

ICMP Small Grants Program in Ukraine 2024



International Day of the Disappeared,
30 August 2024, event organized by the
National Union of Journalists of Ukraine.

Project results achieved by Ukrainian civil society organizations and family associations of missing persons within ICMP's Small Grants Program funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

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Introduction

Nearly The Small Grants Program has empowered civil society organizations (CSOs) and associations of families of missing persons in Ukraine to take practical steps in their search for truth and justice. Through these grants, Ukrainian partners have strengthened their advocacy and built vital support networks; they have enhanced cooperation with government institutions, and provided essential legal and psychosocial assistance to families of the missing. Their dedication and resilience in the face of huge challenges testify to the crucial role that civil society plays in ensuring accountability and upholding the rights of families.

The International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) is grateful to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for its support, which has made this Small Grants cycle possible. The progress achieved so far underscores the importance of sustained assistance to reinforce the efforts of families of the missing to secure information about the fate of their loved ones. Continued engagement and investment in these initiatives is essential in order to ensure that Ukraine's civil society has

the capacity to advocate effectively for truth and justice, and to provide support for victims and survivors. Following the approval of the Norwegian grant in December 2023, ICMP launched the Small Grants cycle, with the objective of helping civil society and family associations, especially women-led family associations, participate meaningfully in the missing persons process. This initiative includes providing learning and development programs to families and CSOs, as well as capacity-building opportunities and small grants to support awareness-raising and advocacy.

In the first round of calls for proposals, from 29 January to 29 February, 2024 **31 proposals were received from 17 CSOs, nine Family Associations and one Foundation. A further 13 proposals were submitted jointly by two or more organizations.**

Seven proposals were approved, accounting for 56,884 USD (out of a Small Grants Program budget of 75,000 USD). **Projects were undertaken in Kyiv (two projects), Dnipro (one project), Kharkiv (one project), Konstantynivka (one project), and Volodymyrets (one**

project), as well as a study trip to Geneva to raise awareness about the issue of missing persons in Ukraine with relevant international stakeholders.

ICMP has been helping Ukraine to develop an effective missing persons program for more than a decade. In April 2022, the authorities requested an urgent expansion of ICMP assistance based on an exchange of diplomatic notes and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Kyiv in 2021. ICMP responded immediately with deployments to help Ukrainian institutions access high-volume, DNA-led identification capabilities, and to help the authorities ensure that evidence is collected, including evidence from mass and clandestine graves, that will be admissible in criminal trials.

Today, ICMP is supporting laboratory operations, data collection, and mass grave investigations; and is actively helping CSOs and families of the missing to participate effectively in the missing persons process. ICMP is privileged to work with courageous and resilient partners in Ukraine and will continue to assist them in their efforts to secure truth and justice.



Kathryn Bomberger
Director-General

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Kathryn Bomberger". The signature is stylized and fluid.

I. Background Information

1. Through its Small Grants Program, ICMP provides financial support to associations of families of missing persons and CSOs to implement projects that:

- Affirm the role of civil society in promoting state responsibility on the issue of missing persons;
- Foster impartial, non-discriminatory, non-sectarian, multiethnic and non-political approaches to the issue;
- Uphold the rights of surviving family members of missing persons; and
- Promote gender equality and champion female leadership among affected communities.

2. The Program has the following objectives:

PARTICIPATION

- Civil society and family associations, especially women-led family associations, participate meaningfully in the missing persons process, to strengthen state accountability and secure the rights of families;
- CSOs and family associations, especially women-led family associations, have the capacity to participate actively in the missing persons process in Ukraine.

COOPERATION

Cooperation is strengthened between the government and civil society, including families of the missing.


CAPACITY BUILDING

CSOs and family associations, especially women-led family associations, have essential knowledge and skills to support missing persons data collection.




II. Overview of the Results achieved by **Individual Projects**

2.1. Center for Psychosocial Support NGO

 **Location:** Volodymyrets village, Varash district, Rivne oblast.

The organization was established in 2023, focusing on mental health and psychosocial support activities. In 2024, the CSO obtained space for a consultation point for families of the missing within a communal Resilience Center, where team members conduct activities aimed at reducing anxiety and building stress resilience and adaptation skills. Thanks to the CSO's cooperation with municipal social workers and the legal aid bureau, community residents can now receive a full range of social services and support in one place.


