than half of unemployed veterans plan to find a job in the future.

Regarding employed ATO veterans, most (22.1% of respondents) work in blue-collar positions. The professions next by popularity are police officers, firefighters and drivers (10.2% each) and security guards (7.6%). Employed ATO veterans are generally satisfied with their current employment (of them, 29.2% are "completely satisfied", and 31% are "rather satisfied"). However, 34.4% of respondents expressed a desire to change their occupation.

Self-employment as a type of employment (individual entrepreneur or a head of a legal entity) is mostly unfamiliar to veterans (81.4% do not have such experience). Interest in a programme that could help ATO veterans open their own business is quite high; 30.6% of respondents said they are "absolutely interested" and 20.4% said they were "partly interested".

As to governmental programmes and benefits,⁹⁰ 37% of respondents use two programmes, 30.5% use three programmes, only 8% use four programmes and less than one percent use all available programmes. Respondents were most aware of the programmes related to receiving land lots (98%), for free transportation (94%), and for residential maintenance and utilities (94%). Respondents were the most satisfied with the residential maintenance, utilities and communications services benefits (72%), and the least satisfied with the benefit programme on receiving land lots.

Another report, the Report on the Results of the Study of the Social Protection System for Combat Participants and Family Members of those who Perished in ATO (2016),⁹¹ found a high level of respondent awareness about the rights to receive benefits and services guaranteed by the state for combat participants and people disabled in war. At the time of that survey, the majority of respondents have used or use

three types of benefits: a right for free transportation in city passenger transport and in near-city and intercity buses (84%), benefits for utilities and residential maintenance bills (72%), and travel benefits in intercity railroad, water, air and motor transport (57%).⁹²

Part of the research was dedicated to evaluating the professional level of female combat participants in performing their occupational duties. Research results revealed that the experience of service together with women causes a higher evaluation of their professional level. That is, respondents who served with women are more often inclined to evaluate female combat participants as being “more competent than men” from the professional point of view, compared to those who never served together with women (11% versus 7%, respectively). In addition, those who served with women are more likely to evaluate the performance of women in service as being “equal to men” (37% vs. 20% of those who never served together with women).⁹³

2.3. Analysis of the Legislative Regulations related to the Status and Needs of ATO Veterans in Ukraine

The main piece of legislation that regulates issues of veterans' social protection is the Law of Ukraine On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection,⁹⁴ which provides for the primacy of the international law standards in cases where international treaties guarantee higher standards of social protection for veterans. However, in current international treaties, conventions and agreements that were made binding by the state, there are no requirements to ensure better social protection for veterans.

The Law of Ukraine On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection provides for a system of social guarantees for veterans, regardless of their sex.

Health care

- Free provision of medicine, medications, medical immunobiological drugs and medical products based on medical prescriptions (in case of outpatient treatment of the underlying disease out of the list approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of August 17, 1998, No. 1303 (as amended). Patients who have

AIDS and HIV-infected people have a right for free medications regardless of their underlying disease.

- Priority, free dental prosthetics (with the exception of prosthetics that uses precious metals).
- Free sanatorium and resort treatment, or compensation of the price of the sanatorium and resort treatment taken on the veteran's own initiative (the amount of such compensation is determined and revised by the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine).
- Yearly medical clinical examination, with engagement of all necessary specialists.
- Priority servicing in medical care facilities, pharmacies and a right for priority hospitalization.

Residential maintenance and utilities and providing housing (land)

- 75% discount in payment for residential maintenance and utility services (for a set housing area per person, and, additionally, for the family, regardless of the type of housing and pattern of ownership). If veterans (including women veterans) have a disability, the discount is 100% (for a set housing area per family).
- 75% discount for fuel, including liquid fuel, within the standards established for sale to general population, for people who live in houses without central heating (regardless of the type of housing and pattern of ownership).
- Priority provision of housing if improvement of housing conditions is needed, and priority allocation of land lots for private housing construction, gardening, and farming, priority repairs of private houses and apartments of female and male veterans and providing fuel for them (if there is no central heating). In cases where men or women were wounded, shell-shocked or disabled in combat or when performing their duties on military service, when needed, housing must be provided to them within two years from the day of registration in the governmental apartment provision programme.

- Receiving a loan for construction, reconstruction or major repairs of a house and yard buildings for connection to utility networks, communications, as well as a loan for construction or purchasing of summer buildings and landscaping of gardening plots. The loan is to be repaid within 10 years, starting from the fifth year after completion of the construction. Currently, this specific benefit is not provided to veterans, regardless of their sex, due to absence of the necessary procedure for providing this benefit, which needs to be developed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.
- A priority right for housing cooperative societies, cooperatives for construction and maintenance of collective garages, car parking and maintenance facilities, gardening societies and purchasing materials for private construction and garden buildings.

Transportation

- Free rides in all types of city passenger transport, public motor transport in rural areas as well as railroad and water transport in near-city and intercity routes, including intra-rayon, intra- and inter-oblast routes, regardless of the distance and the location of the veteran's residence, if the veteran has the identification card of the established standard, and in case of implementation of an automated system for passage control. The veteran should also present an electronic ticket, issued to them free of charge. Currently, this benefit is gradually getting monetized, in accordance to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of March 14, 2018 No. 197.
- Free rides once every two years (two-way) via railroad, water, air or intercity motor transport, regardless of availability of railroad in the area, or passage once per year (two-way) using the types of transport mentioned above, with a 50% discount.

Social security and labour guarantees

- The use of outpatient clinics and hospitals, to which they were attached during the previous place of employment, after retirement (regardless of the age of retirement) or change of the place of employment.

- Priority admittance to institutions of social protection (residential care facilities) as well as getting social care services at home. In case such service by the institutions of social protection of population is impossible, the expenses related to social protection care of the veterans must be remunerated, based on the procedure and in the amount specified by the legislation in effect.
- For combat participants, pensions, monthly lifelong support payments or state social support paid instead of pension, are increased by 25% of the living wage for people who became unemployable.
- The annual one-time support payment is provided by 5 May to the veterans, based on the amount determined under the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.
- Payment of temporary disability support in the amount of 100% of the average salary, regardless of seniority.
- Use of a scheduled monthly vacation in the time convenient for veterans, as well as granting an additional paid vacation, 14 calendar days per year.
- A priority to be retained in employment in case of lay-offs caused by changes in the employer's organizations and a right to get employed in the case of liquidation of the employer's enterprise, institution or organization.
- For the special period, in accordance to provisions of Article 119 of the Labor Laws Code, the workplaces and average salaries are to be kept for persons who volunteered to enlist or who were mobilized to the military service by contract (to enjoy this privilege, the person, regardless of his or her sex, does not have to be a veteran or have the status of combat participant).

Education

- Providing the state-targeted support for combat participants and their children in receiving education in vocational schools and in higher educational institutions.

Tax benefits / rebates for veterans

- Tax benefits related to the payment of taxes, contributions, levies and other payments to the budget in accordance to the tax and customs legislation (currently, for veterans there is a benefit specified in the tax legislation, as to the payment of land tax at 0% rate).

Other benefits

- Priority use of all communication services and priority installation of landline telephones with a discount (payment in the amount of 20% from the tariffs of basic works and 50% of additional works). The subscriber's fee for using the landline is established in the amount of 50% from the approved tariffs.
- Priority servicing by enterprises, institutions and organizations by household services, catering institutions, utility providers and intercity transport.


For persons with disability caused by war

- There is an extensive list of legally provided social guarantees. In addition to the 100% discount for utility payments, people with disability caused by war (regardless of their sex) receive benefits such as priority sanatorium and resort treatment and priority free refurbishment of their housing once a decade.

Benefits for family members of female and male veterans

- The benefits include their children's education in vocational schools and higher educational institutions.

According to the legislation in Ukraine, social protection and state support of veterans is granted based on the status of combat participant in the ATO (JFO) zone, which is established regardless of sex. This approach is fully consistent with the constitutional principle of equality (including equality of sexes). However, problems lie in the effective implementation of these legislative provisions.

A portrait of a woman in a digital camouflage military uniform, smiling and looking off-camera. She has dark hair pulled back and is wearing a blue watch on her left wrist. The background is a blurred green forest. On her left sleeve, there is a patch with the Ukrainian tricolor and a stylized 'U' emblem. A name tag is visible on her chest.

**Kateryna
KORNIENKO**

Lieutenant Colonel of the
Armed Forces of Ukraine

In the Armed Forces of
Ukraine since 2000. In
2015, served during the
armed conflict in the East
of Ukraine to ensure its
territorial integrity.

The status of combat participant gives a right to enjoy the same benefits, regardless of needs of female and male veterans. Disregarding people's actual needs (e.g. economic, social, medical, psychological) is a problem for all veterans, both women and men. Ensuring social guarantees for veterans in the future should consider combat participants' individual needs. For this, we recommend conducting research and surveys about the level of use of the legally provided guarantees and the sufficiency of provided benefits; further amendments to laws and by-laws should be based on the research results.

By-laws do not extend the list of benefits for veterans; they only regulate the mechanism (procedure) for their application. For example, there is a Directive of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of March 14, 2018, No. 197⁹⁵, which provides for monetization (granting in monetary form) of the transportation benefits for combat participants (regardless of their sex).

Therefore, the legally accorded social protection guarantees for veterans do not depend on the sex of people eligible for them, yet it is necessary to research separately the needs of the women veterans after they finish their military service and to improve the awareness-raising campaign about available opportunities for women veterans and ways to use them. Such campaigns would be especially impactful for women living in remote localities.

2.4. Social Protection Programmes of Female and Male Veterans in Ukraine: International, State, Community level experiences

State Budget-funded social protection programmes for veterans and their implementation:

Granting housing

Veterans who need improved housing conditions in accordance with the requirements of the legislation in effect have a right to such improvement on a priority basis (wherein people with disabilities are given the top priority). Statistical data for the number of people on the waiting lists for housing indicates considerable issues with the realization of those benefits. Thus, budget allocations for granting housing to veterans and their families must undergo thorough audits

to assess their effectiveness. According to the Law of Ukraine On State Budget of Ukraine for 2018, the government allocations for the budget-funded programme of providing state budget subventions to local budgets for construction (or purchase) of housing for 1) families of military personnel who participated directly in the ATO and were killed in the line of duty and for 2) the disabled personnel of groups 1-2⁹⁶ who participated in the ATO and need improvement of their housing conditions,⁹⁷ are allocated 329.8 million hryvnias (this is the same as allocated in 2017). According to the budget request of the Ministry of Social Policy for 2018-2020, it is planned to use these funds to pay for 452 compensations for housing.

Housing provisions and registration in the housing waiting list are performed for veterans on a priority basis (persons with a disability caused by war are granted top priority) regardless of sex, but the current progress rate of providing housing to people cannot satisfy the present needs of veterans and members of their families.

Therefore, gender factors should be considered when changing approaches to the registration of people who require improvement of housing conditions. To improve the situation with housing provision, consideration should be given not only the status of a person as entitled to benefits but also their underlying social and economic conditions.

Professional adaptation of veterans

Based on information from the portal of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, as of August 2018 a budget-funded psychological, social, and professional adaptation programme was implemented (budget-funded programme passport No.2505150).⁹⁸ The mechanism for facilitating social and professional adaptation is outlined in the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of March 31, 2015, No. 179 On Approval of Procedure for use of Funds Allocated in the State Budget for Measures for Social and Professional Adaptation of Participants of Anti-terrorist Operation and Injured Participants of the Revolution of Dignity. For its effective implementation, it is advisable to increase the share of expenses that go directly to cover the needs of professional adaptation and expansion of the list of vocations; this can effectively help women veterans in reintegrating into civilian life.

It is advisable to separate public financing for programmes and measures of social adaptation from professional adaptation within the framework of the Ministry of Veterans because currently the distribution of funds, in accordance to the Decree, is taking place based only on the number of combat participants in each oblast regardless of their professional and social needs.

Another problem is that in Ukraine, there is no monitoring of the employment levels of female and male veterans, even though the example of the United States shows that acknowledging and considering veterans' specific employment needs is an effective method.⁹⁹ In the United States, the Veteran Employment Opportunity Act¹⁰⁰ is in effect. This law focuses on the transformation of people who participated in military operations into economic leaders of civil society. A similar mechanism for securing veterans' employment rights is in effect in the United Kingdom; the Association for Employment of Former Professional Military Personnel is operating in many cities across the country.

Therefore, in addition to increasing funding for professional adaptation programmes for veterans, it is advisable to research women veterans' professional needs and opportunities.

Psychological rehabilitation

Based on information of the Ministry of Health, 77% of participants of Ukraine's war against Russian aggression need psychological rehabilitation.¹⁰¹ On 6 April 2018, the procedures for using funds allocated in the state budget for measures for social and professional adaptation of ATO participants and participants who were injured in the Revolution of Dignity, approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers as of June 12, 2017, No. 497, was amended.¹⁰² Currently, budget spending is directed to satisfy veterans' needs in accordance to the principle of gender neutrality. For psychological rehabilitation, however, it is advisable to redistribute the funds based on the specific needs of female and male veterans.

Based on report by O. Burlaka, presented at the annual scientific conference of the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) in 2017, there are significant differences in the psychological problems of women and men in military service

(especially in the conditions of ATO (JFO): “a pronounced gender difference in response to combat stress in the military personnel in the ATO zone manifested in men as more frequent psychiatric symptoms in the form of an open and lucid experience, in contrast to more somatic symptoms in women, which was mainly connected with their reproductive health. The research conducted by Ukrainian specialists showed that servicewomen are more sensitive to the combat stress factors and show a higher chance of developing post-traumatic stress disorder and depression”.¹⁰³

This leads to the conclusion that different psychological traumas sustained by women and men in service require different rehabilitation mechanisms after they become veterans, and, correspondingly, call for separate budget funding because gender factors condition various needs as to ensuring effective psychological rehabilitation. However, current legislative acts that regulate this issue do not specifically take into account the needs of women veterans.

Sanatorium and resort treatment

A right to free sanatorium and resort treatment for the participants of the war of Ukraine against the Russian aggression is formalized in Article 4 of the Law of Ukraine On Rehabilitation of the Handicapped in Ukraine; Articles 12-16 of the Law of Ukraine On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection, clause 3, part 1; Article 11 of the Law of Ukraine On Social and Legal Protection of Service Personnel and Members of their Families. Sanatorium and resort treatment as a benefit is granted on a gender-neutral basis. There are several budget-funded programmes that secure implementation of this benefit, including:

- Based on Budget Programme No. KPKVK 2505150 Measures for Psychological Rehabilitation, Social and Professional Adaptation of the Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation and Providing Resort Rehabilitation for Injured Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (hereinafter referred to as KPKVK 2505150), resort treatment is reserved only for veterans of the war of Ukraine against the Russian aggression who have the status of combat participant or a war veterans with disability, in accordance to clauses 19 and 20 of part 1 of Article 6, and clauses 11-14 of part

2 of Article 7 of the Law of Ukraine On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection. The procedures for using public funds under this programme are outlined by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of 31 March 2015, No. 200 (hereinafter referred to as Decree No.200).

- Based on budget programmes of military and police institutions (For example, KPKVK 2101080 Medical Care, Rehabilitation and Providing Resort Treatment for Personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Veterans of Military Service, and Members of their Families and for War Veterans — hereinafter referred to as KPKVK 2101080), resort vouchers can be granted to combat participants, war veterans with disability, war participants and family members of those who perished (regardless of the conflict, in relation to which the benefit was granted), who either are in military service or receive their pension in accordance to the Law of Ukraine On Providing Pension to People Dismissed from the Military Service and Some Other Persons. The procedure of using the funds is established by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of April 27, 2011, No.446 (hereinafter referred to as Decree No.446).
- Based on programme KPKVK 2501470 Resort Treatment for War Veterans, people covered by the Law of Ukraine On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection and the Law of Ukraine On Victims of Nazi Persecutions and the Handicapped (hereinafter referred to as KPKVK 2501470), vouchers are available for veterans of the war of Ukraine against the Russian aggression and family members of those who perished, which do not fall under the categories described above, as well as war veterans with disability and other individuals who received their privileges based on the Laws of Ukraine On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection and On Victims of the Nazi Persecutions. The procedure for using funds is established by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of February 22, 2006, No.187 (hereinafter referred to as Decree No.187).

Providing vouchers for treatment in resorts takes place based on varying procedures, yet when granting these benefits, the factor of gender-differentiated needs is not taken into account. For simplification

of access to these benefits, we recommend at least streamlining all channels for granting vouchers for resort treatment to veterans under one agency.

Medical care

Free drugs and medications, regular examinations, periodic health assessments, and dental prosthetics are the components of the medical bloc of the Law of Ukraine On the Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection (see Chapter 2). According legislation (the Law of Ukraine On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of their Social Protection and the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as of September 17, 1998, No. 1303), combat participants and veterans, regardless of their sex, can receive free medications based on a list of diseases. Beginning in April 2018, there is also the Affordable Medication governmental programme. Starting in 2014, based on budget programme KPKVK 2301400 Securing Medical Measures under Specific State Programmes and Comprehensive Programmatic Measures within the framework of implementing state targeted programmes and programmatic measures, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine has budgeted for the centralized procurement of medications and medical products for patients with particularly grave diseases.

Similar to psychological rehabilitation, in order to maximize the effect of the guaranteed benefits it is advisable to identify the needs of women veterans concerning the restoration of their health. Currently, all legislatively provided social guarantees require specific additional research of their effectiveness for women veterans.

Local guarantees

At the regulatory level, additional legal protections are granted to women in military service (e.g. additional options for termination of contract and limitations on the types of punishments that can be used for offences they commit). There are no additional guarantees to women veterans from security sector institutions. There are also no transitional programmes for veterans' reintegration to civilian life after completion of the service, even though it could prevent many problems for veterans of both sexes and for their family members.



Ganna KOSINOVA

Private first class

Maidan volunteer. In November 2016, she signed a three-year contract with the Armed Forces, continuing her volunteering. Served in the 27th Artillery Brigade of Sumy. In May 2018, she was transferred to the Separate Presidential Regiment named after Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky. Participated in OOS in 2019. Clerk. Ganna's husband also served in the armed forces during 2014-2019 years. Has a 7-year old child who attends 2 grade at school.

In the United States, mechanisms for re-socialization are exercised after a person decides to leave military service. Payments to unemployed veterans are paid by the Department of Defence, which motivates a high level of social responsibility in the Department. For saving on expenses, there is an “obligatory course of preparation for civilian life even for personnel dismissed for incompetence”.¹⁰⁴ Preparations include professional and social adaptation, a short course of personal financial management, medical examinations and psychological tests. It is advisable that relevant specialists conduct the entire set of adaptation measures for women veterans.

Such programmes exist in many countries. Re-socialization of veterans is conducted by the ministries of veterans in countries such as Australia, Canada (as a federal ministry), Croatia and South Korea.¹⁰⁵

It is advisable to consider in more detail the additional opportunities offered to women veterans by local self-government bodies and NGOs. In addition to social protections stipulated at the legislative level, women veterans can use additional guarantees in the location of their residence or registration. Such options are formalized in local programmes and are financed from relevant local budgets.

For example, in the city of Kropyvnytskyi, obstetrician and gynaecological services are provided for female ATO combat participants and to the wives of those who died in ATO. In addition, there is a local benefit available for children of female and male veterans, i.e. free prescription medications for children of ATO combat participants under three years of age who are outpatients and a 50% discount on medications for such children from three to six years of age. Other benefits include free catering in schools, free rehabilitation for children and free passes to city museums for family members of female and male veterans.¹⁰⁶ Rehabilitation of children of ATO participants (regardless of their sex) is also granted in Chernihiv city.¹⁰⁷

In Lviv, the Women in Entrepreneurship programme’s targets include women veterans after they finish military service. The programme trains women in the basics of entrepreneurship and in starting and managing their own business. At the national level, based on government portal information, the Canadian-Ukrainian project of the “new financial support programme for innovative projects, focused on improvement of

economic options of women and most vulnerable strata of population for overcoming gender and socioeconomic inequality, including those that create for them favourable conditions for doing business in Ukraine” starts to function.¹⁰⁸

Projects supported by international donors

Beginning in 2016, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Project Coordinator¹⁰⁹ in Ukraine had three joint annual projects with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine that are related to the problems of women and men ATO/JFO veterans, including the following projects:

1) Response to Social Security Threats Caused by the Conflict (2016), which was related to:

- improvement of legislation for ensuring social protection and psychological rehabilitation of demobilized personnel;
- a textbook and training course on psychological rehabilitation of people affected by the conflict;
- GFK Ukraine (a private-sector company) conducted research on the quality of the comprehensive social, psychological, legal and other services to demobilized combat participants (including a survey of ATO participants, their family members, family members of those who perished and expert interviews with representatives of governmental agencies and local self-government bodies).

2) Support of the Ministry of Social Policy in Providing Help to People Who Suffered Due to the Conflict and Gender-based Violence (2017):

- improving the legislation to ensure social protection and psychological rehabilitation for the demobilized and members of their families (based on the results of the 2016 research);
- conducting trainings to test the textbook and the training course on psychological rehabilitation of population affected by the conflict (for psychologists and social workers), and finalization of the course and the textbook;
- analysis and printing of materials to inform demobilized ATO participants about employment and retraining opportunities.

3) Support of the Ministry of Social Policy in Counteraction to Gender-based Violence and (re)integration of the Population Affected by the Conflict (2018):

- providing expert support in developing regulatory acts on psychological rehabilitation of population affected by the conflict;
- regional trainings (including printing relevant textbooks) for psychologists and social sphere specialists conducted on providing psychological help to people affected by the conflict and to the families that live in close vicinity to the conflict zone;
- developing leaflets and a video clip on how to receive psychological rehabilitation for service personnel transferred to the reserve.

On 5 December 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the state-targeted programme on physical, medical and psychological rehabilitation and social and professional readaptation for ATO participants and for persons who participated in measures to secure the national security and defence and to repel and hold back the armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Donetska and Luhanska oblasts, securing their conducting, for the period till 2022.¹¹⁰ The Programme declares in its aim that specific needs of both women and men will be taken into account in addressing veterans' needs. The Programme's objectives and measures will be conducted in compliance with the principle of securing the equal rights and opportunities for women and men. Nonetheless, women's veteran movement activists were not engaged in the processes of developing and adopting this document.

2.5. Veteran's Movement and Involvement of Women in Ukraine

The website of the State Service of Ukraine on War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation offers the List of All-Ukrainian civil associations of ATO and war veterans.¹¹¹ As of 2018, 51 associations were listed, including: the Organization of Veterans of Ukraine; the All-Ukrainian Association of Veterans; the All-Ukrainian Union of War Veterans; the All-Ukrainian Association of ATO Combat Participants and Volunteers citizen group; the All-Ukrainian Association of Afghanistan and ATO veterans citizen group; and the Ukrainian Association of ATO war veterans with disability NGO.



