



Analytical review

2025

Support for Families of Fallen and Missing Service Members and Their Interaction with Military Units

This analytical report was compiled with the support of the International Renaissance Foundation. It's content is the exclusive responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the International Renaissance Foundation.

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Abbreviations used:

MoD —	Ministry of Defence;
TRSSC —	Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Center (enlistment office);
UPCHR —	Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights;
CH —	Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War;
NGO —	Non-Governmental Organization;
OTMA —	One-Time Monetary Assistance;
MU —	Military Unit;
PS —	Patronage Service.

INTRODUCTION

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began, news of fallen and missing defenders has appeared daily. According to Artur Dobroserdov, the Commissioner for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances, as of today 62,948 people remain missing. This number includes both service members and civilians. To date, the locations have been determined, and the bodies of the fallen have been identified — this is 10,291 individuals.¹

Upon receiving such tragic news, the families of fallen and missing defenders face numerous issues that they must address with government agencies. The first of these is the military unit which, in cases of death or missing status of a defender, is responsible for notifying the Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Center (TRSSC, enlistment office) (*see note*²). The enlistment office, in turn, must inform the defender's family. Family interactions with military units and enlistment offices involve matters such as the return of the defender's personal belongings, provision of official investigation materials, and documentation required to apply for benefits and financial assistance to which the families of fallen and missing service members are entitled, etc.

This review is relevant because families face a number of problems when resolving these issues: improper document processing, excessive bureaucratic procedures for obtaining documents, lack of information on the circumstances of the death or going missing of a loved one, and delays in financial assistance payments. Communication with government agencies takes place against the backdrop of intense psychological distress of families, requiring agency staff to possess specialized skills in crisis psychological support and emotional self-regulation.

This review outlines the challenges families face when interacting with military units, the specific problems encountered, and potential approaches to address them.

The review was prepared between January and February 2025. Its purpose is to provide a consolidated description of open data from sociological studies and media publications on

families' needs in communication with government agencies, including military units. It also includes excerpts from interviews reflecting first-hand experiences of interaction between representatives of families, military units, and enlistment offices.

The review comprised two phases:

1. Desk research: analysis of reports based on the results of sociological studies, reports of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and media publications related to the review topic.

2. Interviews: a total of 14 interviews were conducted with: family members of missing persons (5), representatives of human rights NGOs (3), the Commissioner for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances (1), a regional representative of the Center for the Search for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances (1), an officer from the Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit (1), representatives of central and regional offices of the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War (2), a head of an enlistment office (1). Interviewees were selected in cooperation with partner human rights NGOs and associations of families of missing persons.

Limitations of the review: this review is not a scientific study; it describes the experiences of a certain group of families of fallen and missing persons and their interactions with military units and enlistment offices.

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February 7, 2025*

1. <https://mvs.gov.ua/news/u-rejestri-osib-zniklix-bezvisti-za-osoblivix-obstavlin-maize-63-tisiaci-osib>

2. Note: Enlistment offices are involved in communication with families of fallen and missing defenders from the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The National Guard and units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs operate their own social support services for families and patronage services.

INTERACTION OF FAMILIES OF FALLEN AND MISSING DEFENDERS WITH MILITARY UNITS AND ENLISTMENT OFFICES:

Search Procedures, Status Confirmation, Notice Processing and Delivery, Causes of Delays in Payments Guaranteed to Families

The interaction of families of fallen and missing defenders with a MU and a TRSSC involves:

- determining the whereabouts of a loved one when contact with them is lost;
- obtaining official information on a loved one's the death or missing status, including the circumstances of their death or disappearance;
- arranging the funeral;
- obtaining documents for applying for one-time monetary assistance, financial allowance due to service members, and benefits to which families of fallen or missing defenders are entitled.

Key issues families face in their interaction with a military unit and an enlistment office at this stage are as follows:

1. Delayed notification of families about a defender's death or missing status;
 2. Issues arising when informing families about the death of a defender;
 3. Errors in the notice issuance;
 4. Затримки в отриманні родинами одноразової грошової допомоги за загиблого військовослужбовця через неправильне оформлення документів, звернення у передачі інформації;
 5. Встановлення статусу «зниклий безвісти» захиснику за наявності інформації про його загибель.
- Розглянемо кожну з них окремо.