 **Facebook:**
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100094288605292>

 **Project title:** Organization of a consultation point for families of missing persons in the village of Volodymyrets.

 **Total grant amount:** USD 9,027.85



— Meeting of Family Associations with the Veterans' Hub of Rivne oblast at the premises of the consultation point, 2 August 2024

 **Results:** The consultation point established by the grantee has become a focal point for families of the missing who live in remote village areas of Varash district in the Rivne region, where they can receive guidance and support for further actions in the search for their loved ones. The project's scope has gone beyond the settlement of Volodymyrets, reaching out to residents of several neighboring communities.

The project team has developed fruitful cooperation with local government institutions and local offices of state institutions that are involved in the



— Off-site visit to Volodymyrets village by the Regional Center for Searching for the Missing to meet with relatives of missing persons, 23 July 2024.

search for missing persons, enabling government representatives and families of the missing to discuss problems in an open way during regular meetings at the consultation point. By organizing psychosocial and recreational activities for family members, the CSO has brought people together, providing space for families' informal gatherings, mutual support and advocacy activities.

Within just four months of the consultation point being established, it had conducted **156 different activities** and delivered assistance to **more than 70 family members of missing persons**. The initiative has gained recognition at the local and regional level and its successful advocacy events have been fully covered by local media.

The grant supported the creation of a local institution that is specifically focused on missing persons and that has delivered tangible results.

This has considerable potential for further development and replication in other areas.



— Mutual support group meeting at the consultation point, 20 September 2024 with relatives of missing persons, 23 July 2024.

2.2. All-Ukrainian Public Movement of Mothers and Relatives of Participants in the Anti-Terrorist Operation “BEREHNIA” NGO

Location: Dnipro city and Dnipropetrovsk oblast.

This woman-led CSO established in 2016 in the city of Dnipro brought together relatives of military personnel and volunteer fighters who took part in what was at that time called the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), Ukraine’s counter-offensive in response to the Russian invasion in 2014. The organization prioritizes the provision of complex assistance and advocacy about the rights of ATO veterans and their relatives, including rehabilitation, psychological support, and social reintegration. The CSO supports families in the search for and collection of data on relatives who have gone missing or have become prisoners of war since 2014, and since

the full-scale invasion in 2022.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/226189581083272>

Project title: Supporting the self-sufficiency of families of missing persons in Dnipropetrovsk oblast.

Total grant amount: USD 6,550

Results: The core idea behind the activities implemented under the grant was to ensure that missing relatives are not forgotten, to draw the attention of government, society, the media, and international organizations to push for action and accountability, to demand government action in the search for missing loved ones, and to secure access to welfare support for family members.



– Roundtable in Dnipro regional military administration with families of prisoners of war and missing persons, 30 July 2024





— Commemorating 30 August International Day of Disappeared in Dnipro

A survey conducted by the grantee identified the main challenges and needs of families of the missing, especially those who have been searching for their loved ones since 2014. This helped in the drafting of an analytical report that was presented at a roundtable discussion organized by the grantee in Dnipro on 30 July 2024. Seventy representatives of government, international organizations and civil society in the Dnipro region took part in the roundtable. This event facilitated dialogue and the renewal of mutual commitments and it offered a platform to relatives of missing and illegally detained persons so that they could take their rightful place as legitimate participants in decision-making on this issue.

The grantee also organized a successful open-air commemoration to mark International Day of the Disappeared on 30 August 2024. A photo collection of portraits of people who have gone missing due to the war was prepared by the grantee and displayed in the center of Dnipro city, raising public awareness about the missing persons issue. The exhibition was complemented by a variety of art and recreational activities for families of missing and captured soldiers. Importantly, these activities brought families together in a sympathetic environment where they

could share their emotions and their thoughts. The relief of individual pain through the collective creation of art helped to build a sense of solidarity, shared understanding, and mutual encouragement.