Liudmyla DEMIANYK,
call sign Arrow

Junior Lieutenant of the reserve forces
of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Volunteer of the Ukrainian Volunteer
Army (UVA). Since August 2014
until February 2016 served as an
assistant to the Chief of Staff of the
5th Battalion and data specialist.
Currently serves as the head of the
administrative department of the UVA
Headquarters. Educational Coordinator
for the Women Veterans' Movement.

A minority group among veterans, women lead 4 of 51 all-Ukrainian citizens' groups of war- and ATO veterans.¹¹² Oryna Sokulska leads the All-Ukrainian Fellowship of Political Prisoners and Repressed Individuals NGO; Anastasia Hulei leads the Ukrainian Organization of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters (former political prisoners of fascist concentration camps); Iryna Mikhniuk leads the All-Ukrainian Civil Association of Families of those who Perished and Went Missing in Action, Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation, War Veterans and Activists of Volunteer Movement WINGS of the 8th HUNDRED citizen group; and Natalia Moskovets is the head of the Association of Wives and Mothers of fighters who participated in ATO.

In addition to All-Ukrainian citizens' associations such as the Association of ATO Participants of Ukraine¹¹³ and the Association of Wives and Mothers of fighters who participated in ATO,¹¹⁴ there are also regional organizations such as the Kyiv city association of ATO veterans.¹¹⁵ There are also numerous initiatives for supporting female and male ATO veterans: the National Campaign of Gratitude to the Military, Women and Men Veterans "Thanks you;"¹¹⁶ free clothing store for families of ATO participants who perished or were wounded in ATO¹¹⁷ (Dnipro city); engagement of veterans to public service (supporting their education in the public administration Master's programme in NaUKMA¹¹⁸) and many others.

The goals of the Veterans to Power! project¹¹⁹ (For VDV!) include training veterans for public service and integrating them into the bodies of the executive power. The project established training centres (that also act as recruitment agencies) in the cities of Kyiv and Kramatorsk. When a veteran enters the training programme, a career guidance specialist is assigned to him or her. After examining the candidate's experience and interests, the specialist provides an analytical report about the candidate's optimal specialization.

Women veterans can join a project coordinated by the Ukrainian Women's Fund, Equality for Security,¹²⁰ which is financed by the European Union. In early fall 2018, the Ukrainian Women's Fund, answering the questions on Facebook about the presence of women veterans in the project, answered, "right now, we form coalitions that will work on updating local action plans for 1325, and we want women

veterans to be part of these coalitions. Yet as of now, we do not have such women participants yet”.

Bez Broni (Without Armor) is an All-Ukrainian project focused on psychological and social support services for service personnel after ATO, as well as providing skilled legal and psychological informational support. They run the only database for verified centres that support ATO participants.¹²¹

On 14 February 2018, the government adopted a decision about new mechanisms for using funds to provide financial support to citizens' associations of veterans on a competitive basis.¹²² As the Legal Hundred pointed out, a national contest for identifying best projects was conducted and administrated by the State Service for War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (the results are approved by the Ministry of Social Policy). Only All-Ukrainian citizen's associations of war veterans, victims of Nazi persecutions and victims of political repressions can be beneficiaries of public funds in the national contest. Local contests (municipal, rayon, oblasts ones) are conducted and administrated by territorial administrations for social protection of population.

In the summer of 2018, near Kyiv, a founding meeting of the women's veteran movement¹²³ took place. The women at the meeting explained the need to organize a separate veteran 'block' for women, along with the shared one with men, because “women in the army are a minority, and at the meetings of men veterans, those few women in attendance have hard time voicing all their problems and needs and getting them resolved”. The event co-organizer, Oksana Ivantsiv, said “in Canada, as well as in the [United] States [of America], there is a very strong women veteran's movement. It inspired us — we found their FB pages, missions, and what they do — it is pretty much in harmony with what our girls have expressed”.¹²⁴

CHAPTER 2, CONCERNING SOCIAL AND LEGAL PROTECTIONS OF WOMEN AND MEN ATO VETERANS, REVEALS THE FOLLOWING STRENGTHS:

1. Society's attention and legislative regulation of the status of veterans, which started as early as the independence of Ukraine.
2. As sociological research conducted in 2016 shows, veterans possess a rather high level of awareness about the availability of government-provided benefits and often use them.
3. The establishment of the women's veteran movement in Ukraine, as a component of the broader veteran's movement, to lobby the interests and visibility of women among ATO veterans.

BASED ON THE INTERNATIONAL GOOD PRACTICES AND NATIONAL EXPERIENCES, CHAPTER 2 IDENTIFIES THE FOLLOWING GAPS:

1. Disregard of gender factors in social protection programmes for women and men veterans, particularly in providing effective psychological rehabilitation and in changing approaches to the registration system for people who require improvement of housing conditions.
2. Lack of governmental support (informational, legal, economic) to local governmental bodies, All-Ukrainian and local NGOs that develop and implement additional social guarantees and develop and readapt programmes for veterans and members of their families.
3. Veterans' insufficient levels of awareness about social protection guarantees and options for protecting their violated rights and interests.

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3

STATUS AND ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS OF FEMALE ATO VETERANS IN UKRAINE:

VOICES OF THE
'INVISIBLE BATTALION 2.0'

3.1. Experience Reintegration of Women in Civilian Life: Needs of Women

“Here, in the society, it’s very hard, harder than on the frontlines. By a thousand, by fifteen thousand times. Well, I do not know, it is this kind of feeling, like I am different. I believe, I probably am different”. (Focus group discussion)

The research team conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 14 female veterans and 8 male veterans. The latter were interviewed in order to understand whether problems are specific to women or if problems apply to all people who no longer serve. The age of female and male respondents varied from 22 to 47 years of age; their period of service varied from several months to four years. The respondents were from different regions of Ukraine (10 were from Kyiv, two were from Odesa and others were from cities such as Avdiyivka, Halych, Haysyn, Horlivska, Hust, and Ternopil). The interviews were conducted from July to September of 2018. The in-person or audio communication interviews were in Ukrainian and in Russian.

Female respondents were invited to discuss several aspects of their experience of return: employment, using services provided to women veterans by the state or by the non-governmental sector, state of physical and psychological health, communication with civilians, and attitude towards veteran activism (see questionnaire in Appendix C. 2).

Appendix B, Tables B.1 and B.2, contain generalized information about female and male participants. The tables do not include any personal information that could compromise respondents’ anonymity or help locate them. Respondent anonymity is preserved because sensitive topics were raised in the in-depth interviews, which female and male respondents were not prepared to discuss openly.

The survey is not representative, as the research team does not possess information about female veterans of Ukraine as a population. The research sample was designed using the snowball technique, by approaching women veterans at various events they attended, via a public invitation to take part in the survey and published on the social network Facebook. This method has its limitations, because

the research team did not get access to those potentially available women veterans who do not keep in touch with others (e.g. on their own will, due to the acute difficulties with adaptation in civilian life, because they do not use social networks, or because they do not want to advertise their experience of service). Because of this, the sample has a certain selection bias towards those more willing to communicate with their fellow servicewomen. A hypothetical woman veteran, who lives in a small village without access to the Internet and who has a serious chemical/drug addiction caused by post-traumatic stress disorder was unlikely to contact the researchers and to be considered into the sample for this research. These sampling limitations should be considered when reading the text.

In addition, during the Assembly of Women Veterans in July 2018, a focus group discussion was held with ten female Assembly participants. At the focus group discussion, the women were asked about the job market, military education, social protection, communication and attitude of society. The guide for focus group discussion is presented in Appendix C. 3.

3.1.1. Job market

The issue of employment is one of the main problems that women veterans are concerned about when returning to civilian life. Availability of a worthy employment brings self-actualization, financial stability and independence. It is also a method of quick socio-psychological reintegration into peaceful life. This research considers the difficulties related to the employment of women veterans and analyses aspects favourable to their employment.

The problem of employment for women veterans has at least **two aspects**: the practical aspect (the absence of jobs in a certain sphere or in a specific locality) and an existential one (absence of worthy/interesting work). Returning from the frontlines, a woman veteran often has to start from zero, because her position is already taken, or her interests have changed, and she needs to seek something different to do. All respondents, women and men, talked about how they need employment where they can self-actualize. They often explain this as a need to do something useful and to feel that they are needed at work. In addition, the psychological process of adapting to civilian life and employment takes a toll.

“

“People need to understand that coming back from there [the frontline], it is very hard to return to your workplace. In other words, there should be, possibly, programmes, aimed at adaptation, getting used to the new regular work”

(Female veteran 8)

Among the hardships related to employment, participants also mentioned low wages, lack of professionalism of employment service staff, inefficiencies in services provided, misunderstandings with colleagues, lack of funds for starting businesses, lack of knowledge for starting new businesses and health problems.

The interviewed women respondents did not have any positive experience of cooperation with employment services. Those who came to employment centres did not get employed. Vacancies at employment agencies did not match their qualifications or interests. Women with military education have a hard time getting employed:

“For this reason, I went to the so-called employment agency in Zhytomyr. They failed to offer me anything. [A]nd now the salary, as for a psychologist, is not very high. So, the options are, either get some training somewhere, but you need to pay for this. Some opportunities are free, but those are in Kyiv. wherein Kyiv you need a place to stay, also, you need to pay for a lot of stuff there, so money-wise, so far it is a bit hard to do. So, essentially, I have an option to sign a contract for a year or two, and to continue my service, but in a different place... and now I will have a right to choose. Where I want [to go]. Not where they send me, but where I want. There.

In other words, there are problems with employment for those who want to get employed as civilians?

Yes. There are problems, especially for women. And [especially] for those who have a military profession. I am not talking about those [women] who had in their civilian life, professions, like seamstress, cook, there is a problem for them, as well... Only for those women who graduated from a military academy, who have military education could not be a problem to find... And if you want to start your own business... lots and lots of examples, when women open their own business and get support from other people for it. By the way, a lot of these women are military, I believe, you know this, right? So, it might be an option”. (Female veteran 11)

However, they are skeptical about the staff of and the services provided by employment centres. This attitude is mostly caused by the negative experiences of their sworn brothers in employment centers. In the

interview, women respondents talk about the biased attitudes towards female and male veterans by employment centre staff, the lack of understanding of peculiarities of the veterans' psychological condition and a lack of communication skills for interaction with veterans. According to the women respondents, male veterans most often get offers to work as security guards, arguing they have a skill of using weapon and military experience and are physically fit. Sometimes, more extreme incidents are reported, such as when a male veteran received an offer to work at a poultry farm based the same rationale and an assumption that he probably does not fear blood and death.

"A lot of my boys work as security guards in ATB, in Ashan, and so forth. Let's take Kaniv. My husband visited an employment center. Another boy, who served with us, and another, and another, and another. You know what their first offer is? "Nasha riaba" for 3.5 thousand. So, you are... either you are a security guard or, for example, a slaughterer. Because they say that you already violated the sixth commandment¹²⁵; you have killed already once, so for you, it's considered all the same. You are already used to blood. And the way this blood can affect them... nobody even thinks about it at all. Big deal, you've killed already, it's not like it's your first time. So, instead of helping people to cope with this state of mind, they push them further into it. And, unfortunately, we cannot offer you any other job... so we do not have a job". (Female veteran 8)

The interviewed women veterans did not encounter such stigmatization. However, they also point out the discomfort caused by inappropriate questions about the reasons they served and their experience in ATO from the officials in governmental institutions.

There are structural and individual factors that are favourable for employment. Structural factors include retention of the job when the employee is mobilized to ATO (JFO). Individual factors include the availability of their own business; the availability of savings or financial support from friends and family (which enables them to "step away" from war and not worry about immediate employment or about making money); a clear understanding of what the woman veteran wants to do in civilian life; opportunities to do business; and opportunities to work in spheres related to war.

“

“I was lucky. I worked before the war. I was mobilized from the Ministry, and my job was kept for me. It is in fact nonsense, as this is a rare case ... not to get laid-off. So, I returned to that job. The only thing I had left here ... is when you come back from war, they view you as a white crow, because only two were taken to the Army from the Ministry. It was one man, who served in the third wave of mobilization, and I, who did the first wave plus contract. They could not understand this at work. Well, why I remained there.... Neither my direct supervisors, nor higher administration have ever really talked to me about this; like, you came based on... by the law you came here, ok, just sit here, nobody touches you, no one gives you any work to do, does not load you with anything – in other words, you feel like a fifth wheel. You are not needed to anyone, they just create conditions for you... like... the attitude... you cannot be disturbed, so nobody disturbs you, just sit... At work, with my colleagues, it was a huge problem. Because I did not talk to anyone, I just did not know what to speak about with them”

(Female veteran 13)

The survey showed that the women who worked as public servants or owned business before mobilization did not have problems with employment, because their situation on the job market was more protected. Women veterans who knew what they want to do in civilian life also did not mention any employment problems.

Of the interviewed respondents, only women who worked in governmental institutions had an experience of retaining employment after demobilization. However, returning to their old job can be traumatic due to the change in the women veterans' worldview during their time of service in ATO and a lack of mutual understanding with their colleagues. These differences often stem from differences in their views on the war in the East of Ukraine, the colleagues ignoring the women veterans, or displaying a prejudiced attitude towards them. Prejudices are often related to the reasons for participating in ATO, especially for those who went to war of their own free will (women who fought are considered frivolous); the veterans' emotional condition; and their ability to perform their professional duties.

"I faced lack of understanding of why I went there [to the frontline] and also, was questioned about the standard reasons: why and... meaning, what I forgot there [at the frontline]. This sounds not only... because it's not a woman's business, even providing medical care at war... In official institutions, which I addressed for a change of the employment place, I did not really face it [discrimination]... lack of understanding, but working in the team now, I can notice those misunderstandings, and all those strange question, which also, essentially, I receive... why, what for, I was not liable for military duty – and things like this".
(Female veteran 12)

Women veterans who did not have to seek employment immediately after returning had some savings or financial support from relatives and friends. These veterans pointed out that it was a positive factor for their future employment and for reintegration in general. Financial independence creates favourable conditions for psychological adaptation. Having time to reflect on their experience and goals, women veterans adapt to civilian life better.

"I was not at least pressured by my relatives, I had no one dependent on me. They gave me freedom, the money issue was not hanging on my neck, that is, it was not an urgent issue to get some employment somewhere, just to do it, and I somehow managed. They gave me a hint there, why not make money on having so many prepared clothes, all packed. So, the idea of a store for children was born, I was contemplating it for like a year, I was getting ready, buying the goods. [I] was crazy worried. So, now I have my own store of branded American children's clothes. Yeah, I do not love children that much, I just make money in this case. Today, I was thinking, is this what I want, or I would be happy to sell it. Maybe, I will sell it and will do something else, more interesting, but at least I already feel confident that I can. As to others... now, I just... I just don't give a shit about them, honestly. That is... if before I was somehow considering public opinion, it was important for me to consider if they acknowledge my image, if they appreciate my jokes and all that... now the format changed completely. In our provincial towns, it is very difficult. Girls must look good, but for boys this rule does not exist. And even with my female friends, we provide something like trainings, saying, why do it? why mutilate yourself? why make lips? why make eyebrows? why wear high heels if you do not need that? And why do you have to listen some... why anyone should reproach you for your weight if you are comfortable with it? So, those women's issues like this, so we created like a women's club like this, yes, really".
(Female veteran 3)

"Thanks to having someone... I have my ex-husband who is my friend, he said, 'you did not rest those three years, so don't worry about your fridge, I will... you will not starve, let yourself just some rest, get enough sleep, visit places you like,' and so forth. In other words, I now survive only because there are people who care, well, a person who finances me. That's it. Even though, mentally it is quite hard for me, I am used to relying on my own strength, not accepting any external help, even from people who are very close to me. So, for me, it was also a barrier". (Focus group discussion)

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“Yes. I am an administrator. An amusement organizer. So yeah, I participated in developing and producing entertainment events. And after this [participation in combat operation] my attitude changed completely; from that point I was no longer interested. The crowd irritated me, I felt nothing in common with them, and I tried... well, not to contact with people. I was losing temper quite often, and very quickly...”

(Female veteran 3)



Activities that seem to make sense and be worthwhile for women ATO veterans include employment related to war, military service and saving lives. Many female respondents pointed out that they were interested in taking tactical medicine or combat training courses after they returned from ATO in order to be more professional, and, given chance, to come back to ATO again. Only one female respondent received this training and was able to apply those skills in civilian life. Some were getting training courses, but only for their own sake. Others acknowledged that this is an artificial link between the military and the civilian world and that for them it was important to know that they can come back or find work related to the military and to get trained at such practical courses – but they still never did the training.

“I cannot say I really found myself completely, so still there is a parallel thought, some parallel plans, variants that I build, I seek opportunities to return to the frontline... I inquired about this. I was not happy with the available options then, and I constantly take courses on paramedic care, tactical medicine, instructor courses. In other words, in parallel to my main occupation, I still train, I learn, but I never tried even once, even though I had options to work in this sphere. It goes like a background for me, but I cannot detach myself from this main option, in philology.

Either you accept it in your head, you live it, and for you, it's like a side option and this is not a normal life. Or, you need to break something inside and say, that's it, the war is over for me, I reject it, I live a peaceful life. But I think, that the third option is possible, and it is healthier and psychological, I say, not even mentioning the fact that it is absolutely necessary for the country, which does not know how the war will unfold in the future”. (Female veteran 4)

Training in areas related to military topics (e.g. tactical medicine, training in medical or combat field, selling military equipment, patriotic summer camps for children, volunteer work and activism) is an important transitional stage for women veterans, which helps with psychological rehabilitation and sometimes brings money. Women respondents repeatedly indicated their need to conduct such activities in a place and/or activity to which they can come back to at any moment, especially when civilian life is difficult, and they want to get back to JFO zone. This could serve as a bridge to civilian life.

"Then, a bit later, I started kind of searching for myself, and at that time, a guy I knew, who also worked the testing grounds, a very young man, our lecturer would love them, indeed. He said, guys, I have this question to ask you, can we teach civilians first aid, without these tourniquets, pulling tight, evacuations. Let us think. We tried, and it went smoothly. Even now, I am probably not ready to get submerged into something, like into roses or essential oils. Yeah, and there, there was a smooth transition, I had to really rebuild ourselves, because while tactical medicine, it passes in a very jolly manner, with cheerful swearing, here we had to show tact and I had to work to become softer, because for this, for this softness, you need to mould a softer image. The boss placed an absolute ban on tactical clothing, because we were scaring civilians, so I had to pull myself out of tactical clothes. Yes, now I worked on... and yes, we had trainings, including how to address people, how to control your tongue and not drop 'F-bombs,' when we practice something, when we are engaged into some dynamic process, and how to save your face, and this skill turned into a hobby". (Female veteran 3)

"I have been doing this for 4 years already... it's the fourth year. Essentially, before that, I was running a summer camp... 'Brave heart' was the name of the camp. And my husband worked in Trakhtemyriv Sich, and, after 2014 ... already in summer of 2015, we decided to join our efforts and focus on this very Trakhtemyriv Sich. In fact, two camps merged into one.

I understand. And engaging the military from ATO... how did it turn out like that?

Because even in 2015, we had lots of people with psychological traumas. So, of course, they needed recreational activities. So, at that time we had an idea to make them instructors in the camp. The idea was accepted readily and now every year, we have crowds of people, who want to work in the camp. Even though the work in the camp is not remunerated, but people leave their contacts and even are prepared to invest their own funds ... I can even say, this is a transitional stage between war and the civilian side". (Female veteran 7)

Among other needs mentioned is knowledge and skills for doing business and fundraising for their own projects. The focus group

discussion revealed women veterans' high interest in starting their own business. However, they lack knowledge, funds and, sometimes, confidence. In addition, there is demand for education and retraining.

“And for the future, for sure, I had even this thought, to graduate from the Institute for postgraduate education for qualification... well, to receive my master's. To increase my level. So there. English is mandatory, all this, bit by bit. There..”.
(Female veteran 11)

There is demand among women's veterans for knowledge of legislation and of English. Women veterans often lack funds for the retraining courses that they selected. Educational courses, or a new education is one of the strategies that women veterans use for transiting to civilian life.

3.1.2. Military education

Separate women respondents said that they would like to receive military education, higher specialized education or additional advanced training. This will influence their future experience of service, which they plan to have sometime in the future. In general, women respondents believe that they will have access to higher or additional education without any serious problems, sometimes even the state itself offers those interested to take part in such programmes. However, only a minority of the women respondent sees themselves in the Armed Forces in the future, most of them decided not to return.

“Well, then I was on advanced training in 2015, I was not studying at all to become a vice head in moral and psychological support. As a psychologist, because according to my military specialty, I can hold this position, but I had a change. They came from the ATO zone, as a matter of fact... that is, these telegrams, they came to the ATO zone, saying that those who want should obligatorily take the advanced training course in Lviv Ground Forces Academy. For two weeks, we enjoyed sharing experiences and advanced training... of this or that. And next, in the future obligatorily, I even had this idea, to graduate the Institute of Postgraduate Education to get another qualification... to get my master's. To improve my level”. (Female veteran 11)

3.1.3. Social protection

In places where large military bases are located, it is easier to access resources and benefits because funding is allocated for them. Further, if funding is not spent in full within the budget period, then next period the allocated sum will be usually be smaller. Therefore, women respondents who live in such localities generally have no issues accessing treatment or other programmes.

In towns or villages where a woman may be the only veteran in the locality, access is worse and state services do not always understand what they must do for this person or how to do it. If she needs some certificate, it is not always clear whether a woman veteran must apply for it herself and bring it to the institution that requested it or whether the rayon military commissariat should send a request for it to the oblast commissariat. The women respondents call **red tape** a significant problem, which can affect social attitudes towards female and male veterans. The staff of military commissariats and social security institutions are not always respectful towards persons coming to them. Overall, the system of granting benefits is not friendly to its users of either sexes. The system does not allow for feedback and lacks actual understanding of its users' needs or the degree of their accessibility of it.

“And don't get me started about the war veterans with disability who are forced on their wheelchairs or to hop on their prosthetics all over different institutions and collect millions of papers and certificates no one knows what for, if, plainly speaking, there exists a database available online... it's high time. The 21st century allows sending all these certificates in an electronic form. Now, essentially, it is ignored, and I have a very strong feeling this is done intentionally – that is, the state is destroying the veterans psychologically. And this is a great problem, in fact, and if we talk about the society, which treats the veterans with lack of understanding, it is, again, this is a consequence of the state policy, which in this way presents the events in the East. I am so awfully sorry you don't have war here”. (Female veteran 7)

The state, they point out, is obliged to regulate all legislative questions with veterans, starting from the simplified procedures for receiving certificates, statuses and benefits. Although the state has to direct

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“Out of more than 1400 persons, only three or four received a land lot. And it cost them so much time, so much nerves, so much red tape, I just don’t have strength for this now”

(Female veteran 8)

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female and male veterans through all necessary institutions (following a clear and standardized path), during their service all veterans should have knowledge about the procedures and proper social packages.

Overall, there is a demand for clarification of legal aspects of benefits and opportunities for veterans. During focus group discussions, participants discussed how they can receive the land plot they have a right to according to the law. This implies that not all women veterans are well informed about what they are entitled to or how they can receive it. Those who wanted to get a land plot encountered numerous difficulties. For example, they have to look for a desirable lot by themselves, cadastral maps are unclear, officials demand bribes and so on. Women and men encounter these problems at similar rates.