1.1. Delayed notification of families about a defender's death or missing status [13], [5]

Families often learn of their loved one's death or missing status before receiving any official notice from an enlistment office. News of the tragedy comes from witnesses — fellow soldiers, medics, or someone who found the body — sometimes even from a Russian soldier.

"... There are more complaints that neither we nor a military unit can address. Fellow soldiers call and say where the bodies lie and that no one is retrieving them. This is the main psychological issue. They (note: the families) communicate, search for phone numbers, find fellow soldiers who are in hospitals or who have already been discharged...", head of an enlistment office.

"...There is an established procedure... that we notify... the military unit sends an official notice to the TRSSC, and the TRSSC representative personally notifies the relatives of the fallen with this document. ... Unfortunately, there are quite a large number of cases when such calls come from military units... There have been cases when the body has not been identified, i.e., it is impossible to identify it, and fellow soldiers are already calling home and informing that the service member has died, we cannot identify them, they are considered missing until DNA results are available...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

To confirm or refute the fact of death (note: when it becomes clear that there are no witnesses to the death and the defender is considered missing), families often seek out fellow soldiers and try to clarify what happened, receiving unofficial information. [3] Sometimes, requests for confirmation of death submitted to an enlistment office and to a military unit may remain unanswered because the information has not reached the TRSSC due to negligence by a unit commander or their subordinates responsible for this matter.

"... In principle, families encounter problems immediately. ... how does it happen: a person goes missing, and the family often learns of it through third parties. Or a person does not contact relatives for a long time, and they start searching for them. Or their fellow soldiers begin writing. Typically, service members ask their friends

to inform their families if they go missing and so on...", representative of a civil society association of families of missing persons.

"...we had issues with notices. The first ones that were sent to all relatives said that the guys had died, although all of our guys are missing, and, probably a year later, we were finally able to replace all the notices with the ones they should have been...", representative of a civil society association of families of missing persons.

It should be noted that thanks to electronic document management, the process of information exchange between an enlistment office and a military unit has been streamlined. However, "delays" in notifications are caused not only by subjective but also by objective circumstances: service members remain in their positions for extended periods, and the fact of their disappearance is only discovered after the unit returns from the front line and the personnel are checked.

"...Everything is clearly defined, let's say, we work on this: if a service member goes missing, we notify a TRSSC on the same day. Now there is an electronic document management system that speeds up this process considerably. ...In general, when communicating with colleagues from other military units, there are situations when notices arrive nine days late. This naturally raises many questions. Again, this can be explained by the fact that when service members are at their positions and then leave them, a personnel check is carried out. They can be at their positions for a week or two weeks, and only upon their departure it turns out that the person is missing...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Thus, families of missing and fallen service members face a lack of timely information about the whereabouts of their loved ones and are forced to conduct their own search, which is an additional psychological burden for them. Delays in the information exchange between a military unit and an enlistment office regarding confirmation of the death or missing status of a defender, as well as errors in the notices, affect the process of documents processing for the payment of financial assistance to families.

1.2. Issues arising when informing families about the death of a defender

The risks include **premature notifications** — when relatives may receive information before official confirmation. This can provoke suicide attempts and acute stress reactions. The traumatic process of identification of fallen by their families further complicates matters.

Lack of psychological training for service members who notify families; notification teams do not always include a medic who can provide first aid in case of a sharp increase in blood pressure or dizziness among family members.

There is also a **lack of psychologists who provide crisis psychological assistance**. These factors complicate communication with the families of the fallen and become a severe psychological challenge for the service

members. [18] In some cases, the ethics of notifying the family about a service member's death is violated by notification carried out in an inappropriate manner, for example, through neighbors or children. [3]

1.3. Errors in the notice issuance

The person to whom the notice is issued is very important, as it affects the subsequent document processing procedures. If the notice is issued to someone other than a direct relative, it must be reissued.

