

SUPPORT FOR THE UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENT COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

It is with great concern that the International Ombudsman Institute ([IOI](#)) has followed recent developments at the *Verkhovna Rada* (Parliament) of Ukraine that have resulted to the dismissal of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms Liudmyla Denisova.

In January 2022 the IOI already spoke out in support of Commissioner Denisova, when Parliament considered the establishment of a Temporary Special Commission to verify a possible violation of oath by the Commissioner. We were pleased when we heard that this did not find the support of the Members of Parliament back then.

In March 2022, the IOI issued another statement, condemning the armed conflict and voicing its concern for the plight of the civilian population in Ukraine and the escalating humanitarian crisis. It is in times like these, when Ombudsman and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), such as the Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, are essential. The IOI therefore offered its strong support to Commissioner Denisova and valued her courageous work.

The IOI is aware of the difficult situation and the exceptional circumstances Ukraine is currently facing. We also note that the amendments to the Ukrainian Martial Law allow Parliament to decide on the dismissal of appointed officials without applying the procedures established by other specific legislation.

However, the IOI also underlines the essential work done by the Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights; especially in the current situation of armed conflict. Commissioner Denisova's work in safeguarding the fundamental rights of citizens, her effort of documenting the human rights violations resulting from the war, and her ongoing commitment to raise awareness about the dramatic situation in Ukraine at the international level, are essential and proof the importance of an independent office.

As the only global organization for the cooperation of more than 200 parliamentary Ombudsman worldwide, the IOI follows circumstances that pose a threat to the independence of Ombudsman closely and takes such circumstances very seriously. We are therefore deeply concerned about the dismissal of the Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights and the fact that the process, in

particular the recently adopted provisions of the Ukrainian Martial Law, may not meet the applicable international standard, such as the UN Paris Principles, the UN Resolution on the Ombudsman (A/RES/75/186), and the Council of Europe's Venice Principles.

Strong and independent oversight bodies are a core element of democracy and an integral part of any state ruled by law. It is in the best public interest to fully respect the independence of these institutions. They should not be hindered in their work, their investigatory powers should not be restricted, and their incumbents should not be removed from office without clear and reasonable conditions established by law.

The IOI shares the concerns of partner organizations such as the Global Alliance of NHRIs ([GANHRI](#)) and the European Network of NHRIs ([ENNHRI](#)) and underlines its full support for the office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.

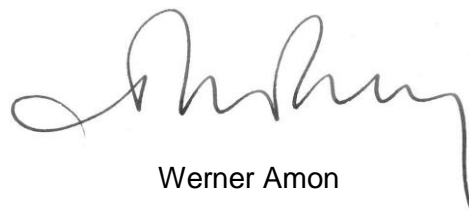
We call upon the *Verkhovna Rada* to uphold the international principles for the protection of oversight bodies such as the Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, especially in an extremely challenging situation such as the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine.



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