In accordance with the laws discussed in the previous Chapter, combat participants have a right to free rides on public transportation. However, although the state compensates the transporter for the price of the ride, because in practice drivers do not give tickets and take some of the money directly to their pocket, they are often reluctant to let benefit holders on board and often refuse to give benefit holders a ride or treat them impolitely. Given this ill-treatment, women respondents often avoided using this benefit. Mass media has also reported cases of conflicts between drivers and veterans. This situation leads to conflicts that sometimes end in tragedy. This issue must be addressed.

Health care services

The Ukrainian legislation provides for preferential medical treatment for ATO veterans and for the members of families of those killed during their service in ATO.

Of health care services, the services that women veterans use most often are the sanatorium and resort care and inpatient hospitalization. This is partially connected to their insufficient awareness of other available benefits and the procedures to obtain them and, when they are aware, difficulties in accessing them. These results align with the results of the 2016 OSCE-commissioned, GFK-conducted Ukraine survey of ATO veterans, according to which "13% of the respondents answered that they are not informed at all about medical benefits and services and 87% said that the information is insufficient and would want to know

more about available benefits and opportunities to receive them”.¹²⁶ Another reason is that women generally seek medical help only in urgent cases. Women respondents mentioned the deterioration of their health after ATO, for example, issues with their backs. However, the majority of them postpone visiting a doctor.

A positive experience of using medical services among the women veteran respondents was a case of free-of-charge birth in Kyiv. During one female respondent’s prenatal care, she was told in the medical institution that the delivery will be for free for her as a combat participant. This outcome, however, could have been due to the veteran’s personal acquaintance with the obstetrician-gynaecologist who helped by properly informing her about the service and providing it in full scope.

“An ob/gyn, who was observing me, she is a wife of one of my fighters, whom I rescued in 2014. In other words, one of ours. So, and she learned in which of the maternity hospitals they see ATO fighters. Again, so that they have a psychologist at hand, so... I laughed so hard... and they asked my husband: ‘did she ask for a machine gun?’ he says, ‘nope, just a hand gun.’ During the delivery! And so, we gave birth. Firstly, we gave birth absolutely for free. Even anaesthesia, they always charge for it, as far as I know, for us... so I had to lie there for a while with the spinal anaesthesia. Everything completely free of charge. And they were taking care of me, calming me, coming to the ward.

Did you give birth free of charge as a combat participant or because the doctor was your acquaintance?

*No, as a woman combat participant. In other words, I came to the women’s clinic to get registered with them, she asks me, ‘what is written up here in red? Is it you or your husband?’ I answer, ‘Me and my husband.’ ‘Can I see your identification card?’ I open it for her, she wrote down the number, and says, ‘that’s all, we understood, you will have the birth for free.’”
(Female veteran 8)*

This is a single case among female respondents, when a medical service was received in full scope and proper quality right away. The male respondents had more positive experiences in receiving medical services.

Medical help in treatment of combat wounds was provided to them and was free. Although, already after demobilization, they often pay for rehabilitation and treatment themselves or with volunteers' funds.

Women respondents talked about difficulties in accessing medical services. They had been refused services and referred to different institutions (medical institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defence) due to the absence of the official status of combat participant or war veterans with disability, discrepancies in the documents, etc.

"There was the time when I thought of improving my health, and those volunteers, who were in volunteer battalions under the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), they encounter this lovely practice... say, a military hospital. You come there and say at this hospital: I am a combat participant, I need medical assistance. At that moment, I had no money whatsoever. So, if it is too expensive for you to stay at the military hospital, and it is written here, MIA, go to MIA, that is, to MIA hospital. So, I go to the MIA hospital. And at the MIA hospital, they tell me: you go there, where they gave you all these papers of combat participant, Dnipropetrovska oblast.

In other words, everybody is sending veterans to however they please, especially those veterans who were demobilized. Well, I was not mobilized, so I cannot say that I was demobilized. So, these veterans are sent from one institution to another, and they in fact cannot receive this damned medical assistance anywhere. So eventually, if this person is more or less young and if the situation is not totally critical, they go to a paid clinic, to receive paid medical assistance in a private clinic". (Female veteran 6)

"When I returned from war, after the wound, I came back after nine months abroad back to Ukraine, and I came back with not a penny in my pocket, nothing, and then I spent five months running in official institutions trying to get my papers for my sick leave returned from abroad, I came from abroad, and it is not admissible here, it has to be officially translated. We made an unofficial translation, the chamber of commerce made it for us and we went to a notary, so that he would attest it, so that I

receive the money owed to me under the sick leave and I have at least some money, and the notary tells me: sorry, but we cannot attest a translation from Lithuanian, we have several languages we can attest translations in: English, German, French, any languages, but a regular Lithuanian language – we have to find a person, as we were told, with a diploma or with a license for translation, that is, to translate. They translated this text for me in the consulate. They translated this text for me in the chamber of commerce. But it was not signed by a licensed translator – and no notary would agree to attest it. And I go to the outpatient clinic, I ask them, I have no money, people – pay me my sick leave. No, we will not pay you your sick leave as it is not attested by a notary. So, I am stuck in this cycle, without money. I lived hand to mouth, then people lent me some money. I finally received the money and returned to people what I owed”. (Female veteran 2)

Based on the experiences of the interviewed women veterans, out of all available medical services, it is the easiest to receive a voucher to a sanatorium and resort treatment — although, these services are in the least demand among the veterans. Getting a voucher for sanatorium and resort treatment is linked to the official place of residence. Based on the experience of the interviewed women veterans, if husband and wife veterans are registered in different localities, they can get vouchers to stay at the same time in the same resort.

For women, difficulties in accessing medical services are connected with (not) having the status of combat participant. As the research ‘Invisible Battalion’ showed, the identification card of a combat participant is not granted to all women who served or is serving. It is especially hard to obtain for those women who did not have an official status while serving in ATO. Without the identification card, they do not have access to state services for female and male veterans. Some women respondents shared that they received their combat participant identification card through the court, some were officially recognized as veterans only at the level of the locality of residence, but not on the national level. One respondent mentioned that she received a written letter of denial to grant her the status of combat participant, where she was addressed with a man’s name — which means that the official processing her papers did not even open them.

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**“I spent three
years proving I
was in Ilovaysk!”**

(Female veteran
during focus group discussion)

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Male respondents also mentioned difficulties in obtaining the status of combat participant. The granting procedure lasted for three to four months. Further, to receive the certificate they had to travel to visit the HQ on the territory adjacent with the combat zone:

*“To get this certificate about participation in the anti-terrorist operation, I remember, I went to the HQ. I went there twice”.
(Male veteran 5)*

However, all male respondents managed to obtain their combat participant identification; not all female respondents were able to do so. Difficulties in accessing medical services are connected with the discomfort of communication with civilian people in general:

“There are people there, this is the seaside, and now there are droves of tourists and such. This is very dangerous for me, or for them, or for me, for us, or for all of us dangerous. If I go there, I will go there sometime, when it will be winter and nobody around”. (Focus group discussion)

Respondents also mentioned dissatisfaction with the quality of provided services. Women respondents stated that civilian doctors lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with the military and with wounds sustained at war.

“And I think this is just plain ridiculous. Firstly, because it is not military hospitals, they send us to. In other words, they offer us treatment in civilian outpatient clinics, essentially where doctors have no experience of treating military wounds whatsoever. There are countless examples of so many men returning from the front with severe wounds, they go through initial treatment, which is kinda so-so, and then they just rot from inside, you know... the doctors are unable to help them, because they lack the experience in this field. They can... like this recent incident, with our fighter, his brothers literally snatched him out of the MRI machine as they managed to arrive in time. And he was taken away on an ambulance, because not a single one of the doctors thought that if he is a veteran, his entire body is riddled with bullets and shrapnel, and if they put him in the MRI machine, he will be torn to pieces. It did not even dawn

on them, because this is not something they know to consider. It is not mentioned anywhere in the book that he has a titanium prosthetic, he must be healthy. Nobody even asked him whether he has any bullets or shrapnel in him. And he has this bullet in his skull, and shrapnel in the body... that's it. These are the examples, they are many and in fact, it is all a great tragedy to talk now about some... state programme or whatever state... let alone the level of this help. No help whatsoever". (Female veteran 7)

Women respondents' experiences with an unsatisfactory quality of medical services are connected to corruption in medical institutions. Women veterans, who went to the resort for their sanatorium-resort care, point out that without additional private payments, one cannot expect high-quality health care services.

"Now, they turn the situation in such a way, they show you that if you don't put some money into the attending nurse's pocket – say goodbye to any decent service. Take for instance, the mud baths! The mud is lukewarm, and you have to lie in it for 15 minutes. Like today: a woman comes along with me, we have the same appointment time, we know we both have the same time – the nurse puts on similar sandglasses for 15 minutes. So, we lay in the mud, 15 minutes run out, and we both have to get up, and this woman keeps lying there, and I see perfectly clear that she is putting a bill in the nurse's pocket. I actually need to use this stretching machine – a bullet hit my spine, so I need it regularly. So, the state is like, here is your resort and sanatorium and everything is cool, but I was not able to get free procedures on this stretching machine. I was sent to this so-called exercise therapy, ok, great, I went there to this exercise therapy – and it never happened because the coach was either absent or had to be elsewhere at the pool or whatever – after 4 p.m. I was able to come there, but after 4 p.m. only paid procedures are allowed. That is, whatever free treatment I was supposed to receive, there was none.

I went to his resort, I went to several procedures and realized that if I don't give them money – and I went there for treatment – I spent there a week, and just up and left. There was no use for me to stay there. I just got depressed. Because if you are

shell-shocked you have to get treatment, actual real treatment, so I went to every procedure the doctor prescribed, until I realized they hate me – as I come for these procedures, as some other woman in my place can stay there longer and put some money in their pocket, and I put no money in their pockets – goodbye, my baby. And a half of all those treated there were ATO fighters”. (Female veteran 2)

Respondents saw the unsatisfactory quality of medical services as a part of the general unsatisfactory situation in the country.

“I take no issue with medical care for war veterans at all. It could have been much better but taking into account what is going on in our country, everything is hunky-dory”. (Male veteran 1)

Neither women nor men respondents gave a single positive account concerning medical services in state resorts. Of those who used the services, some respondents saw their benefit in giving a change of scenery, serenity and a chance to spend time with their family, as they can attend the resort with a family member.

“They had some stuff there... like, those mud baths, I cannot even remember now. All this is of no use, those mud baths”. (Male veteran 5)

But, if the main goal is to rest, change the scenery and reload, women respondents gave higher praise to private volunteer initiatives for veterans’ recreation where the ambience is nicer, and the food is better.

Among the needs for medical services, female and male veterans (particularly those having the status of a person with a disability caused by war), listed:

- better quality of state medical services for female and male veterans;
- informing veterans about opportunities and procedures for receiving these services and informing the providers of these services about the conditions for providing them;
- providing medical services without requesting bribes;
- respectful attitudes towards female and male veterans by staff of medical institutions.

Further, better coordination between institutions that provide medical care to veterans and the unification of the system for providing services to veterans would make these services more accessible.

Psychological rehabilitation

The Ukrainian legislation in effect provides for psychological rehabilitation for female and male veterans. The experience of female and male veterans studied in this research makes it possible to identify some aspects of the available psychological rehabilitation system for veterans that require improvement. It also enables, although to a lesser degree, identification of its strengths.

Psychological rehabilitation services are provided at the city or district (rayon) level, which reduces their accessibility for rural residents. Services are provided if a veteran addresses the department or unit of social protection in city or rayon (district) of state administrations and if there are employees who will provide the services for the registered veterans in the department or unit of social protection of state administration. If the providers of psychological rehabilitation services are “an institution, organization or body independently of the ownership pattern, an individual entrepreneur, who meets the requirements to the subjects that provide psychological rehabilitation services approved by the Ministry of Social Policy”¹²⁷ but are not informed about the possibility of inclusion to the list of subjects providing psychological rehabilitation services, or if there are no providers of such services in the locality, then female and male veterans’ chances to receive the psychological rehabilitation services dwindle.

The psychologist’s consultation and, if necessary, psychological rehabilitation, are not obligatory for veterans in Ukraine. The return from war and reintegration to civilian life, according to Ukrainian legislation, does not require any scheduled inspections of their mental state or consultations aimed for psychological adaptation of former servicewomen to civilian life. In contrast, in the United States, for example, an assessment of the physical state and psychological health of military personnel after discharge became mandatory as early as 1997.¹²⁸ In Ukraine, female and male veterans, already as civilians have to turn to local services on their own initiative to receive psychological rehabilitation services.

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“In fact, I did not find what I needed. Well, in particular now, I would have loved to join, for instance, some groups, psychological trainings, apply for some support. But, unfortunately, everything I see takes place in Kyiv, for instance. The majority of programmes. I cannot find anything like this In Ternopil. What I found, for instance, was not comfortable for me, because those were trainings for men. So, I wasn't able to find something like this for women in Ternopil.

I would have loved to take part in this programme, for instance, in summer I saw they were conducting trainings, but, because of my work, I cannot leave for a long time, including to Kyiv. If it were on a weekend, I would have been able to attend, but I saw these trainings were held on weekdays, so there. In other words, yes, these are more volunteer programmes. State programmes also exist, but somehow I am no longer eligible for them, as I don't have the status of combat participant”

(Female veteran 12)

In-depth interviews with female and male veterans showed that they usually don't know which psychological services they can turn to for help or the procedure of attaining this help. This reveals insufficiencies in their awareness of psychological rehabilitation services at the level of structures subordinate to the Ministry of Defence (before demobilization) and at the level of institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Social Policy (after the demobilization).

"I am not aware whether we have such (services). Haven't heard.

If there were such services, would you use them? Would you see a psychologist regularly?

And why should I go see him? He has to come see me. No?

If he did, would you talk to him?

Yes". (Male veteran 8)

"I cannot call home, I cannot call my family. It will be the ambulance and the ambulance will immediately take me to hospital. A doctor, who came on the ambulance to my home when I had a panic attack, brought me back to my senses and told me than the next time I call an ambulance, they will take me to a mental hospital. After that, I never called an ambulance, I don't want to go to the mental hospital. That's it. And I have these panic attacks". (Female veteran 13)

Some respondents consider the psychological rehabilitation programmes provided by NGOs as difficult to access. Female and male respondents complain that such programmes operate in large cities (predominantly in Kyiv) and are unavailable in their town. Further, even when they want to take part in a psychological rehabilitation programme elsewhere, not all women veterans can afford this due to other constraints (such as work schedules that preclude them from attending a programme for an entire work day or several work days in a row).

Besides the need for psychological rehabilitation services, women veterans point out that these services must be more accessible so that they could combine getting counselling with their work or other activities. Not many women veterans have enough time, financial and emotional resources to undertake psychological recovery full-time,

even if they feel such need. Ultimately, without the official status of combat participant, they cannot have access to state psychological rehabilitation services.

In the United States, the question of physical accessibility of state psychological services for veterans was resolved by diversifying service provision channels: there is a 24-hour hotline, an online chat and a text message service where female and male veterans (and members of their families) can receive consultations from skilled specialists.¹²⁹ The use of tele-health (providing medical services, in particular psychological help, by phone or online) would help improve the accessibility of these services for veterans and members of their families who live in rural localities or have limited possibilities for travel (e.g. due to disability, stay in medical institutions, penitentiary system or being abroad).

The interviewed female and male veterans point out the need to upgrade the qualifications of psychologists who work with veterans. Judging from their experience and the experience of their brothers and sisters in arms, psychologists in Ukraine do not have sufficient knowledge or practical work with veterans. Female and male veterans recognize this as being due to the absence of a need for such specialists before the beginning of war in 2014. Now, there is an urgent need for military psychologists and specialists able to treat psychological traumas in service people and veterans.

“I would even say that the state is failing us hard, actually ... because those programmes that exist in the state, they are nothing more than Soviet psychiatry, which did not admit the existence of the Afghan disease,¹³⁰ because this is it, the Afghan disease – post-traumatic stress disorder. The state did not admit its existence, the most it did was to would lock them up into mental hospitals and turn them into vegetables. This is what your state does. Volunteers, yes. The most important is to try to socialize a person somehow”. (Male veteran 2)

“With rehabilitation... let’s put it this way, they gave us vouchers for resorts, offered rehabilitation, but the situation is that when you, for instance, exit from the ATO zone and those with post trauma, this rehabilitation is not working properly for them. Now, this post-traumatic syndrome, nobody... nobody

can treat it. Now those specialists that we have – psychologists, psychiatrists, those who attempt to treat this issue, they are only learning. And probably those who have this problem, and those who are treating it, both they and we are learning, how it can be done. I only know one thing, if I have to go to a rehabilitation center, where there are others like me, for me it would be problematic. As again, when ATO fighters are gathering together, they start talking about war, and you again return to war. And everybody, who was there is pulled to return there more than to home. And when you spend time with them, you would end up packing your things and return there. In hospital, they don't diagnose you with post-traumatic syndrome, as this is a psychiatric illness, they don't want to diagnose it. But if you have this syndrome... you need to get treatment matching your illness. They diagnose you with neurosis, neurasthenic syndrome and collapses, but they don't diagnose you with PTSD. When you find a decent psychologist, he would start work with you, they know this. I was already given a book and I already read it, it had a clear explanation what PTSD is, and what symptoms and complications is has... what shell-shock is and what PTSD is, how they are different and how such diagnosis is made. That is why state psychologists failed to help me. I have been seeing for a year already a volunteer psychologist, she is treating those with PTSD pro bono". (Female veteran 13)

Respondents were especially skeptical about psychologists who work in state institutions and staff psychologists who work at the front. The major concerns that respondents shared included psychologists' lack of understanding of the specificity of the female and male veterans' psychological state, lack of knowledge on how to work with the people who fought, low ethical levels of communication and lack of confidentiality (concerning psychologists who work in the combat zone).

The majority of female and male respondents who went to see psychologists after returning from the ATO/JFO zone turned to private psychologists, to psychologists who provide their services pro bono or to psychologists who provide their services in NGOs. Significantly better accounts were given to NGO-provided specialists and services, although in respondents' opinions the rehabilitation programmes offered by NGOs lack consistency. NGO psychologists are individual

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“In the army, we did have psychologists. But these were not the psychologists we needed, we required. Those were psychologists who, when you came to them and shared something really intimate with them, everybody in the battalion knew it”

(Female veteran 14)



consultants or projects, which are limited in time and geographically by the available funding and human resources.

Problems of skilled psychological help for veterans are connected to the subordination of the veterans' reintegration system to civilian institutions (primarily to the Ministry of Social Policy), the distance between the system and the military institutions and to the absence of adaptation programmes for service personnel under the Ministry of Defence.

Female and male respondents referred to the experiences of the United States and Israel, where military personnel, before returning to civilian life, go through the adaptation period outside the conflict zone and not in the regular circumstances of civilian life. During this period, military personnel go through psychological training, in particular. Veterans believe that the absence of such a 'springboard' stage in the Ukrainian system of veterans' reintegration is a significant gap.

"The state has to make sure that when veterans, returning home, have to go through some rehabilitation, and are not forced to invent it for themselves by themselves, as I did, maybe at some camp. So that it is an actual possibility. For Instance, I like the way they do it in Israel. In Israel, a person from the front line is never sent on leave, this person is sent to the base, where she is doing some household tasks. Essentially, this is also such transitional period, and when a person has already stabilized psychologically, she can already go on a leave or be discharged. Never would they let a person immediately out of, say, a pocket to go home. As it would be a cognitive dissonance, a very different perception of the world, a very different survival method and even such simple things as to put on civilian clothes may be sometimes very difficult. So that this moment goes down smoothly, the state essentially has to introduce such programmes to make this transition smooth from war to civilian country". (Female veteran 7).

"When a person returns from the army, the first person he has to see, besides a chief enlistment officer, who takes the papers from him, is a psychologist, who would talk to him professionally, and establish the degree. A person, who spent there more than a year, he already has PTSD, if he was on the front line... I am

not saying. A psychologist will see it right away. That's it. And if he was wounded, the same. He has to see this immediately, 'ok, this person has PTSD' and this person has to be taken and sent for two to three months, even without their family, somewhere far to a rehabilitation center... in the very first days. Because those first months... I remember myself, I kept silent, I did not want to see anybody at all... everything felt foreign to me, even the air I breathed felt foreign. So, they should send him, to start treat him... with medications or what... make him sleep, to let him sleep, because sleep does not come, and you just eat yourself from inside". (Female veteran 13)

Not all female and male veterans talk about a need for psychological rehabilitation or counselling, even those who do not show a prejudiced attitude towards psychologists and psychotherapy. Among those interviewed, there are some who believe they managed to return to civilian life without specialists' help.

"Essentially, I don't believe I actually need it, this assistance. I am a psychologist myself, essentially. Well, I did not need it. I did not look for it. If I actually needed it... that is... what heals me is that I am constantly on the move, that I am in regular contact with all the people I know". (Female veteran 11)

Female and male respondents share an opinion that the **adaptation takes more effort for those who served at the front line and immediately witnessed wounds and death of their brothers and sisters in arms.** Correspondingly, they may be in more need for psychotherapy.

Respondents also mentioned that women and men fighting in volunteer battalions are easier to integrate, due to their higher mobility and possibility to return to civilian life at any moment for any amount of time. In other words, those who did not have a prolonged exposure to active duty at the front have a lower probability of facing difficulties in adapting to civilian life.

Prejudiced attitudes towards veterans from the population and state institutions manifest as stigmatization, absence of respect or understanding, excessive pickiness and aggression. This is one of the reasons veterans need psychological assistance.

“A cynicism of the situation lies in the fact that in Khust, it went so bad that the ATO fighters are now somehow considered suspicious citizens, as people, who have PTSD, post trauma. And they send over social workers to inspect their family, whether they observe some certain norms in raising their children, whether their children receive everything they need... the very cynicism here is that a) no, nobody provided me a state-funded psychologist, I see a psychologist and am paying for a psychologist out of my own pocket. And they did nothing comfortable for my child... when it is some trip to a circus or a field trip for kids, they pay for them immediately for all children in our rayon, whose parents are participants of combat. And then my friend, she is a volunteer based in Kyiv, she told me: I will try and find out about this ‘Creative Hideout,’ if you want to go there. And I did not even look into it, as I did not think I would come back with such moral baggage. I felt that if I am not there all the time at the front line, I don’t need it. But when I came here and I saw how they treat us here, well ... I would have loved to have a little more understanding probably; a little more interest if not in those who came back than in those who are there right now. And maybe somewhere in the Ministry of Information Policy should create more social awareness video clips about veterans, about those people who are there [at the frontline]. Maybe... there must be such videos, I know there are”. (Female veteran 10)

De-marginalization of veterans and acknowledgement of their role in the state and society at the social level would facilitate their integration into civilian life.