"...Issues are mainly related to notices. When enlisting in military service, when enrolling in our unit, we require a service member to provide information about their relatives who should be notified. Quite a lot of people do not give contacts of direct relatives, such as their wife or parents. Many indicate sisters or brothers. So, we issue the notice to the sister, for example, even though she is not a direct relative. And then the mother gets in touch and asks us to reissue the notice. Of course, we reissue everything, a TRSSC identifies the mother, for example,

that she is indeed the mother, sends us a request to re-issue the notice, and everything is done quite quickly because of the electronic document management system. So, we quickly reissue everything, and I wouldn't say that it's a problem. It's just the way the situation is...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Hence, issuing a notice requires additional verification of information by representatives of a MU and a TRSSC to prevent the reissuance of documents. Although, thanks to electronic document management, the exchange of information between a TRSSC, and a MU is efficient, errors in notices do occur, and their correction slows down the process of issuing payments to families.

1.4. Delays in families receiving one-time monetary assistance for a fallen service member due to incorrect document processing, delays in information transfer between agencies, military unit command, enlistment office officials [17], [16]

As a result, the first payment from the designated sum of one-time monetary assistance (OTMA) is received by the majority of families of fallen approximately 8-10

months after the application with the corresponding set of documents is submitted.

The main reasons for the violations are:

- delays in document submission by command structures of military units, sometimes extending up to six months;
- enlistment offices failing to insist on timely documents receipt and neglecting to send reminders to military units, leading to further delays of four to six months;

- families being insufficiently informed about their rights, the document processing procedures, and application review deadlines;
- and some enlistment offices suggesting relatives contact military units themselves for the documents, explaining that they are too busy.

According to the procedure for appointing OTMA, family members of the deceased service members must apply to an enlistment office with a corresponding application and required set of documents. In the absence of documents confirming the death of a service member, enlistment offices take measures to obtain them by sending requests to the relevant institutions. An analysis of more than 130 appeals on this issue received by the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights revealed numerous cases of delays or inaction by personnel of enlistment offices in submitting requests to military units for obtaining

documents, as well as delays by command structures of military unit in providing documents. About 80% of the families of fallen service members received the first payment from the OTMA amount within six months to a year [17].

In view of this, the process of processing compensation to the families of fallen service members is bureaucratic, dependent on subjective factor — namely the responsible attitude of enlistment offices' and military units' personnel towards the timely processing of documents and requires additional oversight over their transfer.

1.5. The assignment of the “missing in action” status to a defender even when there is information confirming his death

creates difficulties for the family, as relatives must exert significant effort to obtain official confirmation of death, otherwise they will not be able to receive payments and benefits to which they are entitled. The granting of “missing in action” status for a fallen defender has led to allegations of financial and statistical manipulation in military units: while a service member is considered missing, his financial allowance continues to be credited to the unit, which can then dispose of these funds. Some commanders may deliberately classify the fallen as missing to reduce official loss statistics and avoid damaging their reputation [14] (*see note*).³

According to this, the system for recognizing fallen service members has significant bureaucratic obstacles, leaving families in a state of uncertainty, confusion, and indignation, depriving them of the opportunity to complete the necessary paperwork and receive the due payments on time. The process can be expedited through court action, but it remains complex and exhausting for relatives.

Despite the existing challenges, it should be noted that in some cases the interaction between families and military units regarding document processing can be quite effective, but it depends on the “personal factor,” meaning the individual representative who explains the bureaucratic procedures, the specifics of information transfer, and the coordination among departments, and who assists families with the paperwork.

“...after the funeral, the bureaucracy kicks in: you have to collect documents for the allocation of the one-time monetary assistance from the military unit. The military unit requires a pretty large package of documents to approve this one-time monetary assistance: this includes the order for exclusion, ...and others... and yet again, one document requires another... ...these are bureaucratic issues. ...We cannot issue an order for exclusion without the approval of the higher headquarters because we are merely a separate battalion, yet we remain dependent on the higher headquarters. This all

takes time, and I explain all this to the relatives. We try to do everything quickly, but these issues are among the main ones. In general, when you tell the relatives of the fallen about all this, they generally understand everything, and no conflicts arise... You know, I communicate with them so much: they write to me on all messengers, I am constantly in touch with them and talk to them on the phone, they message me until midnight. I believe that's how communication should be. In other words, the military unit must definitely communicate with the relatives of missing, fallen, captured, and so on...”, officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

There are also examples of cooperation by enlistment offices, when families receive the necessary information regarding procedures, rights, and assistance with document processing.