With the printed pictures, the grantee is now actively organizing photo exhibitions in Dnipro and in other cities in Ukraine to keep attention focused on this issue. The photo collection is being continuously expanded at the request of family members.

2.3. Ukrainian Institute for Anti-Crisis Management NGO

Location: Kostiantynivka city, Donetsk oblast

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089848937123>

The CSO was founded in 2015 by local activists after the outbreak of the war in 2014. Since then, it has helped to develop local democracy tools and bring together the pro-Ukrainian community. The CSO has built effective communication between police, prosecutors, the military, local government and community members, promoting dialogue and openness in the work of government agencies and commitment to the protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens. Despite proximity to the front line and serious security risks, the CSO team has remained in Kostiantynivka, serving as a community “reception desk” and providing free legal consultation, in this way helping local authorities to provide essential social services to residents.

Project title: “Unity. Search. Victory.”

Total grant amount:
USD 12,689.25

Results: The grantee has taken a leading role in consolidating the efforts of state and local government institutions, police, CSOs, and families of the missing to search for and establish the fate of missing persons. This has included coordinating the actions of all stakeholders and providing psychological and social support to families of the missing.

These efforts resulted in the signing of a memorandum consolidating the efforts of all parties, and demonstrating the commitment and solidarity of key government and civil society institutions in the common effort to search for the missing and protect the rights of their family members.



– Distribution of the information materials with important and relevant information on missing persons in Kostiantynivka.

Grant activities have also contributed to public awareness on the issue of missing persons. The CSO has spread



– Awareness rising street actions including distribution of the information and promotional materials related to missing persons issue, Kostiantynivka.

information and provided guidance to community residents on the search process. By doing this it filled a communications gap, since local radio and television and other media had suspended operations in the frontline community. The grantee developed a comprehensive range of information posters, leaflets, flyers, stickers, bags, notepads and rulers for distribution at information sessions with stakeholders.

– Initial project partners' meeting, involving government and civil society representatives of Kostiantynivska territorial community, 4 July 2024.



To maximize public outreach, the CSO organized a “flash mob” in public spaces, speaking to residents and handing out materials on steps to take when a person goes missing or is illegally detained or deported, as well as government hotlines, local police phone numbers, contacts for civil society and human rights organizations, and free legal aid.

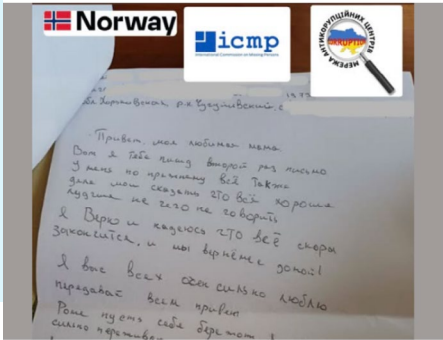
2.4. Network of Anti-Corruption Centers NGO, in partnership with Chuhuiv Human Rights Group and ATO/ JFO participants of Slobozhanshchyna

Location: Kharkiv and Chuhuiv districts, Kharkiv region.

Мережа антикорупційних центрів
28 червень 2024 р.

ОТРИМАЛИ ЛИСТ ДЛЯ РОДИНИ ВІД ЗНИКЛОГО БЕЗВІСТІ, ЯКИЙ ОПИНИВСЯ У ПОЛОНІ

В рамках проєкту «Розвиток коаліції організації з підтримки захисту прав сімей зниклих безвісти» ГО «Мережа антикорупційних центрів» надавала допомогу пані Ірині, яка є матір'ю
Військовослужбовця, що тривалий час вважався безвісти зниклим.... **Більше**



– Example of the legal assistance to the family of the missing persons who to look for social support.

f Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/anticorrmer>

The CSO and its partners have been working since 2014 in the field of protecting the rights of war veterans, prisoners of war and missing persons and their family members, principally in the Kharkiv region. The group has extensive legal expertise related to the rights of military personnel and their families, and provides free consulting services as well as secondary legal aid to families. Through its activities, it helps families to defend their right to information about missing relatives and the status of investigations, as well as access to financial assistance and social benefits guaranteed by the state.

Project title: Development of a coalition of organizations to support the protection of the rights of families of missing persons.