Female and male veteran respondents confirmed ideas about biased attitudes towards psychologists and psychotherapy. On numerous occasions, they mentioned that they observed such attitudes among their sworn brothers, and they were even prone to it themselves.

“Are you seeing a psychologist?”

Please, trust us, we are the same as you. Only maybe a little crazy”. (Male veteran 8)

Nonetheless, at the time of interview, the majority of the interviewed do not have biases against psychologists or stereotypes concerning recipients of psychological rehabilitation services. In addition, they discussed the need to get rid of this stereotype among women and men who serve and who return from war and the need to remove obstacles on veterans' way to psychological reintegration.

Female and male veterans do not mention any significant differences in psychological reintegration into civilian life between women and men who fought. In their opinion, after their return, women and men face similar psychological problems, including emotional disorders, memories of war, sleep disorders, certain fears or habits developed during their stay in the combat zone and a desire to return to war. Respondents stated that adaptation mechanisms can differ between women and men but did not name these differences.

Interview responses also show that support from their family and finding a partner can act as **positive factors for psychological adaptation of female and male veterans**. For women, motherhood and caring for other family members often forces their reintegration into peaceful life. Some interviewed women respondents had to return home from war due to pregnancy (caring for their newborns keeps them from participation in combat). Although it is not uncommon for women to perceive such a situation as a certain limitation, it nonetheless forces them to adapt to civilian life. None of such women respondents have returned to the front.

3.1.4. Communication and attitude of society

Return to civilian life means communicating with civilian people, restoring social contacts and finding new connections. For women who had a family before leaving for the front, returning means once again getting used to co-habiting. Employment at new or old jobs means building bridges with the colleagues. It is important to address questions such as communications with friends, relatives and neighbours. The necessity to obtain a combat participant identification and a desire to get access to benefits leads to active communication with the military commissariat employees, social workers and other officials; such communications often also do not proceed smoothly. In their interviews, women respondents raised these topics and had

different experiences in this regard. For some respondents, it was more or less successful, and they mention it without any specifics "everything is alright," some say, "I don't have any problems with it". Others share that their experience is negative and elaborate on the topic.

"What is very often called PTSD, this in fact is the stress not from what you went through there, it's your stress from returning to regular life, because you have already seen how different it all can be. This is why it is so hard to come back". (Female veteran 6)

It can be hard to discuss experiences gained at war with civilian people who haven't had such experiences. Due to this, in many cases women respondents avoid such communication, in particular, because they want to shield themselves from these types of encounters.

"I talk to people all the time, I work with people, but I don't discuss with them this topic. Why would I? I don't see any reason to. When I started working there, I never mentioned where I had been. I did mention it in my CV, right, so that they don't ask me why there is a gap in my work record. I wrote that I was working with a civil movement or something. Like I was a volunteer supporting the war effort. And I was decorated with a medal, it was not a Ukrainian people's medal, it was a fund 'People's Hero,' to put it short. So, when they came to my work and decorated me with it, everybody was rather surprised that I... well, nobody associated me with the ATO zone or anything like this... and I just did not want to talk about it, I had a period of rejection, I got really irritated by the military, I got really irritated by this very topic, I got irritated... well, somehow, I shut myself from all this and I kept contact with very few people from there". (Female veteran 5)

Some of the respondents have certain expectations that after their return they will be perceived differently than civilians and that their contribution to human security in the times of peril will be acknowledged. However, this does not always happen, or what happens is that the attitude towards them changes for the worse. Civilian people don't understand (and don't try to understand), belittle veterans' motivations for being at the front and express their criticism concerning such decisions. Women respondents reflected on **lack of social respect**.

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“I needed to be understood, and nobody wanted to listen to me. All those talks, ‘stop your war.’ How can I stop it, if the war is still going on?”

**(Female veteran
during focus group discussion)**

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"We can in our big country create our small country of ATO fighters if they all keep pushing us away". (Female veteran 2)

"It is not us who have issues; it is people who have issues". (Female veteran during focus group discussion)

Even in situations in which society does not demonstrate outright rejection, women veterans often are not ready themselves to talk to civilian people and engage in active communication. Veterans' experiences at war are psychologically complex and they share the idea that by default, civilians are unable to understand their emotions if civilians don't have such experience and are not competent to talk about something they only saw on TV. Usually, they are ready to open up about it only with those deemed 'one of them' (sworn sisters and brothers). Those are the people that women veterans, after their return, are more willing to talk to than any other group. In the interviews, women veterans would sometimes refer to civilians as "them" or "outsiders" as if reintegration to civilian life is incomplete.

"Well, what was adaptation like... like I went to see my friends, when I was visiting, say, when I was on a leave, I kept some relationships with people, well, but somehow, when I returned, I did not pay much attention to such meetings. We just met a couple of times to celebrate my return". (Female veteran 5)

"After that, my attitude changed completely, like I lost all interest in it. The crowd irritated me, and I had nothing in common with people in it, and I tried to avoid contacting people". (Female veteran 3)

"But I cannot say I have any issues with people who weren't at war; it is just this little distancing myself". (Female veteran 4)

They also responded negatively to how civilian people discuss the realities of war. Women respondents said they try to avoid such situations because they can be uncomfortable.

"The only thing, when I feel in fact torn inside, as I learned, is the films about war and their perception by those, let's say... outsiders. Here, you clearly understand: this is — us, and this is — them. That is, those, who weren't at war, they a priori

cannot understand this. They understand it the wrong way. Once, there was a screening of the documentary 'Invisible Battalion.' And there was a discussion of this documentary, and after that... I almost had a meltdown... a quiet one, but it was a very strong negative... negative feeling caused by how people were expressing their opinions on this topic. Then I realized, yes... I must have a trigger here. I realized I have to attend such screenings with somebody of ours". (Female veteran 4)

Insufficient contact with civilian persons is linked to differences in political views and general reluctance to admit the fact of the ongoing war. Sometimes, a woman veteran returns to her home region, where she encounters pro-Russia-inclined people and this, obviously, leads to conflicts. If there are many such people around, it causes distress. Even in cases in which somebody tells the woman veteran they respect her choice, it is still a rather disturbing situation, as the question of war and choosing your side in it by default is critical and causes psychological tension. Women veterans are separately worried about the problems of possible separatism outside of the ATO/JFO zone, as for them it means that they have to face enemies not only at the front, but also in the rear, in civilian life.

"Sometimes, when it gets really tough, I often recollect the words said to me by a person I worked with: 'They should just take you and your kid to Deribasivska Street and gun you both down.' I found myself in a situation when after war I came back and had no money and no place to live, and after all, I thought, maybe it is indeed better to gun us down as we are now a problem for the society". (Female veteran 2)

"In fact, in Zakarpattia, it only looks like that it is Western Ukraine, but in fact there are so many separatist moods, they want again some kind of their republic, some territorial unit. In 2014, they failed to do so, and now somebody obviously from outside is disrupting the situation again. That is, these people have this attitude... and keep sneering and let their aggression manifest in some cases, that is why it is somewhat uncomfortable". (Female veteran 10)

"And you begin hearing what they tell you, and the conversations of people in civilian life... they just shock you. For you, they are

just insane. You just come back from war, for you everything was right and clear, and they tell you, you can go to Russia. How can I go there? How can they go there, if we are at war with it? But what about the relatives? So, what about the relatives? You are on a state service, you are a public servant, and you want to go to your relatives in Russia? What are we talking about here? So, I have to be more tolerant... to whom? To an enemy?" (Female veteran 13)

"You are used to living in extreme conditions and to resolving issues with extreme measures. And then you come back, get stuck in red tape and you feel that you... obviously, many cannot manage to get through this... it's like you were in a different society and conditions, you were sacrificing your life, and now you come here and they keep sending you from office to office. I understand it can be difficult for an official seeing hundreds of persons a day but is it a way to treat a person that needs social rehabilitation". (Male veteran 3)

Participation in combat as an emotionally laden experience that changes values and priorities. Both women and men participants of the research mentioned that what was important for them before may stop to be so. This reflects in their communication with civilians and impairs mutual understanding. Among such changes, female and male respondents list the heightened sense of justice, granting the situation at the front more importance, than civilian situations, a shift in the perception of the world towards a more "black-white" picture, a clear division into "us" and "them". The high level of danger they experienced urges these changes in the perception of the world. Because for many civilians, nothing changed due to lack of such experience, this newly formed difference in values can cause conflicts. This change in priorities, values and worldviews is observed in both women and men:

"You go through a complete change of principles of perception of humanity, kinda... and you do not understand people, and people do not understand you. For an ATO fighter, say, for example, I have a good salary, I have a job, I have a decent salary, but for me to donate my entire salary was no big deal. And I gave it no thought. For me it was not a problem, but for my family it is, and I do not understand them, and they do not understand me". (Female veteran 13)

Although, such shift in priorities does not always becomes a problem:

“You know, it got easier. In the sense, somehow it seems, there is somehow less hypocrisy around me now, and in fact if you go to war, go through the possibility to die at any second, you begin to see a lot of things in a much simpler way. Actually, I became more true to myself, and I try to say simply what I believe in to people directly. To write about what I believe in. And I had no problems with people with similar political views and so on. So essentially, I don’t have conflicts, everything is alright”. (Male veteran 4)

There is a **stereotypical attitude to ATO participants** as people prone to wanton aggression. This perception is reinforced by media materials¹³¹ and cases of aggression, which in fact are one of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Still, establishing stereotypes concerning a group based on separate occasions stigmatizes it, and the female participants of the research are aware of this.

“It happens to me, say, now I do not watch the news as I find it difficult to hear, ‘an ex-ATO fighter assaulted his wife,’ ‘an ex-ATO fighter...’. Why, then, don’t you say, ‘an environmentalist assaulted,’ why don’t you say, ‘a plumber assaulted his wife’? Do you mean to say these people don’t do this? Not true. But the news don’t mention their professions and here they mention it all the time. And people begin to be afraid of ATO fighters”. (Female veteran 8)

“Question: is it true that you all return from there a little different? And you feel this urge to pick up a stool, bang my fist on the table and say, ‘So, am I now different or not?’ This is a question they do ask”. (Female veteran 8)

The respondents are aware of the **differences in attitude to them and to men who served**. Men are treated with respect, as heroes, as those who played their gender role of defender, or are not bothered out of fear of open aggression. Women, as these interviews show, receive open and unabashed negative attitudes from society, as women are perceived as unfit to stand up for themselves.

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“They would look at me as a woman with such... kinda, we understand why you went there, sure... but at a man... he is a man, right, he went to the army, alright, but what were you doing there? Although he served just one year in the third wave and in the ATO zone as such he was for four months only, and I fought there for two years. That is, out of my full three years of service, I served two full years in the ATO zone. But he is a man, and you are a girl. Those first encounters were not that serious... that they said on the Day of Defender of Motherland last year. It was the very first Day of Defender of Motherland, when everybody started shouting: we have to congratulate the boys... and the Ministry. The Ministry was preparing to congratulate the boys. And in many sections and departments, they prepared gifts for boys, and I just stood there, a girl, and... they remembered that I am a girl and also kinda a defender around midnight on the 13th, at night, they called me and said: you are a defender of Motherland, too, you will get a bonus tomorrow. They suddenly remembered, and it was very insulting, honestly, when they were preparing those gifts and congratulating the boys and only in the middle of the day would sometimes remember... yeah, right, you were there, too”

(Female veteran 13)

“They might be merely afraid of men. They are afraid to tell them such things. They are afraid to be aggressive with them, as a man is usually able not only morally, but also physically, to stand up for himself. Especially a man, who went to war and has some experience in, let’s put it bluntly, of killing people. And to a woman, you can say whatever, as a woman usually cannot stand up for herself”. (Female veteran 10)

Society is not always ready to overcome **gender stereotypes** concerning women’s ability to serve on par with men. The presence of such woman is not always perceived as new knowledge for their picture of the world. Instead, people are looking for familiar explanations as to why a woman was in the combat zone. The research ‘Invisible Battalion’ showed that women’s motivations to participation in ATO range very widely. For some, it was a logical continuation of their participation in the Revolution of Dignity 2013-2014. For others, they dreamt about a military career since childhood.¹³²

Still, in many cases, those around the women veterans cannot fathom why the women can strive for active service with this motivation. The stereotypical attitude towards servicewomen manifests in ascribing to them false and depreciating motivations to combat participation – not their social or political views, not ways to find their calling in this sphere, but as an attempt to catch a husband. The society lacks the notion that a woman can have some other motivations (e.g. she wishes to follow her calling or to participate in important socio-political processes); women talk about it.

“They were telling my parents night and day that ‘she did not have enough men here so that is why she went to war’. It enrages me so when they compare me to a hooker, who went there oblivious”. (Focus group discussion)

“It is hard to talk to people as again. Not all of those working with you, not all of them understand what you did, not all understand why you just up and went there all by yourself, voluntarily. “You could have stayed home, nobody would have had an issue with that... what for did you go there? To do exactly what? Did you lose something there to go like this?” And you have to explain to people that you had to... as I was explaining at first, “sorry, there were... there were people who needed my help”. (Female veteran 8)

Men interviewed during the research occasionally mentioned their aggression in conflicts and lend themselves to being aggressive or are aware of such instances. This is explained by the fact that a civilian demonstrating disrespect, or a clearly negative attitude is perceived psychologically as an enemy. The internal permission to physically attack an enemy already exists, and the heightened sense of justice allows male veterans to apply the corresponding experience. A respondent talked about a veteran who killed a driver of a route bus he had a conflict with.¹³³

“Yes, he committed a crime, yes, he killed a person, but in his understanding, it was not a person, it was an enemy. In his understanding, there in Avdiyivka, he was killing enemies. Here... how does this man differ from those enemies, who were in Avdiyivka. They wanted to kill him there in Avdiyivka and here they wanted to kill him. But if he hit the plate even stronger, he would have died”. (Male veteran 2)

“Yes, I sometimes ask myself, if I were there at that bus stop instead of Dima, I would have killed. So, I understand him. In that moment, I am fully aware, I soberly admit, I would have killed a person, too. Well, that is, I can, but I would not have killed him, I would have beaten him”. (Male veteran 2)

“I took my beer cup, poured the beer into this goon’s face, and after that with that very cup broke his face to a bloody pulp. And only then it dawned on me – I am standing there, blood dripping from my cup, and a guy on the ground under my feet, and the coach is looking at me shocked. It was my normal communication style immediately after my return from the front, but with time, it got better. Or maybe they just stopped to have such conversations around me”. (Male veteran 1)

Women almost never tell such stories.

In conclusion, women veterans and civil society should establish communications. Civilians lack understanding, tact and respect, and women veterans lack trust in civilians. Bonding, if invested in, will facilitate the social reintegration of female and male veterans.

3.2. Women's Participation in the Veterans' Movement: Challenges and Perspectives

The process of adapting to civilian life is not simple for women veterans in Ukraine. Women who fought in ATO/JFO face difficulties in adapting to civilian life due to stigmatization and biased attitudes towards veterans in general and especially towards women who fought. In addition, women veterans have limited access to social protection services due to challenges with obtaining the status of combat participant and insufficient effectiveness of the system of providing these services and informing veterans about them.

The social protection system for veterans **requires changes both concerning its structure (particularly its adaptation to the needs of women veterans) and concerning the quality of services being provided.** Women veterans are not using the entire range of services provided, although they have voiced a need for additional services and opportunities (e.g. an institutionalized transitional stage from military service to civilian life, accessible state programmes on professional retraining, training in how to run a business and fund-raising). Women veterans also articulated the need to improve the quality and accessibility of medical and psychological services for veterans and for upgrading the skills and qualifications of the staff of social services, medical institutions and psychological counselling centers working with veterans.

Both female and male respondents commended the Veteran's Travels recreational project and the peer-to-peer programmes Posestry (*Sworn Sisters*) and Pobratymy (*Sworn Brothers*) as initiatives that they did (or would) find interesting to participate in. Respondents also suggested it would be great to have a chance to travel not with their family, but with a civilian friend. Civil society veteran's programmes, the so-called 'volunteer-run' ones, are generally assessed more positively. However, aspects that prove their quality and orientation towards an actual (not formal) resolution of problems can also be signs that female respondents would not want to criticize the programmes as the respondents might be left without them.

"What I actually liked was Iceland, for instance. A person like me would have never gotten to Iceland... truly... and I did get there.

I'm a person who went to Iceland, dammit! And when boys get taken somewhere across the world, to Italy or wherever they go to, that's it. This person till the end of their days would say, I went to Spain, or to Italy. As I lived all my life in Khmelnytsky and had never been anywhere, for me, this is a huge deal. So, I think these events are useful". (Male veteran 1)

Some servicewomen demobilized due to their desire to have children. What they experienced is that motherhood prevents them from participating in certain projects such as accessing military education or getting a job. Respondents with children mentioned that they were unable to go for treatment at a resort. No special assistance is provided for women combat participants who have children. Convenience or ease of getting anywhere with children is brushed off as something that never happens. Educational, entertainment and other programmes are beyond their reach as soon as they have children.

"The girls invited me to go horse riding. This means I had to walk for 10 minutes to the bus stop and then another 20 minutes on a bus, and then walk for another 20 minutes. And then it was not clear what to do there with them, as it was early spring. By the time we get there the kids will be sleepy, hungry, you name it. Those who have two small kids would understand". (Female veteran 1)

Yet, other countries somehow address questions of combining motherhood and participation in veteran programmes, further education and further service. Respondents were not always clear what specifically should be done in this regard, but they voiced a request for the state to do something about this issue.

"I personally believe that we should not burden the state with these issues, as this was my decision to have children. I could have decided not to have children and to live my life and study and whatever. This was my decision; I realized what I was getting myself into, essentially. But, on the other hand, I know all over the world there are service women and these women have children, and somehow, they still serve. And they can even be combat participants, and still have children. Where they place those children for this time, I don't have the slightest idea". (Female veteran 1)



Halyna ALMAZOVA

Head of the emergency medical unit "Viterets", driver/paramedic

From 2014 to the present, serves as the driver/paramedic in the medical unit "Viterets". Objectives: evacuation of the wounded and providing first aid on the battlefields, removal of the casualties, assistance in the setup of field hospitals, medical stations, stabilization rooms.

3.3. ATO Veterans: Gender Peculiarities of Needs: Expert Opinion

A survey of 20 experts was conducted to assess gender-specific needs in reintegrating women participants of the ATO/JFO. The experts included employees of state services, NGOs that provide services to ATO veterans, journalists and employees of international organizations. The expert interviews were conducted with persons who have professional knowledge and experience working with veterans in the sphere of psychological and socioeconomic reintegration and at least one year of experience of work with ATO veterans or at least one year of experience analysing issues of the status of female and male veterans of ATO, writing several journalist materials about ATO veterans.

Not all experts were ready to talk about gender-specific needs of veterans' reintegration into peaceful life in Ukraine. What was important for the research, though, was their expertise and first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of the national system for reintegrating female and male veterans. The list of interviewed experts and the questionnaire used for expert interviews can be found in Appendix B (Table B.3.) and Appendix C.

This subsection outlines the experts' opinions concerning reintegrating female veterans into civilian life, including their views on positive and negative characteristics of the system for reintegrating veterans in Ukraine; gender peculiarities of the reintegration process and of the veterans' needs; and recommendations concerning coordination and improvement of the reintegration system (including examples of best international practices).

During the four years of war, a system was established for the socioeconomic reintegration of female and male veterans to civilian life. Positive characteristics listed by the interviewed experts include its very existence, its availability and operation, its wide range of services, the availability of state funding and regional coverage. The experts also noticed a gradual improvement in the quality of services and the system of delivering these services.

"These changes are moving slowly, but they are moving. And it is very difficult to notice them if you look from within and it looks like everything is the same". (Olena Snisarevska, Psychologist NGO Zihriy Dushu and Psychological crisis service)

Among the major concerns about the national system for reintegrating ATO veterans is the lack of consistency, integrity and focus on customer. Lesia Vasylenko, head of the board and founder of Yurydychna Sotnia, talks about gaps in the national system of providing of consultations to ATO veterans via a hotline:

“Each security institution has its own hotlines. The Ministry of Defence has at least a dozen. Each on a different topic. Say, from logistics support to pay service, moral and psychological support, that is, you name a topic and they have a hotline for it. But there is a problem here — in state structures, and in the Cabinet of Ministers there are hotlines, for instance, but in every one of the state structures the hotline is nothing more than a landline. Often with the code 044.¹³⁴ That is, if you are calling from a different city, or from your cell phone, you will rack up huge bills, especially, if the talk takes a lot of time. These hotlines are actually in officials’ offices. These are not dedicated free direct hotlines”. (Lesia Vasylenko, Founder and head of the board of the All-Ukrainian human rights advocacy organization Yurydychna Sotnia, expert of the group National Security and Defence)

A significant number of services and benefits is provided for ATO veterans. However, the experts pointed out insufficiencies in informing ATO veterans and their families about services available for them and about opportunities to sign up. The experts also noted the excessive red tape and complexity of the procedures necessary to access these services.

According to Iryna Suslova (head of the subcommittee for gender equality and non-discrimination of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for the protection of human rights, ethnic minorities and inter-ethnic relations) in Ukraine there is no unified register or analysis of all services for veterans, their providers and procedures of providing these services. This complicates optimizing the national system for reintegrating ATO veterans.

“There is this set, this huge set of services, which are not systematized. And the most important is not that... the MPs do not understand this, as they voted a lot on different draft laws.

But if the MPs do not understand, how can a regular person understand, who just yesterday was in military service and now cannot grasp what to look for in what law and where to run to?" (Iryna Suslova, head of the subcommittee for gender equality and non-discrimination of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for protection of human rights, ethnic minorities and interethnic relations)

Another significant gap is the absence of an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the available system of reintegrating female and male veterans. The services the state provided to ATO veterans were assessed by quantitative indicators such as the amount of money spent, the number of female and male veterans that received services and the number of services. Information about whether the provided services were effective was not collected.

"I still believe this assessment scale is being done on the proper level... say, it is done by the Ministry of Social Policy, correspondingly, the ministry collects the data and the charts of all conducted activities by the departments of social protection in oblasts. And the oblasts correspondingly conduct the activities in rayons. This is done to secure the intended use of public funds". (Mykola Kaziuk, chief specialist, the State Service of Ukraine in Affairs of War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Ternopilska oblasts, veteran)

"It (system of reintegration for veterans) exists. And this may be the bad news, that it does. As this means it should be changed, because it is ineffective. It is formal and does not satisfy those needs that are there. I am not satisfied with the national, that is, state, adaptation programme, because it lacks any assessment criteria. How can they understand whether this programme is working or not? It works because we allocated 15 million dollars for this or that. Not that our veterans are now better". (Andriy Kozinchuk, military psychologist, NGO Pobratymy)

The interviewed experts do not have a shared vision as to gender differences in the needs of female and male veterans in reintegrating into peaceful life. This is, to a degree, related to the experts' different personal experiences in working with women veterans and to the

absence of empirical studies on this topic in Ukraine. Some of the experts do not see any obvious gender differences in the process of veterans' reintegration.