“... They often call. That becomes like the second phase of communication, because in the first phase nobody is really concerned about the payments. That phase lasts for about a week, during which people are emotional while communicating. ... Once people calm down a bit, we communicate quite often. I try to provide psychological and moral support. Then, of course, comes the paperwork, questions on payments. I inform them of the first steps they need to take, where to go, what documents to provide us with...”, officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Thus, the effectiveness of families' interaction with MUs and TRSSCs depends on the personal responsibility of personnel who explain bureaucratic procedures and advise families on document processing. Despite the complexity of document collection caused by the multi-level approval system, personal communication and support from military unit representatives help resolve or even avoid conflicts. Maintaining contact with families is especially important during the initial stages following the receipt of the notice, as the families are in a state of stress.

3. It is worth noting that, according to the recommendations of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, a service member will be classified as missing until one of the following events occurs: confirmation of captivity and a change in status; identification of the body of the fallen or the issuance of a court decision declaring the individual deceased (to date, obtaining such a decision is complicated by the current practice of the Supreme Court of Ukraine in a model case).

COMMUNICATION AND SEARCH-RELATED ISSUES:

Challenges for Families of Missing Persons in Their Interaction with Military Units and Enlistment Offices

Families of missing defenders when communicating with MUs and TRSSCs, also face delayed notifications, prolonged official investigations, improper document processing, and violations of instructions in the procedure for notifying families about their missing relative. The families of missing persons are most concerned about the lack of information about the whereabouts of their loved one and the difficulties in obtaining details about the circumstances of the disappearance. [10]. Families find it hard to understand the roles of the agencies responsible for searching for the missing persons and the search mechanisms. Families of missing persons, like families of fallen, conduct their own searches believing that the agencies are not doing enough and are ineffective.

Families of missing persons also encounter the following issues when interacting with military units.

2.1. The closed nature of military units complicates interaction with families [10]

Although military units are a key link in the process of collecting documents, service members often avoid communication, are reluctant to provide information, and to assist with paperwork. The lack of legal experts and responsible personnel in military units leads to huge queues for document submission (sometimes schedules extend two weeks in advance). Because the email addresses of military units are rarely published, families have to contact the Ministry of Defence in order to start communication with a military unit. Additional difficulties arise for families of the missing who are forced to reside abroad. They cannot communicate with an enlistment office online, nor can they visit it to process documents and conduct search [2].

"...military units mostly avoid communication with families...", lawyer, founder of a human rights NGO.

"...I understand why enlistment offices 'hide'; I understand that information is not available online."

"But excuse me, if you notify a person, you understand the situation when you pick up the notice. The right for an office, active phone number, a mailing address, a clear procedure... I see it that way...", mother of a missing person.

Thus, the communication between MUs, TRSSCs, and families requires improvements. Specifically, provisioning accessible contact information, simplifying procedures, and improving legal support.

2.2. Families lack understanding of the roles and functions of agencies addressing the issues of families of the missing

Assistance for families of the missing is provided by the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War; the Joint Center for Coordination of Search and Liberation of Persons Unlawfully Deprived of Liberty as a Result of Aggression against Ukraine (SSU); the National Information Bureau (NIB); military units; TRSSCs; the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine; the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA); the National Police of Ukraine; the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights; and the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances. Often, families lack understanding whom to approach.

"...Firstly, they do not know where to go or what to do because they don't know which specific agency can help them with a particular issue. ...When they already know which agency to contact, the next challenge is to submit information. For example, we have many chatbots that do not always work properly. ...Next, in some cases, they must register with certain agencies, such as the Coordination Headquarters or the Single Window, and there they need an electronic signature, which people do not understand how to obtain. ...Third, people who have relocated as internally displaced persons (IDPs) come to me, and it is good if they have a simple mobile phone, especially elderly people. This is a substantial problem for submitting information. ...Then there is another issue: to contact the investigator when, for example, the case has been transferred to another region. People have such a problem as well, and we assist them..." Center for the Search for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances at a Main Regional Police Department of the National Police of Ukraine.

In cases where communication problems arise, for example, with a military unit, families turn to the Coordination Headquarters or the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances. Thanks to their intervention, the problem can be solved, but families are confused because these agencies are distracted from their primary duties, raising the question why numerous agencies duplicate certain functions.