Total grant amount: USD 10,150

The grant helped to enhance the joint efforts of the coalition of organizations to provide tangible support and protect the rights of families of missing persons.

Мережа антикорупційних центрів ініціювала встановлення статусу зниклого безвісти

Apr 2, 2024



– Announcement for the online workshop for the young lawyers how to provide legal support to the families of the missing persons.

During the six-months project, experts from the group provided **more than 50 information sessions and 100 legal consultations to relatives of missing persons, and facilitated 20 requests with secondary legal aid and guidance.** This included drafting official letters to military units and government

institutions, and, in some instances, preparing appeals and justifications for litigation. Most of these efforts resulted in obtaining the necessary documents or information from the military institutions, satisfying the claims of family members for restitution and social services, or restoring justice through successful lawsuits.

✓ **Results:** The grantees' activities went beyond Kharkiv region, as word of mouth about the group's services and results reached residents of other regions in Ukraine, who applied for legal support from the group.

The grantees also organized two online information workshops that offered participants a comprehensive overview of the legal framework regarding missing persons and the

rights of their relatives. By developing the legal competences of family members of missing persons, the grantees empowered them to become more proactive and confident in seeking justice for themselves and their loved ones.

2.5. All Ukrainian Human Rights Group “Legal Hundred”, in partnership with Volunteer Association "VESTA"

📍 **Location:** Kyiv

“Legal Hundred” was founded in 2015 by an association of lawyers. The partner organization emerged from a volunteer movement. Both have been helping war veterans and families of deceased and missing soldiers since



— Conference on the occasion of August 30, International Day of Disappeared, 2024 Kyiv.

2014. *Protection of human rights in the context of military service and the creation of legal mechanisms for the reintegration of war veterans are at the core of the CSOs' missions.*

f Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/yursotnya>

<https://www.facebook.com/vo.vesta>

<https://www.facebook.com/vo.vesta>

Project title: Strengthening protection of the rights of families of missing persons in Ukraine.

Total grant amount: USD 12,111.50



— Conference on the occasion of August 30, International Day of Disappeared, 2024 Kyiv.

Results: The grant activities were focused on free legal counselling and secondary legal aid. There is a high demand for this support among families of missing persons. Through

the hotline maintained by the grantee, 1,187 information consultations and basic legal advice sessions were provided to family members, two and a half times more than the project's initial target indicator.

The findings from hotline inquiries were systematized in weekly digests and an analytical report, shared with key stakeholders, provided a broader perspective on the issues that families of the missing in Ukraine are dealing with.

A conference organized to mark International Day of the Disappeared, attended by **more than 50 representatives of family associations and organizations**, proved to be an effective platform for communication and networking. Combined with the partner CSOs' social media campaign, it enhanced the common effort to increase visibility and effective advocacy for the rights of missing persons and their families.

2.6. National Union of Journalists of Ukraine

Location: Kyiv

A well-established organization in existence for more than 60 years, the union's overall goal is to promote the




– Workshop on effective communication with media held in Kyiv on 30 May 2024 for over 50 family representatives.


development of journalism in Ukraine and protect the social, economic and creative interests of journalists. It has offices throughout the country, bringing together more than 19,000 professional journalists and media workers. The union actively cooperates with the government, international organizations, and institutions that promote social initiatives.

 **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/nsju.org>

 **Project title:** “The united hearts of families of the missing”.

 **Total grant amount:** USD 12,188.90

 **Results:** A workshop on effective communication with media, organized

by Union of the Journalists in Kyiv on 30 May 2024 provided family members of the missing with guidance and practical skills to communicate effectively with the government, the international community, and Ukrainian society. Participants received "blogger's kits" to produce high-quality videos for social media campaigns. At the same time, by connecting family associations with the media, the event contributed to a discussion about journalistic ethics regarding coverage of the missing persons issue in Ukraine. Workshop participants voiced their concerns and offered journalists their own perspective on creating materials related to the issue of prisoners of war and missing persons, highlighting safety and the importance of protecting the dignity of media subjects.

The main activity supported within the grant was the preparation of a photo exhibition and the organization of a mass event to mark International Day of the Disappeared, on 30 August.