“Concerning needs that emerge, there are different views and we haven’t interviewed that many servicewomen, but still there were some, and they did not agree between themselves as to whether there are any separate needs of women and of men. On the other hand, though, the specialists we talked to (these were psychologists, employees of rehabilitation centers, human rights advocates) also have differing views on whether such differences exist”. (Dmytro Koval, researcher, International Alert)

The International Alert researcher underlined the necessity of the availability of the same and similarly accessible socioeconomic services for women and men who fought. For example, getting physical and psychological rehabilitation, medical services, professional retraining, employment and simplified conditions to start one's business.

“As to the stage of stress... and pain stress, and post-traumatic stress and post-traumatic stress disorder... they are all very similar and manifest both in men and women virtually in the same way, but because the societal expectations from women and from men are different, I believe, this is so With the women I talked to, I can say, they needed the same help. This is my subjective impression”. (Victoria Babiy, researcher, International Alert)

Also, the opinion was shared that veterans – women and men – require not benefits and payments, but opportunities such as **new perspectives and tasks**, which would help them switch to new goals and meanings and would help them integrate into civilian life.

“The biggest support they need is not, as I already said, providing certain benefits, they need new opportunities. The opportunities to learn, retrain, maybe launch their own business, this is the kind of support they need. Obviously, all this should go along with the psychological and medical rehabilitation”. (Oksana Havryliuk, Head of the Charitable Fund Information and Coordination Centre, project Veteran's Home)



Olena LOMACHYNSKA
Veteran

Started her services in 2014,
served in the volunteer
battalion ever since.

The experts point out the necessity of skillful and accessible psychological support for female and male veterans. The key task of psychotherapy is to help female and male veterans understand what is going on with them after their return from war on the psychological and physiological levels and to help them manage their critical conditions, adapt to new conditions and, ultimately, to reintegrate into peaceful life.

“There is a clinical tool – a unified clinical protocol for medical care, a procedure the doctors follow when a person gets diagnosed with [PTSD], they are often put on certain medications, which have to support this person in this condition and pull out of it. But as we see, international practice shows, you cannot treat PTSD with medications alone. The person cannot return back to normal. Psychotherapy is required as support in the process of returning and reintegration, even if we are not talking about active service and war, but about a person living through any psychotraumatizing event. This is always the most important and first element – psycho education. This is training and explaining to a person what happened to her and what can happen in the future. And the most important thing is to explain that the person is responding to abnormal conditions. Because war is not normal conditions. It cannot be perceived by a person as normal. This is why it is logical that our brain and our body are responding in some ways. These responses are usually consistent and can be grouped in several clusters of symptoms. It’s just due to social factors, in each person they will manifest differently. Our service people, they are afraid of this stigmatization – they are afraid: I will be diagnosed, they will relieve me of duty, they will take away my decorations and so on. But nothing of this is taking place”. (Yulia Sobolta, psychologist, NGO Consensio)

KyivPost journalist Oksana Hrytsenko, who worked on the Ilovaysk Battle project, discussed the necessity of establishing an accessible and effective psychological assistance system for veterans, which also acknowledges of participation in ATO through granting the status of combat participant¹³⁵. In cases, when the state does not acknowledge the person’s participation in ATO, creates additional obstacles for obtaining the status of combat participant, fails to provide psychological

support to female and male veterans and to their families – it is not doing enough for veterans, the expert believes.

“Moreover, these are people, who lived through, truly, the bloodiest moments in the history of this war.¹³⁶ And I am aware that many of them have issues with alcohol abuse and have psychological issues. If truth be told, it is not the majority of them that have these or those psychological issues, it is all of them. But still... I know, for instance, this one veteran, who still is trudging through red tape to receive his status of a combat participant. We are not even talking here about any psychological help, we are talking about mere action... of the state fulfilling its obligations before this person, who was standing strong... to protect the country at such a crucial point. Correspondingly, if we talk about the psychological aspect, this is truly a huge trauma for him, and for his wife and for his family. This entire situation. This is why I am afraid the state is not doing enough to help veterans, both men and women”.
(Oksana Hrytsenko, journalist, KyivPost)

Olena Snisarevska, psychologist of NGO Zihriy Dushu and the psychological crisis service, points out that serious psychological and even psychiatric help is necessary for a small number of veterans. Others can reintegrate into civilian life independently under the system for socioeconomic reintegration, including opportunities for professional fulfilment, financial independence and the absence of stigmatization of veterans in society.

“I think, only 5-7% [need psychological or psychiatric support], that’s it. This is purely psychological issue, it can even be psychiatric. All others, if they return home where they are greeted as heroes, yes... dignity, honour, respect. If they have jobs, support from their families, that’s it. When they are back... and everything else just stems from this. If we had emphasis on this, it could have spared us a lot of unnecessary work, which was ineffective. Maybe we would have needed less financial resources, if it were organized and managed in smart way; I think so. This is triage all over again”. (Olena Snisarevska, Psychologist NGO Zihriy Dushu and Psychological crisis service)

The interviewed experts discussed **gender blindness in providing services** for female and male veterans. For example, Mykola Kaziuka (male veteran of ATO and representative of the State Service of Ukraine in Affairs of War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Ternopil'ska oblast) does not think that the existent reintegration system for veterans takes into account the gender aspects; rather, it is gender-neutral and non-inclusive. He also identifies some changes towards a more gender-sensitive approach, which manifests at the level of collecting gender-disaggregated statistics.

“Well, I should say, I haven’t seen this. Not a single time, no requests for such disaggregation; I don’t think anyone has it. In Ternopil, I really don’t know, the majority of women veterans we know of – they are career military or in police, or in security service, or in the 44th artillery brigade, in which they were more on staff work, as well. But they receive the same benefits, services, resort and recreation treatment, their children go to resorts in Ternopil, just as children of veterans, members of families of those who died, they all have access to these resorts, all receive gifts on St. Nicolas Day. A lot of measures are organized for children. Here there is no division into men and women. Correspondingly, among women there are fewer of those who died.

On the whole, on the whole, I believe, recently they began working with this topic, as earlier nobody was suffering, no information. I do have some information on those who fought, on their numbers and so on, but it is not divided by women and men. Never was. And now, I recently had a conversation with the Department of Family, Youth and Sports, and they say that the Ministry began asking, how many women. I think they will only now begin to collect this data”. (Mykola Kaziuk, Chief specialist, the State Service of Ukraine in Affairs of War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Ternopil'ska oblast, veteran)

At the same time, the experts talked about the difficulties in registering for the status of combat participant and correspondingly, in accessing social and financial services for combat participants among women and men who participated in hostilities in 2014 (especially in volunteer

battalions) as well as for women in general. Victoria Babiy, researcher at International Alert, points out that **women, who fought from 2014 to 2015, especially in volunteer battalions, are the most vulnerable category as to the level of access to social benefits.** Due to the unofficial status of volunteer battalions and to the ban on holding military positions (combat positions in particular) for women at that time, many women are facing difficulties confirming their participation in combat and thus with obtaining the status of combat participant and accessing the socioeconomic and medical services the state provides for combat participants.

“If a person served in 2014-2015, it was a complete and utter mess with the paperwork, and after that, it is difficult for them to obtain the status of combat participant... well, essentially, any official status. And naturally, women were extremely unprotected because that decree was not adopted yet. That is, sorry, that decree was not cancelled yet”. (Victoria Babiy, researcher, International Alert)

The experts emphasized the **necessity of taking into account gender peculiarities in designing and providing reintegration services.** Andriy Kozinchuk, psychologist of the Pobratymy NGO, pointed out that approaches and programmes of psychological reintegration should take into account the differences in gender roles, social expectations from women and men in civilian life and differences in perceptions by women and men of themselves in civilian life after war.

The experiences of the interviewed experts in their work with ATO veterans may be different, but it attests to the fact that **women and men go through their experiences of returning to civilian life differently,** and in general have different perceptions of crisis situations and overcoming them. As The experts observed that women who fought are less willing than men are to work with psychologists or to share their emotions and concerns. This complicates the process of their rehabilitation.

“Obviously, there is this specificity, this difference, although in the army there is no such notion, woman/man. They have ‘combat units.’ Or, at least, this is the way it is supposed to be. But life is life, and a servicewoman is still a woman. She

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“As to gender, I can say that the depth of this traumatic event that happened to them, it is the same but its nature – it is completely different. That is, in the majority of men, one of the problems that they bring with them back from war is guilt for what you did or failed to do. This is especially true for the command staff of all ranks, from squad leader to brigade commander. Women and girls face a different question of integration, that is, the answer to the question, who am I? They face social rejection of their different role as a woman; it shifts to an internal conflict. It boils down to the necessity to prove that I am actually a woman veteran, that I exist not for kitchen, child, husband, that I can be independent. And this can manifest in wearing a military uniform, in some rituals, men’s habits, rudeness and so on. Compensation for this by declaring that she will not have children because she doesn’t want them. That is, the depth is the same – the roles are different. And this is why we made our training single-sex”

(Andriy Kozinchuk, military psychologist, NGO Pobratymy)

is more vulnerable, not even emotionally. Well, it is believed that a woman is emotionally more vulnerable. Men are more emotionally vulnerable". (Olena Snisarevska, Psychologist, NGO Zihriy Dushu and Psychological crisis service)

"Well, the impact on a woman is probably even stronger than on a man. No, not because they fought, but what happened to them at war. For women, it's harder. Boys, they somehow are more open, and women, it is hard until you get through to them, to make them share what they experienced". (Anna Lysakova, Head of NGO Zihriy Dushu)

Psychologist Olena Snisarevska draws attention to the necessity of separate approaches for rehabilitating women who fought and women from other vulnerable categories who suffered from war. Each of these categories of women went through their own traumatic personal experience connected to war; each requires attention and a special approach.

"In your opinion, should reintegration programmes be separate for women or mixed-sex, for women and men; which is better?"

Probably, for a certain category, they should be separate. These are women who survived violence or severe wounds, or maybe widows. I think they have to do it separately, as many of them since 2014 are still grieving. Those stages that are standard, classical — not all go through them like this, everything is different". (Olena Snisarevska, Psychologist, NGO Zihriy Dushu and Psychological crisis service)

Other experts point out the necessity of establishing special psychological rehabilitation programmes not only for women veterans separately, but also separately for the wives and mothers of ATO/JFO participants. These women provide psychological support to veterans and face difficulties when waiting while their family members are at the front as well as when they return.

"What is very important is that a majority of military personnel are men. And their wives stay at home and wait for them, and as some American psychologists proved, a person waiting and worrying experiences a significantly deeper shock and stress

than a person in this stress. So, we do not have family [having access to] rehabilitation". (Mykola Kaziuk, chief specialist, the State Service of Ukraine in Affairs of War Veterans and Participants of the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Ternopil'ska oblast, veteran)

Anna Lysakova, head of the Zihriy Dushu NGO (which provides psychosocial support to participants of ATO) and Oksana Havryliuk, head of the Veteran's Home project talked about the **possibility of rehabilitation work in mixed-sex groups** with women and men.

"Nope... mixed-sex, definitely... we already work in mixed-sex groups. Obviously, if this is therapy, for instance, or counselling, it takes place one-on-one, this is not a concern, and in a group, it is ok". (Anna Lysakova, Head of NGO Zihriy Dushu)

The results of the expert surveys show that only some NGOs account for gender peculiarities in the reintegration needs of ATO veterans. State programmes and services do not have a clear emphasis on differences in needs or services for female and male veterans. Veterans' services and the system for providing them were developed without prior gender analysis.

The interviewed experts suggested improving the state reintegration system for veterans by adapting the experience of other countries. In particular, Dmytro Koval (International Alert researcher) and Olena Snisarevska (psychologist of the Zihriy Dushu NGO) recommended that the experiences of Israel inform the creation a transitional stage for veterans where they can decompress from combat conditions and prepare for re-entering civilian life.

"The international practice shows it is highly effective to place such servicepersons, say, for a month or a month and a half, or at least for two weeks, into a civilian setting, but along with those they are used to spend their time with, with former service personnel. This enables them to easier transition to civilian life, takes off pressure from them and makes this transition softer". (Dmytro Koval, researcher, International Alert)

"In the Israel system, they have it, too, this decompression disease. After hostilities, they take them to the adaption base

camp, which is not in civilian life, but on the second or third line, where the conditions are almost military, but a chaplain, psychologist and doctor, they go through triage. This one goes to psychoneurology, as he has some screws loose, this one needs to get treatment for his wound to that hospital, that department. This one needs relaxing and massage". (Olena Snisarevska, Psychologist, NGO Zihriy Dushu and Psychological Crisis Service)

Iryna Suslova and Oksana Havryliuk talked about necessity of systematization and better coordination of providing services to veterans by establishing a Ministry in Veteran Affairs, similar to ones in Croatia, Israel and the United States.

Primary responsibility for the quality of the reintegration system and changes in it should be vested in the state. Experts have high expectations for the Ministry of Veterans. The Cabinet of Ministers announced¹³⁷ the launch of work on establishing the Ministry of Veteran Affairs in March 2018 in accordance with the Decree of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine addressing the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine as to establishment of the Ministry of Ukraine in Veteran Affairs.¹³⁸ Also, according to the experts interviewed, since the announcement, a lot has been done for a quick launch of operation of the Ministry.¹³⁹

"Well, I think certain questions have to be addressed by the state itself, as there are a lot of social guarantees and legal issues, which do emerge; they are regulated by the state institutions. Right now, I am not sure how effective they will be". (Victoria Babi, researcher, International Alert)

"It seems to me, one of the problems is that we do not have a comprehensive approach. Now, there are plans underway to establish the Ministry of Veterans and I believe this should be established as soon as possible. I feel that this very institution will enable us to develop a unified strategic and comprehensive policy that will include components of education, employment, psychological rehabilitation and other problems that are linked to veterans' issues. What we have now is all scattered; some things are done separately by the Ministry of Social Policy, some by the Ministry of Health. I think this is affecting the situation". (Vitalia Lebid, lawyer of the Strategic Litigation Center, Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union)



“What international experience of veterans’ reintegration should be applied in Ukraine? Well, obviously, the experience as to establishing a unified centre of work and development of state policies and their implementation, following suit of the United States, Israel or Croatia and establishing a Ministry of Veteran Affairs. In these countries, there are such institutions. And then again, there are some interesting successfully operating centres, like Veteran’s Home”

(Oksana Havryliuk,
Head of the charitable fund Information and Coordination
Center and the Veteran’s Home project)



“That is why it all should be systematized. There should be one governmental body to address this, which has rubrics. Here this person comes, man or woman, after ATO. They come to this institution after their contract or conscription ended, they come and they are told, so, according to this military code, you are entitled to these and these services, for this you have to come to this institution. That is, a person should not be forced to run around and search where he or she can receive assistance, medical care, psychological or legal help. This person has to come to one place, where they get their orientation”. (Iryna Suslova, head of the subcommittee for gender equality and non-discrimination of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for protection of human rights, ethnic minorities and interethnic relations)

It is necessary to establish cooperation among Ministry of Veteran’s Affairs and the Ministries responsible for providing services to female and male veterans. In particular, a single unified database of services for veterans should be created, as well as a database of veterans that contains information on the state of their physical and mental health and their needs in medical and psychosocial services (the data should be collected from questionnaires the veterans fill in).

“I see the biggest problem is that we do not have a sound tradition of intersectoral coordination and cooperation. Where the mandate of one ministry or institution ends and the mandate of another one begins, we always have gaps. Each of them has their own sectoral health retreats and resorts and none is willing to share them. They all are ready to develop their own rehabilitation system, but none is ready to separate it into a separate rehabilitation system, which in this case could cater to veterans’ needs.

That is, currently there is no unified consolidated information database, for instance, about the psychological profile of the person or about their wounds that would help understand what has to be addressed. This data can be collected with a questionnaire and later simply transferred from one system to another. Based on this filled questionnaire, we already can work with this person and offer him or her solutions for their

problems. I feel this is something worth doing if we see there is still no ministry in the near future. I believe the most important thing is to standardize the approaches of providing assistance and information based upon which a person is referred to a different institution and a different system between institutions. When you leave the Armed Forces or the National Guard, the information about your needs has to be already available to the Ministry of Social Policy, and then it is significantly easier to provide services in a unified way. This is what I think". (Ivanna Klympush-Tsintsadze, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine)

According to Kateryna Levchenko, Government Commissioner for Gender Equality Policy, more effective reintegration of female and male ATO veterans entails establishing intersectoral cooperation between institutions responsible for providing services to women veterans. It also requires enhancing cooperation between the state and the civil society sectors; the civil society sector is more flexible and knowledgeable as to working with veterans.

"From what I can say, it is very important that the Ministry of Defence, or the General Staff, should have an operating system of quick response to issues and problems that veterans face. It is very important that this question of transition from the Armed Forces to civilian life be finally addressed. A lot of problems can be resolved before the time of mobilization (or begin resolving them). It is important to develop such an internal system within the Armed Forces themselves, as well as cooperation of such officials in the Armed Forces with social workers, who work in the centres of social services, in the system of social protection of population. Also, NGOs are playing an important role. As a fresh example of this, cooperation began between the national hotline that La Strada has been running and the hotline of the Ministry of Defence". (Kateryna Levchenko, Government commissioner for gender policy)

Oksana Havryliuk (head of the Veteran's Home project, run by the information and coordination centre in Zhytomyr) stresses the importance of cooperation not only between state bodies, but also with the civil society and the private sectors.

“Clearly, this must be a cooperation with the public. We even talked at the forum about this. If the Ministry of Veteran Affairs is indeed established, it should have a separate direction — the direction of project work. Project work and close cooperation with NGOs and even more so with the private sector, for example with banking institutions or some programme on investing or loans for ATO veterans”. (Oksana Havryliuk, Head of the Charitable Foundation Information and coordination centre, Veteran’s Home project)

The interviewed experts identified the following **major gaps in the national system for reintegrating female and male veterans of ATO/JFO to civilian life:**

1. A lack of coordination of work and unsatisfactory effectiveness of state institutions that provide services to female and male veterans in the spheres of employment, psychosocial reintegration and medical care.
2. A lack of high-quality and accessible psychological support for female and male veterans.
3. Absence of an effective system for monitoring and evaluation of rehabilitation programmes.
4. The absence of a gender-sensitive approach to developing and implementing a system for reintegrating veterans. There is no practice of consultations on drafts of rehabilitation and reintegration programmes involving female and male veterans.
5. The absence of special programmes of psychological rehabilitation for female and male veterans’ families.
6. Difficulties with obtaining the status of combat participant and accessing state services and benefits for veterans, which is even more difficult for women who fought.

In the experts’ opinion, pooling the resources and experience of state structures, NGOs, international organizations and the private sector and ensuring their deliberate and concerted coordination and cooperation will facilitate quicker establishment of a reliable, effective system for reintegrating ATO veterans. Major expectations of

improved coordination and effectiveness of the reintegration system for veterans are being placed on the Ministry of Veteran Affairs — whose establishing date has not yet been determined. The issues with reintegration of female and male veterans are presented in more detail in Appendix D, Table D.1.

This research applied data triangulation by using three methods of information collection: analysis of legislation; surveys of female and male veterans; and interviews with experts. The research identified gaps in the current reintegration system, including:

- the absence of needs assessments for female and male veterans;
- the absence of a gender-sensitive and data-based approach to development of programmes and services for reintegrating veterans into civilian life;
- inefficient coordination and excessive red tape in providing services to veterans;
- the absence of an institutionalized transitional stage between military service and civilian life;
- insufficient awareness about services and benefits available to veterans.

Legislation analysis, veterans of both sexes and interviewed experts all brought up these gaps. Female and male experts and lawyers also emphasized the necessity of gender budgeting for reintegration programmes, of effectiveness assessments of state programmes and services, and the necessity to implement an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the reintegration system as a whole.

Female and male veterans provided more details about gaps in the practical implementation of social guarantees. In particular, they pointed out:

- biased attitudes towards women veterans (primarily concerning their activities in the ATO/JFO zone);
- a lack of competence in civilian health professionals and psychologists for working with veterans and post-war traumas;
- difficulties in access to services;
- impaired access to services due to difficulties in obtaining combat participant identification cards and the status of person



Svitlana LITVINCHUK

Veteran

Coordinator at the Firefly Training and Rehabilitation Center for veterans. Awarded with a Medal for Sacrifice and Love for Ukraine.

with disability caused by war, especially for women from former volunteer battalions;

- stigmatization of female and male veterans in society;
- insufficient quality of state services for psychological rehabilitation, medical care and assistance with finding employment;
- ineffective services for providing housing and land lots.

Similarity of the results obtained by using different research methods supports the conclusion that the state system for reintegrating female and male veterans into civilian life displays the identified gaps. The interviewed female respondents and the lawyers that worked on the analysis of the legislation agree that these gaps in the state reintegration system should be addressed. Proposed changes to the existent system for rehabilitating women and men ATO/JFO veterans are presented in more detail in the Recommendations section.

3.4. Representation of Female ATO Veterans in Mass Media

This study of women veterans' representation in mass media undertook a content analysis of media messages. The sample was collected from online media outlets. Some sample elements were online copies of other media formats that reach an audience that does not actively use the Internet. The analysed materials encompassed both national and local media. Ukrainian and Russian search queries included 'women veterans', 'women combat participants', 'women veterans of ATO', and 'women participants of ATO.' We analysed 16 online materials from 2017 to 2018; no earlier materials on the topics were found.

This research segment aimed to analyse how women veterans of ATO are represented in Ukrainian mass media. The posed research questions include:

- What ideas about women veterans of ATO do Ukrainian media offer?
- Are these ideas patriarchal or egalitarian?
- Do these ideas correspond to what the women veterans (in their interviews to our research team) tell about themselves?

For the researchers, this was the first study of media representations of women veterans and the second study of media representations

of servicewomen. The first study of media representations of servicewomen was conducted within the framework of the 'Invisible Battalion' (2015) research.¹⁴⁰ In that research, the team concentrated on media depictions of women, who at the time of the articles' writing was serving in ATO. The research yielded the key result that journalists glorify and romanticize servicewomen but fail to address or mention the actual issues they face in their service.

The total number of media materials dedicated to women veterans is extremely small. In four years, first as ATO and then as JFO, thousands of women engaged in combat and some of them are already veterans. However, there is little more than a dozen media materials about them. Further, some of the materials were written by women veterans who had returned home from the front and were working as journalists.

Researchers identified two categories of materials: egalitarian and patriarchal. Egalitarian pieces discuss actual needs of women that returned from the front, their hardships and achievements. Patriarchal pieces exoticize the image of women veterans.

Issues, needs and successes of women veterans

"There was not a single rehabilitation programme for me. First, when I returned, I retreated into my own shell, found it impossible to talk about my experience, to talk about it with people not included in the processes. These are just talking about war, about how you want to go back there. And there is the impossibility to return to your previous job, to those usual occupations you had before the war. Then I joined the civil society sector, so that the girls had somewhere to come back to, so that they could travel with 'Veterans travels,' could find themselves on the informational, civil front, so that it would not be as hard for them, so that rehabilitation programmes started developing in Ukraine".¹⁴¹

After return, female veterans face a standard set of challenges, which the research team discussed with them at more length while in the field. Challenges include finding a new job after return (or resuming work at their previous job); getting treatment for health problems; finding understanding with people who lack experience with military

service; and getting access to benefits and services the state provides to women veterans. The analysed journalist materials superficially address these challenges with little, if any, detail, on how, if at all, women actually manage to address them.