"...unstable payments... there was an issue. I couldn't get the military unit to explain why the payment amount was different each time and why it seemed unfair. Then, after that meeting at the Coordination Headquarters - in June, when we met and wrote a collective letter addressing both the Coordination Headquarters and military units. Since July, they have paid all the arrears they owed, and since July, stable monthly payments have been made... It should not be like this. I emphasize once again: The Coordination Headquarters should focus on the return of prisoners of war, searching for those who are missing, repatriating the bodies of those who have fallen on the frontline - that is its primary task. But it is dealing with everything that investigators, the Naval Forces, the Security Service of Ukraine, military units, or some other structures of the State Research Expert and Forensic Center should be dealing with...", mother of a missing person.

In view of this, families of missing persons need a single agency responsible for maintaining contact and resolving their specific issues.

2.3. Delays in initiating command investigations and providing command investigation reports [5]

A military unit should investigate the circumstances of a service member's disappearance within a month. If this period is insufficient, it may be extended for another month by the order of the commander. However, military units often fail to complete the investigation on time; consequently, families receive the documents with delays of four to six months. The explanations given are that there is a shortage of personnel, that a unit is overloaded due to the active participation of defenders who are witnesses in combat missions, and that witnesses are hospitalized. Families have the right to review the investigation results once it is completed. However, there are cases when the command of certain units ignores requests from families, delays the transfer of investigation reports, and conducts investigations insufficiently diligently, all of which undermines the trust of families.

"...Most reports are copy-and-pasted, as the officials conducting the command investigation have additional responsibilities, including executing of tactical objectives. Often, the commander or political officer, i.e., the leadership, gives instructions on what to include and what to omit, to distort certain data... The explanations given by eyewitnesses do not match reality, and most service members unofficially tell families that they did not even see what is stated in the explanations; some, in informal conversations with families, speak of circumstances other than those stated in the report...", lawyer and founder of a human rights NGO.

Military units refuse to provide information, citing the absence of direct requirements in regulatory documents (note: Order No. 280 dated 09.15.2022 On the approval of the Instructions on the Organization of Personnel Records in the System of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine), or the Law on the Protection of Personal Data. Possible reasons for the delay in providing investigation reports may be related to the fact that the command concealed details.

"... again, an investigation report raises many questions: why are there no names of witnesses? We cannot provide such information because of the Law On the Protection of Personal Data, according to which there is legal responsi-

bility. And no service member who enters the service gives us consent to disclose their personal data. That is why we explain all this to the relatives...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

At the same time, the argument for families to obtain data is the Law On the Legal Status of Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances, which guarantees families the right to information about the whereabouts and circumstances of their relatives' disappearance. [6] [5]

It should be noted that families have certain expectations regarding the investigation [2]. Some of them imagine the investigation by a military unit as a search for a service member, whereas it is a procedure to clarify the circumstances of the disappearance by interviewing fellow soldiers, some of whom cannot provide objective testimony or refuse to testify in order not to take responsibility for false testimony. [6],[5] Units also lack clear procedures for conducting investigations and explanations as to what evidence of disappearance or capture is sufficient.

Command investigation reports contain errors.

"The command investigation reports prepared by military units in cases of missing persons contain many errors, especially regarding personal data...", lawyer, founder of a human rights NGO.

The families' requests to a military unit to correct the errors are redirected to the officers who drafted reports and are currently engaged in combat operations. This delays the document correction process. [2]

In view of the above, it is necessary to review the procedures for conducting investigations and documenting their findings to prevent them from being carried out in a formal manner, reduce the number of errors, and speed up the process. It is also essential to ensure compliance with legislative norms, to strengthen the accountability of military units for the timely provision of information and clearly regulate the process of command investigations.

2.4. Families of the missing face issues with the return of the defender's belongings and documents [4]

The procedure for returning personal belongings of service members who have gone missing does not have a clear timeframe at the legislative level. In general, it is only stated that the belongings must be returned.