This event in Kyiv brought together more than 400 family members from across Ukraine and put a spotlight on challenges that the relatives of missing persons face. Extensive media



— Gathering over 350 family members on the occasion of August 30, International Day of Disappeared in Kyiv.

coverage of the event amplified public discussion of the issue, enabling family associations to be heard and to take on their rightful role as equal parties in the process of accounting for their loved ones, regardless of where they come from or

who they represent. The solidarity that was reaffirmed and strengthened by this event had a strong and positive impact on the morale of family members.

The photo exhibition displayed at the event is now being presented elsewhere in Ukraine and abroad, thus helping to draw global attention the issue of missing persons and prisoners

of war following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.


2.7. Warriors Liberation NGO, in partnership with Azov-Steel CSO (Community of Families of AZOV Warriors)

 **Location:** Kyiv

The two CSOs emerged in 2022 with the main goal of maintaining Ukrainian and international focus on the issue of missing and captured soldiers. The organizations bring together the families of missing military personnel to conduct effective information campaigns, collect information about Ukrainian prisoners of war, and build cooperation with state institutions and international organizations to search for the missing, secure the release of captured relatives and, protect the rights of illegally detained and missing persons and their families.

 **Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092689853359>

 **Event grant:** Organizing an international advocacy event regarding missing persons and prisoners: initiation and participation in a special session of the UN Human Rights Council.

€ **Total grant amount:** USD 4,966.50

✓ **Results:** The grantees created a powerful example of how to implement an effective advocacy campaign, attending a meeting of the United Nations (UN) Committee on Enforced Disappearances in Geneva and using this to raise awareness among international stakeholders about the issue of missing and captured Ukrainian servicemen.

By participating in the event, grantee representatives were able to **highlight the issue of enforced disappearances due to the Russian invasion**, and call for the mechanisms of the Committee and its Working Group to be applied in the search for missing service personnel in Ukraine.

– Interview with two released Ukrainian soldiers who were part of information and advocacy campaign in Geneva, Switzerland.



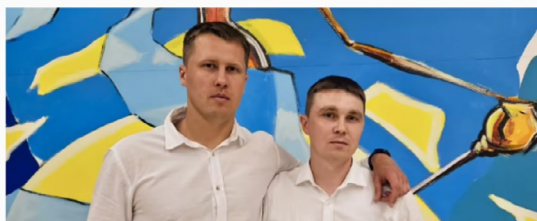
– Participation at UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva, July 2024.

Thanks to the participation and presentations of families of the missing and a former POW at this event, the international community was able to hear at first-hand about the systematic violation of the basic human rights of Ukrainian prisoners in Russian captivity. The Ukrainian delegation spoke on behalf of all Ukrainian families of captured and missing Ukrainian military personnel and urged the participating countries and organizations to take steps to secure the release of Ukrainian prisoners of war and prevent deaths in detention.

HUMAN RIGHTS #Ukraine war ACTU
Published on July 26, 2024 05:04 / Updated on August 07, 2024 16:15.

'Fighting for their release keeps me strong': Ex-Ukrainian POW on mission to reveal horrors of Russian captivity

By Michelle Langrand

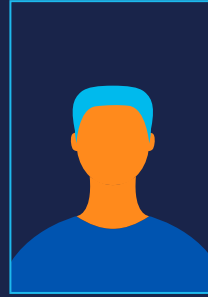
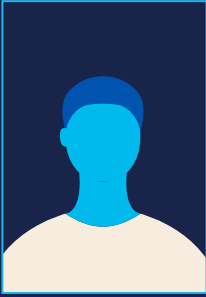




— From various meetings with UN representatives, media, Ukraine diaspora and other stakeholders meeting with the representatives of Warriors Liberation and Azov-Steel.

During the visit to Geneva, the delegation had an opportunity to brief the Papal Nunciature on the brutal conditions, including torture, that Ukrainian military personnel are exposed to in Russian captivity, and called on the Holy See to visit Ukrainian prisoners of war in pre-trial detention centers and prisons in the Russian Federation and in the territories of Ukraine that are under Russian occupation.







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