Only one of the materials found addressed the issue of communication with civilians:

“Sometimes, girls who fought as volunteers fall off the wagon and go to the ATO zone as medics or to do other jobs, as there are issues that prevent them from returning and adapt to civilian life. Just imagine, you, a woman, come back and some people learn you are a veteran. And the first question they ask, ‘Who did you sleep with there?’ What do you think? How easy it is to come back under such conditions? Obviously, we do not want to experience such attitudes”.

*“I just wish they would stop painting us as epic heroes or, to the contrary, look at us with pity. I would very much want to avoid that, as at war we found our dignity, and we now know our worth – the actual worth of our values”.*¹⁴²

The articles show that women veterans experience PTSD, but fail to raise the question whether women experience it the way men do or if they experience it differently:

*“I still sometimes find it frightening to walk the streets in Kyiv, as any loud noise or a firecracker goes off and it sounds like guns are firing. It feels like this stays with you forever. When I was studying in Estonia, by then I already had some combat experience. We had some professors coming; they served in Iraq and they told us about PTSD, and I did not understand what it was. At war, you have no time to process your state, and when I came back, I realized not everything was as great as I thought it was back at the front. The brain just shuts instincts off and now I realize that in some situations I would have stayed instead of going”.*¹⁴³

Not a single material addressed the topic of the accessibility of benefits and services that women are entitled to in accordance to the Law of Ukraine, On Status of War Veterans, legal provisions for Guarantees of

their Social Protection, or whether women have equal access to these opportunities compared to men.

The issue of the image of women veterans was raised on several occasions; the conclusion is that this image has not yet been articulated.

"The issue of a woman-veteran is not articulated yet, and we are working on this right now. We are showing that girls serve in the army, girls participate in armed conflicts, girls return and adapt. We are here, we are present and there is this image of a woman veteran and we, too, need help and support. We can share our opinion and we know we will be understood. We are like family". (Alina, training participant)¹⁴⁴

"Here it would be difficult to do without the image of a veteran and what stereotypes exist about women in general and specifically about women veterans. Based on these stereotypes, I personally found it hard to combine my role as a woman and my role as a veteran. I was going to extremes all the time, I was saying, I am just 'one of the guys' or I am a woman only?"¹⁴⁵

Women were initially visible while serving at the front, but with time they became more noticed. However, women veterans remain unrepresented in media, lacking an integral image. This image is missing in society's perception and sometimes even in the women's own perception of themselves. Partially due to this missing representation, women feel they are stuck in men's shadow and wish they could interact more with other women.

"The explanation the girls gave to the need to organize, along with the joint movement with men, a separate women veteran's 'block' was that women in the army constitute a minority and at the meetings of male veterans, those few women found it hard to voice their problems and needs and to have them addressed. After all, this is the way it is done in other countries over the world".¹⁴⁶

"It is so cool that there are only girls here, cool to have only women veterans around [participating in the training], as there are things you cannot share with men present. I feel safer and more relaxed when there are only women veterans here. We

have a lot in common". (Olha, female veteran and training participant)¹⁴⁷

"These questions were raised as well in the interview we conducted. The household question often causes a certain discomfort. Persons of different sexes find it rather difficult to discuss it candidly, especially when you are in a minority. International experience also proves that women veterans require separate services".¹⁴⁸

Differences between women and men also manifest in the spheres of visibility and representation.

"Women veterans admit [that] when they return from war, they encounter the same problems of adaptation as men (in general, at the front there is usually no division by gender, your preparedness and professionalism are what people look at). But the society is still not used to seeing warrior girls adequately".¹⁴⁹

There are passing mentions of the lack of infrastructure to address needs of women returning from the front. The research 'Invisible Battalion' uses "infrastructural invisibility" to refer to the lack of infrastructure for women's service in the ATO. This phenomenon is observed here, as well. Just like the campaign for servicewomen's visibility was launched at the grass-roots level, women veterans themselves resolve the issues they are facing.

"In Ukraine, the charitable project 'Travels of Women Veterans' is gaining traction. While there are no state-run rehabilitation programmes for women veterans, civil society is picking up the state's slack".¹⁵⁰

"At a training I attended, I wanted to raise the issue of contact with other men at war and after war. To what extent can we be an equally acknowledged part of the men's veteran community? To what extent do we need our own local women's communities? You cannot discard biological differences. It is hard to explain to a man, for instance, why you cannot not shower for a week in winter".¹⁵¹

"How long have you been at the front? What was the hardest after your return?"

I came back in summer of 2015. It was very hard to get used to regular life. At the front we were talking about history, and in civvy street, all people talk about is restaurants, sex, and entertainment. It was very hard for me to get used to it all again. I switched a lot of different jobs".¹⁵²

Women veterans' successes are described in a gender-neutral way, but lack gender sensitivity. Woman veterans are rarely asked whether in the course of her success story she, as a woman, encountered any manifestations of sex-based discrimination. It would have been interesting to see this issue addressed, but the general tone of the materials is just a statement of her employment. How she managed to achieve it, whether it was easy or difficult, how her advancement looked compared to that of men — virtually none of these issues were looked into. Women veterans are shown as starting their businesses, participating in some competitions or spearheading the women veteran's movement. But this is all presented devoid of any context or personal history, or the situation in the society, where the women veterans are facing positive and negative societal attitudes.

Halyna Almazova is a director general in one company and a chief commercial officer in another. While working as a paramedic at the front, she keeps her business running — this allows her to cover some of the needs of 'Viterets'.¹⁵³

"I keep running my business; among other things, it helps cover some rehabilitation for veterans. This is why for me this experience of communication was and still is very interesting. Differently, sometimes radically contrary opinions, but this is what makes it interesting, as you see a different view, a different opinion, a different person from a different angle," says Almazova.¹⁵⁴

There is a single mention that in this concrete case there was no discrimination, but there are no indications as to whether this story reflects a regular occurrence, or is it just the good luck of the protagonist:

"The only woman among veterans-participants of "Invictus Games" says she feels comfortable working in the team, and she experiences no prejudices from her male teammates. It

*would have been really funny, if they began to challenge to a wrestling match the only girl on the national team”.*¹⁵⁵

Overall, media outlets concentrate predominantly on the topics of solidarity among women veterans and the psychological needs of women returning to civilian life. Comparison with the findings of the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews conducted in the course of this research show that women veterans are facing significantly more problems than media outlets cover.

The exoticization of women veterans

All texts quoted above are written in a sensitive or at least neutral manner, but there are also materials written differently. The other type of articles exploits the fact that the notion of a servicewoman, let alone a woman veteran, is novel and unusual for a Ukrainian audience. This approach, being gendered but not gender-sensitive, exploits the issue of the women’s looks and feeds sexism.

We observed such exoticization — the turning women into an object of admiration — in our previous research on servicewomen. We did not analyse the media image of male veterans and are not ready to comment on whether they are similarly presented as objects of admiration. However, there is a clear gender-related difference. In the case of men, it is their actions and personality that are admired, not their visual appearance. In fact, for readers’ consumption, journalists serve as informational curios, with no interest in the personality and life of the very person they are writing about.

Attention to the appearance is part and parcel of the patriarchal perception of a woman: she must be beautiful no matter what with no regard to whether she herself enjoys it or can afford it. A woman, currently in a wheelchair, who went to the front at a very young age, who established an efficient military unit subsection under her command and who keeps supporting the front after her injury, has a lot to share with society besides her attractiveness — but all of that is ignored to set up an image of a young beauty/object of admiration.

“A woman veteran, the commander of the Medical Battalion, ‘Hospitaliers’ Yana Zinkevych shared her photos in an unusual

image. She is posing in a long black gown and in a hat. In the comments to the photo, social network users pointed out that Zinkevych looks gorgeous and looks like a fairy tale heroine".¹⁵⁶

Another case: out of everything one can say about a person, journalists deemed her appearance to be her most important feature. In contrast, when describing men, they disregard it — compliance with beauty standards is a patriarchal demand that is applied only to women.


"To go to the front to fight for your country, while others entertain themselves, is an act of bravery. If you are a petite woman, who has never held in her hands anything more dangerous than a rolling pin, this is bravery squared. And if you manage among this hell to stay beautiful and well-coiffed, this is a truly great feat.

They are womanly and manly [meaning courageous – translator's note] at the same time. They take out guerrillas, treat the wounded, drive pickups for hundreds of kilometres to deliver food, equipment, software. They twine camouflage covers, air-cure borshcht prepacks, support men with their smiles, when they want to scream with fear, despair, and pain.

Spirited Ukrainian women. Sure, a neat hairdo and well-groomed nails for them at war are not a priority, but our dear ATO women fighters should not be offended by our seemingly frivolous topic about their beauty. Beauty exists to be admired".¹⁵⁷

Another example of women being exoticized is not about a beautiful woman, but about a mother, 'hearth keeper'.

"In the communal non-commercial enterprise 'Ivano-Frankivsk City Clinical Perinatal Centre' on 12 September a baby box was given to a special mother – a woman, who had been protecting our Motherland in the zone of conducting of the Anti-terrorist operation. 'Shevchuk Anastasia is a petite beautiful woman. It is hard to believe that she is a combat participant and repeatedly stayed in the ATO zone', the page of the city clinical perinatal centre reports".¹⁵⁸



Ivanna CHOBANIUK

Veteran

Volunteer in the medical battalion "Hospitaliery". During her medical studies at the university, in late September 2014, joined the active combat zone, became commander of the medical evacuation team, worked mainly in the village Pisky near the Donetsk airport. Ivanna periodically returned to studies, her last rotation was in April 2015. She is currently a member of the Women's Veterans Movement and the Veterans Diplomacy Club.

The topic of combining motherhood and a return to civilian life is extremely interesting with regards to survey respondents' discussion of the insufficient protection of reproductive work and with regards to certain stereotypical ideas about motherhood — but the material does not mention it in the slightest. As the topic of women's participation in military operations is rather new, the ways for women to combine service and motherhood are insufficiently reflected at the regulatory and infrastructural level, something that respondents who have children mentioned during the in-depth interviews. Coverage of this regulatory and infrastructural issue in mass media could accelerate its evolution.

A considerably negative shift was observed in media materials that use the word 'ATOshnytsia',¹⁵⁹ and appear when this word is used as a search query. This word has outright tabloid connotations, which manifest at the level of headers: "Girl ATO fighter died from horrible disease (photo)", "Driver denied ATOshnytsia from Khmelnytsky free bus ride, turned out to serving bus route illegally", or even "Song by ATOshnytsia 'Chocolate Ass' about Poroshenko blew up the Internet". The content of these materials matches their headers and is intended as clickbait rather than a discussion of actual problems.

3.5. Attitude towards Women in the Military Sphere: Analysis of Public Opinion

A public opinion survey, representative of all of Ukraine, was conducted in order to discern public opinion with regards to the topic of gender equality in the Armed Forces. The research was conducted by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology from 28 August to 24 September 2018. The field stage took place from 8 to 23 September 2018. The survey was conducted in 109 localities and in all oblasts of Ukraine, except for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. In Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the survey covered only the territories under the Ukrainian control. As a result of the field stage, 2026 questionnaires were collected; 1111 from women and 915 from men who reside in 109 localities of Ukraine.

The research studied the opinions of adult residents of Ukraine (18 and older). The major research stages included construction of the questionnaire and support toolkit, sample design, interviewing the respondents, quality control, data entry and checking data for logical

errors, and preparation of the final data array and tables of one-dimensional distributions.

To conduct the survey, a stratified, four-stage random sample (random at each stage) was developed. The sample is representative of the adult population that: permanently resides on the territory of Ukraine; is not doing military service; and is not in prison or a medical institution (e.g. hospitals, medical residential institutions).

The population of Ukraine divided into 49 strata. It was first stratified by region (24 oblasts and the city of Kyiv), then the population of each region was stratified into urban (cities and towns) and rural populations (except for Kyiv, where the population is entirely urban). For each stratum, proportional to the adult population size, it was determined how many interviews should be conducted in it, by how many localities and where the survey would be held.

After stratification was complete, specific locations were selected where the interviewers were to work. At the first stage, localities were selected within each stratum. Urban localities were selected with the probability proportional to the size of the adult population in the locality. Within the rural population strata, rayons were selected first (with the probability proportional to the size of adult rural population in the rayon), and then within the already selected rayon, villages were randomly selected.

At the second stage, stations were selected within each locality. At the third stage, for each polling station, an initial address was selected (street, house number and, in case of multi-story buildings, number of the apartment) from which interviewers would begin the survey. At the fourth stage, selection and survey of respondents using the method of modified route sampling took place.

In Luhanska and Donetska oblasts, the survey covered only the territories under Ukrainian control. The survey was not conducted on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

The list of questions can be found in Appendix E. The statistical sampling error (with probability of 0.95 and with the design effect of 1.5) does not exceed:

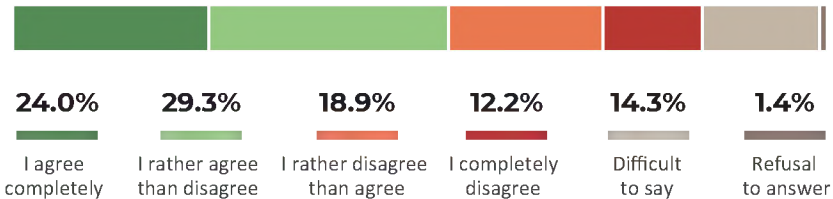
- 3.3% for values close to 50%
- 2.8% for values close to 25 or 75%
- 2.0% for values close to 12 or 88%
- 1.4% for values close to 5 or 95%
- 0.7% for values close to 1 or 99%

As the results of the representative public opinion survey show, Ukrainian society supports the idea of equal rights and opportunities in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

More than a half agreed that women in Ukraine should be granted equal opportunities with men to work in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations (see Table 1). 25% of survey respondents agreed with this statement completely. In contrast, only 12% disagreed with this statement completely.

TABLE 1

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Women should be granted equal opportunities with men to work in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations?

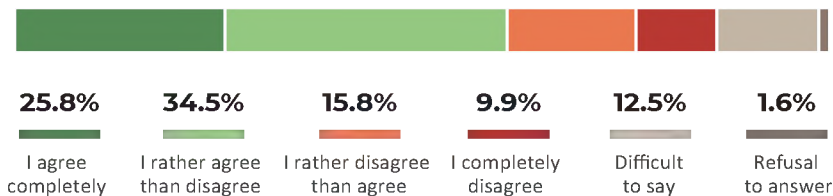


Another important egalitarian idea as to engagement of women on par with men in all spheres of social life is the opportunity to access military education. As Table 2 shows, around 60% of respondents support the idea of providing women the same opportunities as men to learn military science. In Ukraine, women face a lot of hurdles and limitations in this sphere.

TABLE 2

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

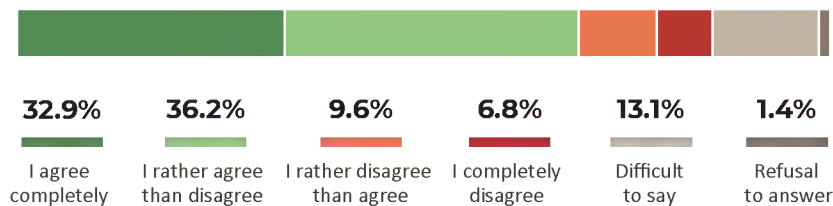
Women should be granted equal opportunities with men to access military education?



Currently in Ukraine, in accordance with Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men,¹⁶⁰ compulsory military service for men that is prescribed by law is not considered sex-based discrimination. Instead, as Table 3 shows, there is a significant support (at the level of 70%) for the idea that army should be a professional sphere, where both women and men can achieve their potential on a voluntary basis (of their own free will).

TABLE 3

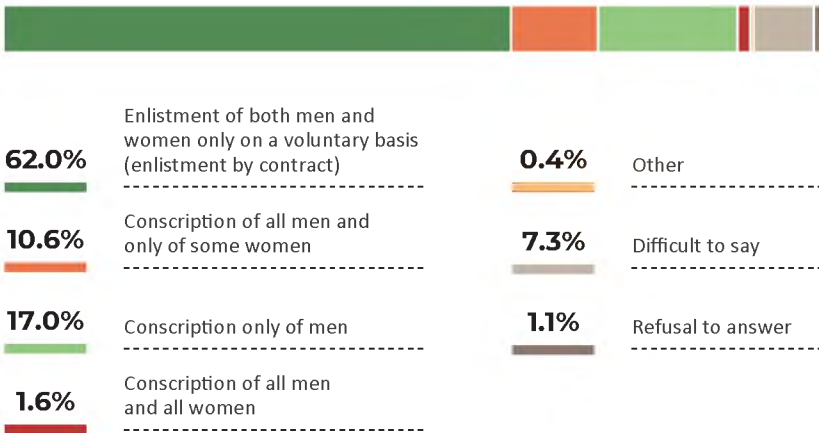
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
The army should be a professional sphere, where both women and men serve on a voluntary basis (of their own free will) can achieve their potential?



As Table 4 shows, a significant minority (17%) supports the conscription of only men. 62% supports enlistment by contract for women and men. Less than 2% supports the idea of conscription of all men and all women. Compared to other questions, this question yielded the smallest share of those who found it difficult to answer or refused to answer at all.

TABLE 4

To your opinion, what kind of army should Ukraine introduce?

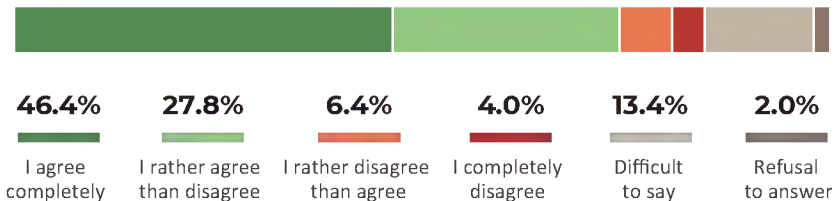


Finally, as follows from Table 5, 75% of Ukrainian society supports the idea that the state should secure the reintegration of servicewomen and servicemen who participated in ATO to civilian life, taking into consideration needs of both women and men.

TABLE 5

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

The state should secure the reintegration of servicewomen and servicemen who participated in ATO to civilian life, taking into consideration needs of both women and men?



CHAPTER 3, INTERVIEWS WITH FEMALE AND MALE VETERANS, FEMALE AND MALE EXPERTS AND ALL-UKRAINIAN SURVEY REVEAL THE FOLLOWING POSITIVE ASPECTS:

1. In Ukraine, there are programmes of reintegration for female and male veterans to civilian life that offer medical services, psychological rehabilitation, social benefits and guarantees.
2. The results of the public opinion survey show that the Ukrainian society supports the ideas of women's involvement in the Armed Forces of Ukraine on par with men, military service on a voluntary basis (enlistment by contract) equally for women and men, providing opportunities for women to access military education and ensuring the reintegration of female combat participants on par with male combat participants, taking into account their needs.
3. Some women who fought engage in civic activities and strive to develop the veteran's movement.

CHAPTER 3 REVEALS THE FOLLOWING NEGATIVE ASPECTS:

1. Poor access to reintegration services for women veterans, which is linked to difficulties in obtaining the official status of a woman combat participant, excessive bureaucracy in registering for social benefits for female and male veterans, insufficient awareness about their rights and available services, corruption, lack of coordination between institutions that provide services to veterans, and lack of necessary infrastructure in remote localities.
2. The absence of feedback from services recipients (e.g. an assessment of the effectiveness of provided services and the collection of information about the needs of female and male veterans) renders the existing reintegration system more gender-blind than gender-sensitive and not entirely effective, as it fails to meet women veterans' needs as to variety and quality of services. The absence of clear information about the needs of female and male veterans in Ukraine also renders the effective distribution of state funds for the reintegration of veterans to civilian life impossible.

3. Difficulties in women veterans' communications with civilian people results from biased attitudes from employees of medical institutions and social services towards them, from the stigmatization of female and male veterans, in particular in the media, as well as from a lack of skills and knowledge as to how to communicate with persons who returned from the military service and persons with emotional disorders.

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CONCLUSIONS AND ROADMAP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

At the national level, gender equality is guaranteed under the Constitution of Ukraine and several national laws. Nevertheless, despite of its international and national commitments, Ukraine did not adopt a comprehensive gender-responsive reintegration strategy, which would be aligned with its international commitments and other localized documents, like plans and programmes. Even though the recently adopted Programme on the Physical, Medical and Psychological Rehabilitation and Social and Professional Adaptation of Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) participants considers some gender-sensitive measures,¹⁶¹ its designing and development did not include consultations with the demobilized women and men, as right holders. Therefore, the voices of women-veterans were not included there. In addition, the action plan for programme's implementation does not include a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, was not costed and was developed without a baseline assessment or thorough analysis of data, including statistical, which imposes limitations on measuring the progress with its implementation. Finally, the programme is focusing on rehabilitation and social adaptation, which are only parts of the full-scale reintegration programme.

To make sure that the voices of demobilized women are heard, to advance their interests, raise issues that are important to them and to increase their visibility in the veterans' movement, women are associating in women veterans' organizations. The women veterans' movement, which considers both international experience and ATO veterans' wishes and needs, is currently finding its footing in Ukraine.

The issues of social protection and informing women veterans about benefits provided for in the legislation are urgent due to a significant number of veterans in society (and the number of veterans who were combat participants is growing). According to official statistical data, as of 1 August 2018, out of 345 thousand persons who were protecting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and participated in anti-terrorist operation, 12,010 were women who received the status of combat participant. There are 33 women (of 3,369) among those with the status of a person with a disability caused by war.

The largest numbers of female combat participants are registered in Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovska, Kharkivska, Zhytomyrska, Lvivska oblasts, the city of Kyiv and Kyivska oblast. The largest numbers of female combat participants who sustained a disability caused by war were registered in the Volynska, Dnipropetrovska and Zhytomyrska oblasts.

In 2016, the Sociology Department of Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University conducted non sex-disaggregated sociological research on the initiative of the Charitable Fund of War Veterans and ATO Participants. Research data showed that half of respondents intend to continue their military career; almost half want to start their own business. The major issues of concern for ATO veterans include financial hardship, absence of their own place to live, violations of their rights for social guarantees, unsatisfactory state policies, health issues and government agencies' bureaucracy when processing the documents for benefits. Respondents showed the highest level of awareness concerning programmes on the allocation of land lots, free ride and housing and utilities benefits. Respondents were most satisfied with the housing and utilities benefits and benefits for communications services; they were least satisfied with the allocation of land lots.

Given the fact that before there was no gender-sensitive study on the needs and challenges for male and female veterans, and while constituting the minority of veterans, women chair 4 associations among 51 national civil associations of war and ATO veterans, it is important to emphasize on social and legal protection of female veterans by raising the women veteran community's awareness of the social security guarantees for them. This is relevant both for female representatives of veteran NGOs and for women who are not engaged in the veteran's movement in society. Female veterans who are undergoing medical treatment, who have a status of a person with disability caused by war or who are residing in remote localities are especially vulnerable if they remain unaware of their entitlements and social benefits, available and guaranteed for them by the legislation.

To understand more about the needs, challenges and good practices, experienced by women in their reintegration to peaceful life, this

participatory and evidence-based research was conducted. It concluded that even Ukraine has a legislated system for reintegrating female and male veterans, this system lacks gender-sensitive and data-based approaches to developing programmes. The lack of a comprehensive needs' assessment of female and male veterans prevents the development of targeted services, renders it impossible to effectively distribute and use funds designated by the state and prevents achieving top efficiency in veterans' reintegration into civilian life. Further, there is no mechanism for evaluating how effective the provided services were. The design of available services for veteran reintegration and the system for providing these services is currently gender-neutral. A partial separation of the reintegration system for female and male veterans from the beneficiaries of these services impairs its effectiveness and harms its reputation in veterans' circles.

Weak or absent coordination among agencies that provide veterans' services, excessive bureaucratization, corruptive practices of duty bearers compromise the accessibility of these services. The procedure for receiving the status and relevant documents can take months. Women, particularly those who fought in volunteer battalions, frequently encounter obstacles when formalizing their combat participant status and accessing their benefits. Interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the process of transitioning from military service and combat missions to civilian life is insufficiently regulated and too rapid. Military structures work only with the military; civilian agencies do not consider social, medical and psychological nuances of civilians who have an experience of military service. The current system lacks a transition stage between active service and return to a peaceful life similar to those practiced by foreign armed forces (in particular, those of the United States and Canada). In those practices, individuals no longer perform their official duties but do not come back to the civilian life. Instead, they go through health examinations, receive information about their rights and benefits they are entitled to and receive services related to the transition to civilian life. Veterans and experts unanimously emphasized that an additional transitional stage is needed that prepares veterans and simplifies the process of returning to a peaceful life.

Reservation of a job and average salary for those mobilized and those who signed a contract for military service creates favourable conditions

for quick reintegration into the labour market. The absence of effective retraining programmes for demobilized military personnel is a gap to be addressed.

Issues identified in survey respondents' answers include:

- insufficient quality of state services for psychological rehabilitation, medical assistance and assistance with finding employment;
- inefficiency of services related to providing a place of residence and land lots;
- lack of training of civilian health care specialists and psychologists for working with veterans and war-induced trauma;
- poor accessibility of services, particularly insufficient awareness about them, especially among those who live in remote populated localities or who undergo treatment in medical institutions.

Important factors for women veterans' reintegration is their treatment by society and the ease of communication with civilians. Stigmatizing female and male veterans in the community, harbouring biased attitudes towards women who fought in ATO/JFO, downplaying of their contribution to national security, and denigrating their motivation for military service creates considerable obstacles to reintegrating into civilian life. It is not just the general public that stigmatizes and discriminates against veterans; health care personnel and the staff of social security and employment services also do so.

In result of conducted content analysis of media messages, it was discovered that media materials can be divided into two groups by the topics they cover — articles that address issues, needs and successes of women veterans, and materials that exploit an exotic nature (as they see it) of the image of a woman veteran. The women veterans' problems are shown rather superficially; they are generally just stated but not analysed or broken down by concrete aspects. The other group of the reports shows women veterans as something exotic, leaving them in the role of a curiosity, an object of interest for consumers, or even creating a scandalous image of them.

Yet, according to the results of the all-Ukrainian survey of public opinion Ukrainian society generally supports egalitarian ideas as to engaging

women to the armed forces on par with men; having a professional army of women and men who enlisted voluntarily (based on contracts); providing opportunities to women to receive military education; and securing reintegration for women combat participants on par with men combat participants that takes their needs into account.

Based on the key findings of the study and analysis of existing legislation, governing the reintegration of ex-combatants, the following roadmap with recommendations to improve the protection for women-veterans was designed. The recommendations can be used for integration in the next National Action Plan on the Implementation of the UNSCR 1325 in Ukraine as it already involves a number of actors who are currently engaged in the implementation of NAP 1325. The next development of the NAP 1325 may represent an entry point for this integration. Likewise, it is proposed to use the below drafted roadmap as a basis for the development of a comprehensive gender-responsive reintegration strategy.

Roadmap for the implementation of recommendations of the research for improving protection for women veterans – combat participants and persons with disabilities caused by military conflict

1

Recommendation:

To conduct gender-based analysis of women and men veterans' needs (through the questionnaires) in social protection, employment, medical services and psychological rehabilitation.

Explanation:

As the survey of experts and women veterans and analysis of the legislation showed, currently no systemic analysis of the needs of women and men veterans is conducted. The national- and local-level programmes of assistance to women and men veterans lack empirical backing. They are predominantly based on calculations of the number of persons with the status of combat participant that are officially registered in a territorial unit, not on actual needs of women and of men who participated in ATO/JFO.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:¹⁶²

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

2

Recommendation:

To assess effectiveness of services provided to women and men veterans.

Explanation:

Qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of provided services is not conducted. The available assessments are superficial and concentrate predominantly on how the funds are used, not on how effective the provided services are.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

V. Monitoring of implementation of the National Action Plan.

3

Recommendation:

To establish a consolidated unified database of services for women and men veterans that contains information on the state of their physical and psychological health and their needs in medical and psychosocial services developed based on questionnaires they answer.

Explanation:

Such a database would enable the development of national and local action plans to support women and men veterans based on empirical data and more efficient provision of services as well as improve

intersectoral coordination. Currently, there is no such database and this information is not collected.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

4

Recommendation:

To secure the availability of all benefits and programmes for released servicewomen to take maternity leave.

Explanation:

Servicewomen released on maternity leave face difficulties in accessing benefits and programmes for women and men veterans.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

5

Recommendation:

To introduce in all territorial branches of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine a position of a specialist for providing services of social protection for women veterans.

Explanation:

Quantitative and qualitative capacity building of human resources of territorial branches of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine will improve effectiveness of provision of services of social protection to women-veterans.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

6

Recommendation:

To conduct educational events (workshops, trainings, etc.) on gender equality and combating discrimination and stigmatization towards women and men veterans, for all employees and officials whose activities are coordinated by the Ministry of Social Policy and Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine of Ukraine.

Explanation:

State officials lack knowledge and skills as to working with women and men combat participants, as well as knowledge as to the gender aspects of war's impact on women and men.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

7

Recommendation:

To increase the number of trained psychologists to conduct campaigns on advanced training for psychologists engaged in aiding women and men veterans and members of their families.

Explanation:

Lack of trained psychologists for work with women and men veterans is one of the key problems identified in this research.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

8

Recommendation:

To improve awareness of medical specialists about benefits in the sphere of health care for veterans, participants of war, combat participants (of either sex) and members of their families, as well as to improve training of civil doctors for work with battle traumas.

Explanation:

The lack of medical specialists to work with women and men veterans trained in treating battle traumas is one of key problems identified in this research.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

9

Recommendation:

To introduce a transition period between military service duties and the return to civilian life (to organize conducting interviews, gender-sensitive trainings on career guidance and financial literacy for women and men veterans, medical examinations, etc.). A similar practice exists in the US and Israeli armies.

Explanation:

Transition to peaceful life is barely regulated and is deeply flawed. The interviewed women and men veterans mentioned many times that it is necessary to establish a special institutionalized transition period between active duty and before returning to civilian life.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Defence of Ukraine,
Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

10**Recommendation:**

To provide proper medical rehabilitation (in particular, psychological and mental health), taking into account the specific responses to stress dependent on patients' sex. For this purpose, we recommend that the Ministry of Health of Ukraine makes relevant amendments to the unified clinical protocol in effect for primary, secondary (specialized) and tertiary (highly specialized) medical care (UCPMC). "Response to heavy stress and adaptation disorders. Post-traumatic stress disorder", approved by the Decree of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine as of 23 February 2016, No. 121.¹⁶³

Explanation:

High-quality services of psychological rehabilitation and reintegration of the military require significant improvement of the legislation.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

11**Recommendation:**

To create special programmes for psychological rehabilitation for women veteran separately and for families of ATO / JFO participants (e.g. mothers and wives).

Explanation:

Most of the few, existent rehabilitation programmes do not take into account the gender aspects of rehabilitation and reintegration to peaceful life.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine,
Ministry of Health of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

12**Recommendation:**

To establish gender equality in the sphere of security and defence; to make vocational and higher military education available to women; to provide for women and men equal access to all military specialties; to equalize the rights and obligations of young women and men during their study in military educational institutions; and to provide funds for creating proper sanitary and hygienic conditions for women in military educational institutions.

Explanation:

Women have limited access to military education. Women face formal barriers (e.g. at the level of legislation and the rigid infrastructure of military educational institutions) and informal barriers (e.g. prejudice towards women in the military profession) on their way to participate in the restoration of peace.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Defence,
Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine,
Ministry of Social Policy.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

II. Women's participation in peacebuilding.

13

Recommendation:

To inform veterans and vulnerable categories of veterans about the social security support they are entitled to, about opportunities to protect their violated or contested rights and about the services offered by the national Ukrainian free legal support system.

Explanation:

The especially vulnerable group most likely not to know about available protection of their rights and social security services are women veterans who are being treated in hospitals or reside in remote localities. The function of informing these women veterans about available social and legal support should be taken by the relevant governmental agencies who can engage mass media for this (e.g. conducting awareness-raising campaigns and other educational and training events).

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Social Policy,
Ministry of Defence,
Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

14**Recommendation:**

To secure regular trainings on gender equality for employees of the army and police structures, to include the guidelines of gender equality and non-discrimination to all official trainings and to conduct trainings in military educational institutions and in training centres, with the aim of securing gender equality.

Explanation:

State officials lack knowledge about gender aspects of war's impact on women and men.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Defence,
Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

15**Recommendation:**

To improve coordination among agencies that provide services to women and men veterans but are subordinated to different ministries (e.g. Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Internal Affairs), and to centralize and streamline management of the system for reintegrating veterans under one executive body, for example, the planned Ministry for Veteran Affairs.

Explanation:

Lack of coordination among agencies that provide services to women and men veterans but are subordinated to different ministries is one of the key problems of the national system of reintegration of women and men veterans to a peaceful life.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

I. Analyses, coordination and human resources.

16

Recommendation:

To identify and eliminate discrepancies in the procedures for granting the status of combat participant, receiving benefits and other procedures.

Explanation:

Excessive bureaucracy and lack of coherence between the procedures for granting the status of combat participant and receiving benefits is one of the key barriers to accessing the services of reintegration to peaceful life for women veterans.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Social Policy,
Ministry of Defence,
Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Ministry of Health.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

17

Recommendation:

To enable women and men veterans who served in volunteer battalions to be officially granted the status of combat participant, and to receive all benefits this status entails.

Explanation:

Women who fought in volunteer battalions face the most difficulties in receiving the official status of combat participant and in getting access to services for women veterans.

Responsible for implementation:

Ministry of Veterans' Affairs of Ukraine,
Ministry of Social Policy,
Ministry of Defence,
Ministry of Internal Affairs,
Ministry of Health.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

18

Recommendation:

To introduce the present recommendations to the National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325 "Women, peace, security".

Explanation:

For implementation, the recommendations developed based on this research require incorporation into legislation.

Responsible for implementation:

Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

19

Recommendation:

To allocate sufficient funding for implementation.

Explanation:

Implementation of the recommendations will be possible only if the funding is allocated for the corresponding measures.

Responsible for implementation:

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine.

Cluster of National Action Plan 1325:

IV. Protection of women and girls affected by conflict.

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APPENDIX A: TABLES WITH STATISTICAL DATA

(RESULTS OF OFFICIAL REQUESTS)

TABLE A.1

Number of persons who received the status of combat participant for participating in the Anti-Terrorist Operation, securing its support or ensuring national security and defence, repelling and deterrence of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, securing their support as of 08 January 2018 (by institutions).

| INSTITUTION | TOTAL |
|--|--|
| 1. Service personnel, rank and file and command staff, employees of institutions, which have authority over military formations engaged in ATO: | 344,048 |
| 3.5% 11,990  | 332,058 96.5%  |
| 1. Ministry of Defense | 233,568 |
| 3.4% 8,027  | 225,541 96.6%  |
| 2. Ministry of Internal Affairs | 32,481 |
| 2.6% 845  | 31,636 97.4%  |
| 3. National Guard | 33,097 |
| 2.3% 772  | 32,325 97.7%  |

| INSTITUTION | TOTAL |
|---|---|
| 4. Security Service | <p>6.7% 708  10,543  9,835 93.3%</p> |
| 5. Foreign Intelligence Service | <p>5.1% 2  39  37 94.9%</p> |
| 6. Administration of State Border Guard Service | <p>3.0% 581  19,377  18,796 97.0%</p> |
| 7. Administration of State Special Transport Service | <p>2.0% 49  2,397  2,348 98.0%</p> |
| 8. State Security Administration | <p>0.2% 1  434  433 99.8%</p> |
| 9. Administration of State Special Communications Service | <p>3.1% 25  801  776 96.9%</p> |
| 10. State Emergency Service | <p>6.4% 322  5,056  4,734 93.6%</p> |
| 11. State Penitentiary Service | <p>0.0% 0  0  0 0.0%</p> |
| 12. Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine | <p>1.0% 3  311  308 99.0%</p> |

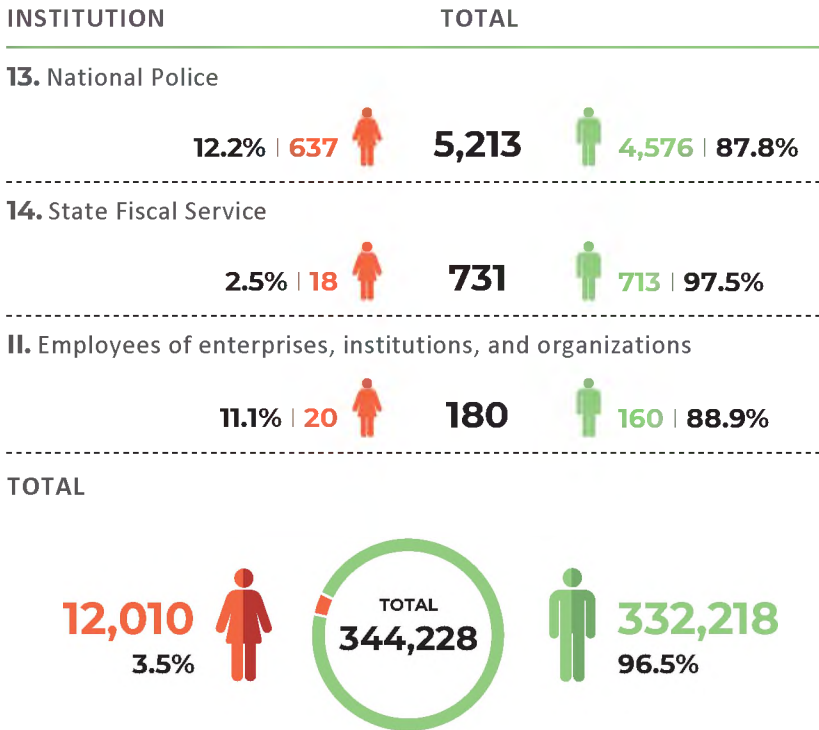
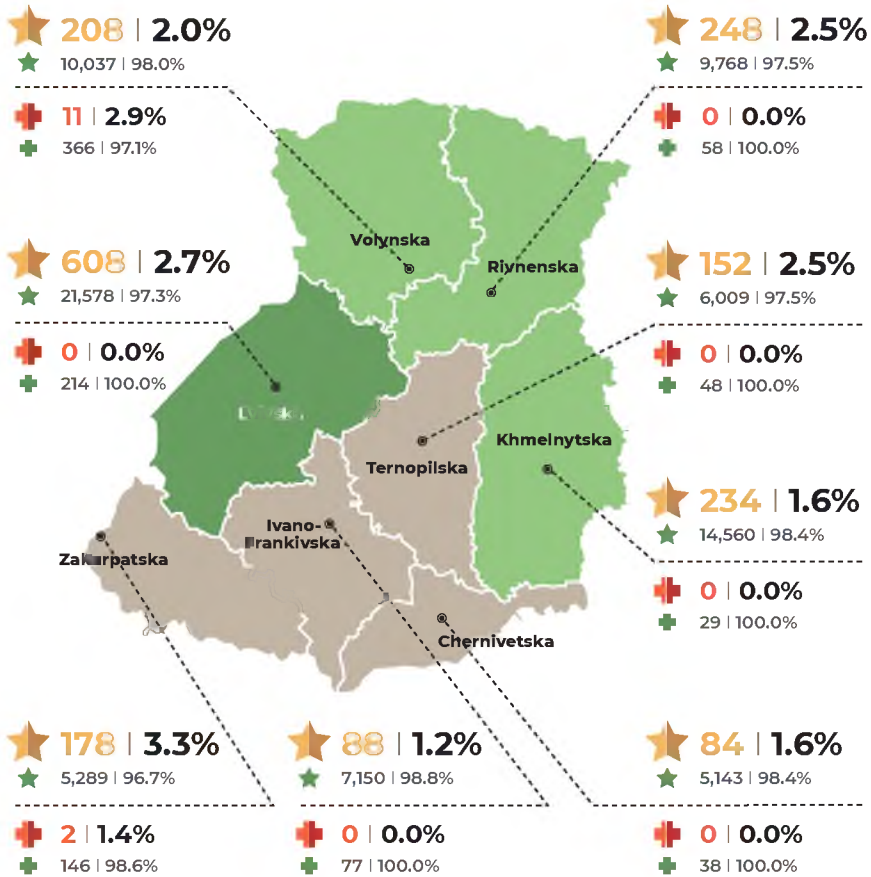


TABLE A.2

Number of persons who received the status of combat participant for participating in the Anti-Terrorist Operation, securing its support or ensuring national security and defence, repelling and deterrence of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, securing their support as of 08 January 2018 (by oblasts).

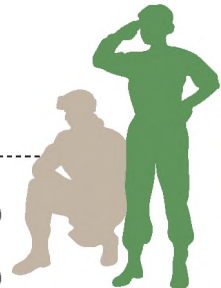


★ Number of women with the status of combat participant

★ Number of men with the status of combat participant

✚ Women with disability caused by war (number)
(according to the data of departments of social protection of population)

✚ Men with disability caused by war (number)
(according to the data of departments of social protection of population)



CITY OF KYIV

★ 525 | 2.9%

★ 17,788 | 97.1%

+ 0 | 0.0%

+ 75 | 100.0%

★ 379 | 3.1%

★ 12,012 | 96.9%

+ 0 | 0.0%

+ 195 | 100.0%

★ 269 | 2.3%

★ 11,612 | 97.7%

+ 1 | 1.4%

+ 70 | 98.6%

★ 500 | 2.9%

★ 16,897 | 97.1%

+ 1 | 0.3%

+ 335 | 99.7%

Chernihivska

Sumska

Zhytomyrska

Kyivska

Poltavska

Cherkaska

Vinnytska

★ 146 | 1.3%

★ 11,263 | 98.7%

+ 1 | 0.5%

+ 185 | 99.5%

★ 134 | 1.1%

★ 12,341 | 98.9%

+ 1 | 0.8%

+ 123 | 99.2%

★ 320 | 1.8%

★ 17,506 | 98.2%

+ 0 | 0.0%

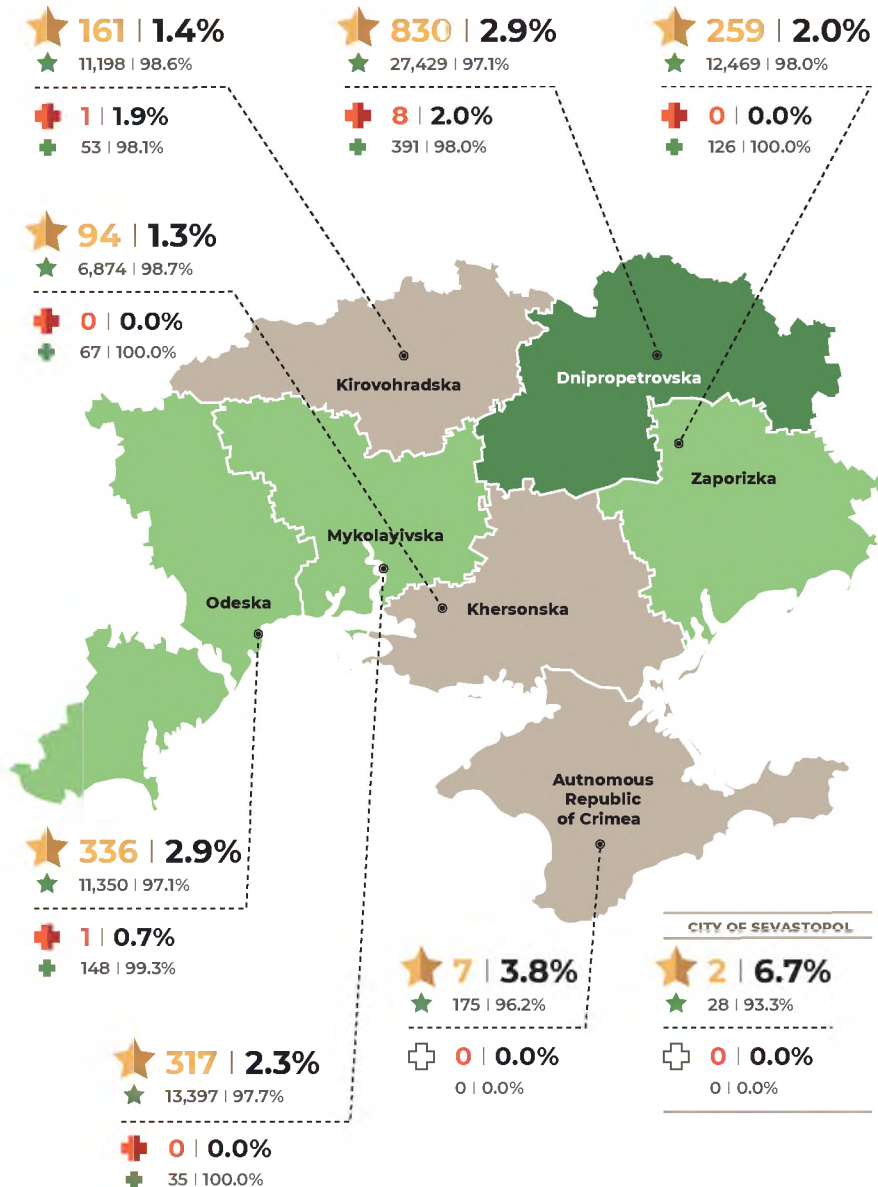
+ 143 | 100.0%

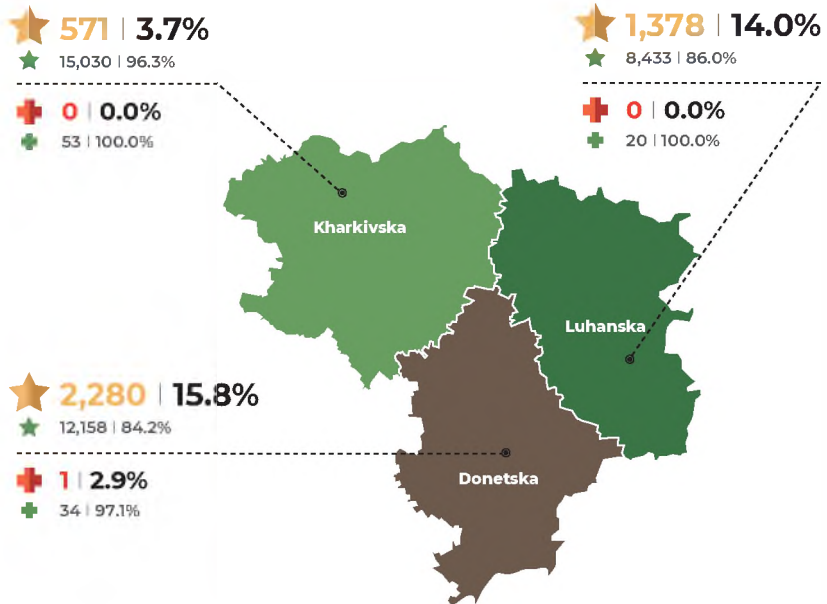
★ 652 | 3.8%

★ 16,695 | 96.2%

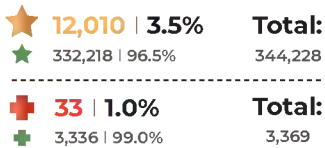
+ 5 | 1.6%

+ 307 | 98.4%

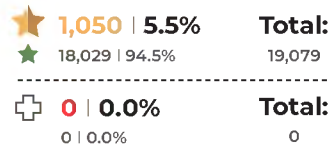




Total



Without a specified region



★ Number of women with the status of combat participant

★ Number of men with the status of combat participant

+

Women with disability caused by war (number)
(according to the data of departments of social protection of population)

+

Men with disability caused by war (number)
(according to the data of departments of social protection of population)



APPENDIX B: TABLES WITH EMPIRICAL DATA

TABLE B.1

Female research participants; interviewed female veterans.

| Code | Age group | City | Combat participant |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Female veteran 1 | 31-40 | Kyiv | Yes |
| Female veteran 2 | 41-50 | Odesa | Yes |
| Female veteran 3 | 31-40 | Haysyn | No |
| Female veteran 4 | 31-40 | Kyiv | Yes |
| Female veteran 5 | 21-30 | Kyiv | No |
| Female veteran 6 | 21-30 | Kyiv, Lvivska oblast | Yes |
| Female veteran 7 | 31-40 | Kyiv | No |
| Female veteran 8 | no data available | Kyiv | Yes |
| Female veteran 9 | ≤20 | Avdiyivka | No |
| Female veteran 10 | 21-30 | Hust | Yes |
| Female veteran 11 | 21-30 | Zhytomyr | Yes |
| Female veteran 12 | 21-30 | Ternopil | No |
| Female veteran 13 | 41-50 | Kyiv | Yes |
| Female veteran 14 | no data available | Chernihivska oblast | Yes |

TABLE B.2

Male research participants; interviewed male veterans.

| Code | Age group | City | Combat participant |
|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Veteran 1 | 31-40 | Kyiv | Yes |
| Veteran 2 | 31-40 | Kyiv | Yes |
| Veteran 3 | 31-40 | Kyiv | No |
| Veteran 4 | 21-30 | Simferopol, Lviv | Yes |
| Veteran 5 | 21-30 | Kyiv | Yes |
| Veteran 6 | 31-40 | Odesa | Yes |
| Veteran 7 | 31-40 | Horlivka, Kyiv | Yes |
| Veteran 8 | 41-50 | Halych | Yes |

TABLE B.3

Information about experts.

| | Name | Activities, place of employment |
|----|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Babiy Victoria | Researcher, International Alert |
| 2 | Vasylenko Lesia | Founder and head of the board of the All-Ukrainian advocacy organization 'Yurydychna Sotnia', expert of the group 'National Security and Defence' |
| 3 | Havryliuk Oksana | Head of the Charitable Fund 'Informational-Coordination Center', project 'Dim veterana' ('Veteran's Home') (city of Zhytomyr) |
| 4 | Hrytsenko Oksana | Journalist, Kyiv Post |
| 5 | Zubareva Liudmyla | Specialist in social work of the City center of social services for family, children and youth (city of Kovel, Volynska oblast) |
| 6 | Ivantsiv Oksana | Vice-director, NGO 'STUDENA' |
| 7 | Kaziuk Mykola | Chief specialist of the State Service of Ukraine for war veterans and participants of the anti-terrorist operation in Ternopil'ska oblast, veteran |
| 8 | Kytayeva Yevhenia | Journalist, Channel 5 |
| 9 | Klympush-Tsintsadze Ivanna | Vice-Prime-Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine |
| 10 | Koval Dmytro | Researcher, International Alert |
| 11 | Kozinchuk Andriy | Military psychologist, NGO 'Pobratymy' ('Sworn Brothers') |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 12 | Lebid Vitalia | Lawyer of the Strategic Litigation Center, Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) |
| 13 | Levchenko Kateryna | Government Commissioner for gender policy |
| 14 | Lysakova Anna | Head of NGO 'Zihriy Dushu' ('Warm the Soul') psychosocial support for ATO participants (city of Kovel, Volynska oblast) |
| 15 | Malohulko Lidia | National specialist of OSCE projects |
| 16 | Snisarevska Olena | Military psychologist, psychotherapist NGO 'Zihriy Dushu' (city of Kovel, Volynska oblast), Psychological crisis service |
| 17 | Sobolta Yulia | Psychologist of NGO 'Consensio' |
| 18 | Suslova Iryna | Member of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, head of the subcommittee for gender equality and non-discrimination of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for protection of human rights, ethnic minorities and interethnic relations |
| 19 | Tretiak Inna | Director of the City center of social services for family, children and youth (city of Kovel, Volynska oblast) |
| 20 | Lebedev Anna Colin | Researcher of the veteran's movement, Université Paris Nanterre |

TABLE B.4

List of online materials for content analysis.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Beauty saves Ukraine: TOP-11 beauties who fight in ATO // Depo.ua, July 10, 2016 // https://www.depo.ua/ukr/life/krasaryatue-ukrayinu-top-10-krasun-biytsiv-ato-02072016163400 |
| 2 | “Convocation of sworn sisters” near Kyiv: how women's veteran organization is conceived // Novynarnia, July 31, 2018 // https://novynarnia.com/2018/07/31/zlit-posester-pid-kiyevom-yak-zarodzhuyetsya-zhinocha-veteranska-organizatsiya/ |
| 3 | “After they told me that I would have to use a stick to walk – it is unbelievably cool feeling to ride a 10,000 km road on a bicycle”. Who helps Ukrainian military women to travel around the world and why it is important // Censor.net April 6, 2018 // https://censor.net.ua/resonance/3057854/pslya_togo_yak_tob_kazali_scho_hoditimesh_z_palichkoyu_neyimovrniyi_kayif_ssti_na_velosiped_ta_prohati |
| 4 | Meditating on wool: how woman veteran opened her business of hand-knitting clothes // Delo.ua March 27, 2018 // https://delo.ua/special/vjazannja-shersti-dlja-mene-ce-meditacija-jaka-dopomagaje-rozsla-340619/ |
| 5 | In Dnipropetrovsk, organization of women veterans is launched // Depo, Dnipro, January 31, 2016 // https://dnipro.depo.ua/ukr/dnipro/u-dnipropetrovsku-initsiyuvali-stvorenniya-organizatsiyi-zhinok-veteranok-31012016174700 |
| 6 | Yelena Mosiychuk: “My son does not realize the tragedy of what is happening, but he knows his mother is military, and she saves people” // Womo // http://womo.ua/elena-mosiychuk/ |

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- 7 How psychological and social adaptation of women veterans of Donbas war is conducted // Channel 24, August 12, 2018 // https://24tv.ua/voni_ryatuvali_lyudey_teper__ryatuyut_yih_yak_prohodit_reabilitatsiya_veteranok_viyni_na_donbasi_n1014346
-
- 8 ATO veteran from Manevychi launched her “garlic” business // Rayon.in.ua, June 27, 2018 // <https://rayon.in.ua/topics/2247-veteranka-ato-z-manevich-zapustila-chasnikovii-biznes>
-
- 9 “She looks like a mountain witch”: woman hospitalier Zinkevych shared photos posing in unusual image (PHOTO) // Invak.info, July 23, 2018 // <http://invak.info/zhizni-i-lichnosti/skhozhana-molfarku-gospitalyerka-zinkevich-podililasya-znimkami-uznezhichnomu-obrazi-foto.html>
-
- 10 Rehabilitation for women heroes: “Women Veterans’ Travels” charity project visits Iceland // Gazeta.ua, May 19, 2018 // https://gazeta.ua/articles/donbas/_reabilitaciya-dlyageroyin-blagodijnij-proekt-mandri-veteranok-pobuvav-v-islandiyi/837811
-
- 11 Combat participants provided with tool for adaptation in civilian life (VIDEO) // Zhurnalist, August 12, 2018 // <https://journalist.today/chuvstvui-nie-ghasi-eto-v-siebie-v-khodietrieningha-uchastnitsam-boievkyh-dieistvii-priedostavliaiut-instrument-dlia-adaptatsii-v-ghrazhdanskoi-zhizni-2/>
-
- 12 In Frankivsk, combat participant was handed a baby box // Blitz, September 13, 2018 // <http://www.blitz.if.ua/news/u-frankivsku-uchasnyci-boyovyh-diy-vruchyly-bebi-boks.html>
-
- 13 Veteran women: You come back from ATO, and the first question is – who did you sleep with there? // Donetsk News, May 14, 2017 // <https://www.dnews.dn.ua/news/607115>
-

| | |
|----|---|
| 14 | “Engagement in combat, war effort, and victory”. Who will participate in the first Convention of Women Veterans? // Hromadske Radio, July 25, 2018 // https://hromadske.radio/podcasts/kyiv-donbas/vklyuchenist-u-viynu-dopomogu-i-peremogu-hto-bratyme-uchast-u-pershomu-zleti-veteranok |
| 15 | Training for women veterans: why not everything can be discussed with brothers-in-arms? // Hromadske Radio, June 12, 2018 // https://hromadske.radio/podcasts/hromadska-hvylya/trening-dlya-veteranok-chomu-ne-vsi-pytannya-mozhna-obgovoryty-z-pobratymamy |
| 16 | Maya Moskvych – the only girl representing Ukraine at Invictus Games // Povaha, August 13, 2018 // http://povaha.org.ua/majya-moskvych-jedyna-divchyna-yaka-predstavlyatyme-ukrajinu-na-ihrah-neskorenyh/ |

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES

C.1. Questionnaire for expert interview

1. What is your assessment of the national system of reintegration of persons who fought in ATO/JFO, to civilian life in Ukraine: strengths and gaps?
2. In your opinion, do men and women who fought in ATO/JFO have the same issues and needs in reintegration?
3. Does the existent reintegration system take into consideration gender aspects (special needs of women and men)?
4. Do you consider the existent system of reintegration of persons who fought in ATO/JFO to civilian life in Ukraine effective? Why? By what criteria? (services provided by the state and NGOs)
5. Do men and women who fought in ATO/JFO have equal access to reintegration services? Do these services satisfy their needs equally?
6. What has to be improved in the existent reintegration system for persons who fought in ATO/JFO? Who should do this?
7. Does the existent system meet the international standards? Why? In what ways?

C.2. Questionnaire for female and male veterans¹⁶⁴

| Topical unit | Questions for interview |
|---|---|
| Sociodemographic portrait of a woman veteran | Name Gender Age Locality of your residence (city/village) Education Whether you have underage children Household composition (you should learn whether she has children and / or family, and whether it is a supporting or confounding factor) Religion |
| Introduction (to strike up a conversation) | How long ago did you return from the war? What is your life after you returned from war? (Where do you live? What do you do? What difficulties are you facing and who helps you overcome them?) |
| Situation on the job market, advanced training, education, financial security | Do you work? What is your job / where? Are you employed officially? What was your job before the war? Do you make enough money? (What is the money you are making enough for? What can't you afford?) Do you support yourself? Are you satisfied with your job? What would you rather do / what job would you rather have? Would you want to pursue a military career? Specify. Do you feel you need retraining? In what area? Do you plan to retrain / what is stopping you? Would you want to start / continue military |

education? In what area? Where? When do you plan to start/what is stopping you?

Do you know any women that started military education? Any women who would want to? Please share.

Would you want to engage in public work or advocate for impact on decision-making?

Communication, conflicts, stigmatization, sexism

Do you talk to your relatives and friends after you returned from war?

Are there any difficulties? What are they? Why (to your opinion)? Who helps you overcome these difficulties?

What could improve the situation of communication with your family and friends?

How is your communication with people in general? Do you feel they treat you differently because you are a woman who fought in war? (Is their attitude positive or negative)? Please share. Are you ok with this?

Do you experience discrimination or sexism because you are a woman who fought in war?

Physical and mental health

Do you have any health issues after war? What are they?

Can you get health care services in Ukraine to address these issues? Are they free or do you have to pay for them? Why can't you (if this is the case)? How easy is it to get these services? Are they easily accessible / not? If they are not easily accessible then why, to your opinion, is it so?

Do you face any psychological difficulties with your adaptation to civilian life? What are they? How do you cope with these difficulties? (Are you self-medicating with alcohol / drugs? What do you think about this method of coping?)

What would speed up / facilitate the process of psychological adaptation?

Reintegration programmes and special services for women veterans

Does the state provide any services and benefits on medical care, including services of psychological aid, for women veterans? Do you use them? If no then why? How did you learn about them?

Do you know of any reintegration programmes for ATO veterans (for both men and women)? What are they? Who conducts them?

Have you participated in them? What is your opinion about them? Would you want to?

In your opinion, what should the reintegration programmes for women veterans aim for? What would you personally want to receive from them?

Should the reintegration programmes be separate for women and for men, or can they be mixed-sex? Which would be more comfortable for you?

Should these programmes be state-run?

Do you use services and benefits for veterans provided by the state? Which? If not, then why?

Do you face any difficulties in obtaining the status of woman combat participant? Do you face any difficulties in accessing necessary services? Any difficulties with access to reintegration and rehabilitation programmes?

Do the existent programmes satisfy the needs of men and women veterans equally? Have you faced discrimination as a woman who fought in a war?

Veteran's movement

Do you keep in touch with your brothers and sisters in arms? Please share.

Are you a member of an organization or a spearhead group working on veterans' issues in Ukraine? What are they? What are you doing in them?

Would you want to be a member of such organization or network of women veterans?

If so, what are you ready to do as a member for such network / organization and within the framework of its activities? (passive membership, launching and implementing some initiatives locally/ at the national / international levels)

What issues, to your opinion, could a veteran organization work on?

Do you know any veterans' organizations in Ukraine? Which ones? How do you assess their activities?

How do you see veteran organizations' engagement in influencing decision-making at all levels and the process of lawmaking/ amending the existent legislation as necessary?

Conclusion

Where would you want to be in three years?
How do you see your future life in general?

References

164. The questions to men were almost identical, except for the questions on discrimination.

C.3. Guide for focus group discussion with women veterans

Greetings, explanation of the procedure, introduction of participants.

QUESTIONS

- 1. What are you doing after you returned from the front?** (What does your life look like? Do you work? Where? On what? Are you working in the same profession you had before the war, or are you doing something new? Would you want to return to the front? Would you like to receive military education and pursue a military career?)
- 2. What social support have you already received from the state?** (Identification card of combat participant, medical treatment, utilities benefits, etc. Was it easy to obtain this or did you have to fight for it?)
- 3. What negative experiences have you had after your return?** (Bad attitude from the civilian environment, family, etc. They do not acknowledge your merits, they do not understand why you went there. The state is failing where it was supposed to provide support. Whether everything is all right with your psychological state, if you are willing to talk about it.)
- 4. What positive experiences have you had after your return?** What have you managed to receive or obtain, considering you are women veterans? What positive experiences of women veterans' integration are worth spreading?
- 5. In your opinion, do male veterans face the same issues?** (is the situation the same for male veterans you know, or is it different? Do women encounter experiences specific to women? For example, women do not receive acknowledgement for their merits, and men do, men obtain the status of combat participant, and women cannot obtain this status, etc. is there something linked to the role of the mother, possibly?)

6. **What rehabilitation programmes and programmes to address PTSD do veterans require?** What programmes are you aware of? What have you heard about them? In your opinion of them?

7. **What should the reintegration programmes for women veterans look like?** (What is lacking. Whether there is anything that women volunteers and NGOs (Ukrainian or international) are doing for you, and thank them for this, but essentially the state should be doing this. On what grounds such programmes can be based and how they can be organized, how they can be provided skillfully. Please share all your suggestions and ideas, we will write them down, structure them and articulate as recommendations for the responsible institutions and persons.)

Gratitude and explanation, when the research results will be available.

APPENDIX D: COMPARATIVE TABLE OF THE OBTAINED RESULTS

TABLE D.1

Comparison of women veterans' problems and needs as to reintegration into civilian life identified in the course of the survey of female and male veterans, expert surveys and analysis of the legislation in the sphere of veterans' reintegration in Ukraine.

| | interviewed experts | interviewed women veterans | interviewed men veterans | analysis of the legislation |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Gaps | | | | |
| Absence of an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the available system for reintegration of female and male veterans (assessment of effectiveness of services provided in the sphere of employment, etc.) | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Absence of analysis of women veterans' needs in social protection, health care, and psychological rehabilitation services | ✓ | | | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disregard for the gender factor in social protection programmes of female and male veterans (in the approach to the registration system for persons, who are entitled to this or that benefit, for instance, housing, and availability of services separately for women and men veterans) | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Gender blindness in distribution of public funds for psychological rehabilitation of veterans | | | | ✓ |
| Lack of state support (informational, legal, economic) for local government bodies and All-Ukrainian and local NGOs, which develop and implement additional social guarantees, development and readaptation programmes, etc. for women veterans and members of their families | | | | ✓ |
| Lack of coordination between institutions, which provide services to female and male veterans | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Absence of an institutionalized transitional stage between military service and civilian life | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Difficulties with formalization of the status of combat participant and the status of person with disability caused by war, especially for women and those who fought in volunteer battalions (the process is logistically complex and takes a lot of time) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Difficulties with obtaining official access to social benefits for female and male veterans with the status of combat participant and for persons with disability caused by war (the process is logistically complex and takes a lot of time) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Inaccessibility of benefits and social protection, medical services and psychological rehabilitation guarantees for persons without the status of combat participant or the status of person with disability caused by war | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Insufficient awareness of female and male ATO veterans, as well as their families, about social protection guarantees and opportunities for protection of violated rights and interests | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Difficulties in reintegration of female veterans to the job market | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Lack of skilled psychologists for work with veterans and the military | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Lack of skilled civilian health professionals for work with veterans | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Absence of psychological rehabilitation programmes for families of female and male veterans | ✓ | | | |
| Biased attitude towards and stigmatization of female ATO/JFO veterans in the society, in particular, by workers of social protection services, health professionals and psychologists | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Ineffectiveness of housing programmes for veterans, caused, in particular, by underfunding of these programmes. Not all veterans entitled to housing can exercise this right | | | | ✓ |
| Ineffective providing of consultations to ATO veterans via hotline | ✓ | | | |

Needs

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Gender-sensitive assessment of needs of female and male veterans | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Gender-sensitive assessment of effectiveness of social guarantees, medical services and psychological rehabilitation services for female and male veterans set forth by the legislation and provided to female and male veterans | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Better intersectoral coordination in providing services to female and male veterans | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Establishing of the Ministry of Veteran Affairs | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Institutionalized transitional stage between military service and civilian life (run by the security and defence sector institutions) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Introducing gender-sensitive programmes on psychological rehabilitation (in particular, separate programmes and approaches for women veterans, for wives/mothers of veterans, for veterans' families), medical care and social protection and funding for them | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Redistributing necessary funds for reintegration services for female and male veterans with due account for their respective special needs | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| Informing female and male veterans about services the state offers them and mechanisms of receiving them | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Informing female and male veterans and members of their families about opportunities of protection of violated rights and interests | | | | ✓ |
| Simplified procedure of granting the status of combat participant (especially for those, who fought in volunteer battalions) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| High-quality and accessible health care services, services of psychological rehabilitation and social protection for female and male veterans | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Advanced training for civilian health professionals and psychologists, who work with veterans | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Cooperation between employment centers, business, and social sector for more effective employment of female and male veterans | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Effective employment and retraining programmes | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Increasing the share of the expenses for immediate needs of professional adaptation and expansion of the list of vocations, as this can effectively help women veterans in reintegration to civilian life. | | | | ✓ |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Separation of the funding for social adaptation programmes and measures from the funding for professional adaptation within the framework of the soon-to-be-established Ministry of Veteran Affairs, as currently, in accordance to the mentioned Decree, the funds are distributed only by the number of combat participants in every oblast. | | | | ✓ |
| Assessment of budgetary allocations for housing for veterans and members of their families as to their effectiveness | | | | ✓ |
| Gender-sensitive approach to the methodology for identification of persons eligible for housing (to take into account socioeconomic characteristics, not only the state of health) | | | | ✓ |

APPENDIX E: QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

BLOCK A. ARMY

A.1. Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

CARD A1. ONLY ONE ANSWER IN EACH LINE

| | I agree completely | I rather agree than disagree | I rather disagree than agree | I completely disagree | Difficult to say | Refusal to answer |
|--|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| A1.1. Women should be granted equal opportunities with men to work in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| A1.2. Women should be granted equal opportunities with men to access military education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| A1.3. The army should be a professional sphere, where both women and men on a voluntary basis (of their own free will) can achieve their potential | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1.4. The state should secure reintegration of service women and men, who participated in ATO, to civilian life, taking needs of both women and men into consideration | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|

A.2. To your opinion, what variant of the army should Ukraine introduce?

CARD A2. ONE ANSWER

| | |
|---|---|
| Enlistment of both men and women only on a voluntary basis (enlistment by contract) | 1 |
| Conscription of all men and only of some women | 2 |
| Conscription only of men | 3 |
| Conscription of all men and all women | 4 |
| Other (<i>write down</i>) | 5 |
| Difficult to say | 6 |
| Refusal to answer | 7 |



“As to gender, I can say that the depth of this traumatic event that happened to them, it is the same but its nature – it is completely different. That is, in the majority of men, one of the problems that they bring with them back from war is guilt for what they did or failed to do. Many women and girls face a different question of integration, that is, the answer to the question, ‘Who am I?’ They face social rejection of their different role as a woman; it shifts to an internal conflict. It boils down to the necessity to prove that ‘I am actually a woman veteran, that I exist not for kitchen, child, husband, I can be independent’. That is, the depth of trauma is the same, but the roles are different”