"The personal belongings of service members who have been killed in action, died in healthcare facilities, gone missing, or evacuated to the rear due to injury or illness shall be sent to their relatives who have the

right to inherit in accordance with current legislation. Personal-use items are sent to the relatives along with the personal belongings. ...are dispatched as parcels with a declared value at the expense of the military unit. The return is carried out depending on the specific situation and the circumstances of the disappearance" — excerpt from the Instruction (*note: Instruction on the organization of clothing allowance for servicemembers of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the State Special Transport Service in peacetime and during special periods*). If the items are not returned within a prolonged period, relatives, in an effort to expedite the process, contact the leadership of a military unit, or the Coordination Headquarters or the Commissioner for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances. However, it sometimes happens that valuable items cannot be returned either because the defender had them on his person while fulfilling a combat mission at the time of his disappearance, or because the unit's location was destroyed as a result of a missile strike.

"...my son's personal belongings were never returned to us, although he was supposed to have had a phone, valuable personal items... the officer said that the unit's location was hit by either a shell or a rocket - 'nothing remained...'. It was impossible to verify this. ...", mother of a missing person.

In view of this, a clear procedure for the return of property should be introduced at the legislative level, specific deadlines for the return of personal belongings should be included in regulations, a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of this procedure by military units should be established, and responsibility for delays in the return or disappearance of property should be provided for. It is also necessary to implement a mechanism for recording the personal belongings of service members prior to their deployment on combat missions and to define the procedure for the official confirmation of the loss of items due to combat circumstances (e.g., destruction of equipment, of the unit's location, etc.). Families should be given clear instructions on what steps to take if the return is delayed.

2.5. The initiative to communicate with enlistment offices often belongs to families

In most cases, communication from enlistment offices takes place only after a request from families. Not all TRSSCs inform families about the procedure to follow in the event of a loved one's disappearance. If such information is provided, it is not always clear to families who are in shock, and it is difficult for them to remember everything on their own. [5].

...I encountered situations where a TRSSC did not conscientiously perform its functions. Specifically, it did not inform families of the steps they should take next. So, I wanted to create an informational leaflet (note: for families): explaining what should be done first, where to go, where to submit an appeal, with my phone number listed on this leaflet for people to establish contact with the military unit. After all, the enlistment offices personnel already have my number. I wanted this information to be provided beforehand (note: handed over to families when a person is mobilized)... But I believe that this should be within TRSSC's competence be-

cause they are responsible for mobilization and ought to work more closely with families, given that they carry the 'social support' label. I think they must fulfill their duties...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Therefore, enlistment offices should have standardized understandable information materials that are understandable for families. These materials should include up-to-date contact information of the agencies responsible, a step-by-step description outlining what families must do to collect and submit the necessary documents (e.g., guidelines or checklists). Also, these materials should help to establish and maintain contact with the families of service members and provide them with the contacts of the patronage service or the civil-military cooperation service of the military unit for prompt response in the event of the death or disappearance of a close family member.

2.6. Families demand more information from military units than they are able to provide, which leads to misunderstandings and additional stress for families

Families of missing persons who are trying to obtain information to search for their loved ones find the contacts of officers - commanders and fellow soldiers of their close relatives. Sometimes commanders can provide information, but most often they refuse to

do so because of classified information and prohibit their subordinates from sharing it. This response to the request further depresses families and creates a negative impression of the command and their "indifference."

"...It still depends a lot on the unit commanders or direct superiors. If they are decent, as anywhere else, they will talk and provide some guidance. I understand that there are many cases where this happens. I understand that they cannot talk to everyone. I understand that at first someone communicates, but then they simply stop doing this because they are too exhausted. Just designate someone who will speak at least once, rather than what I have been told: "He swore at me when he was drunk - the commander", I've heard that more than once, you understand. This absolutely should not happen!...", representative of a civil society association of families of missing persons.

"...My methods of searching for my son's fellow soldiers and the unit commander relied on personal connections. Friends among volunteers found the contact of the commander who commanded the battle... with a plea "don't tell anyone," I was provided with the approximate address of my son's disappearance (the battle took place in a city). He didn't give me the contacts of his fellow soldiers... of course, I was even more upset... I got the impression that he didn't care..." mother of a missing person.

Since official notices about missing persons contain only a brief description of the incident without any details, families are not satisfied with them and want to know more. Military units often cannot provide more information because they themselves have limited details

about the circumstances of the disappearance and are not allowed to disclose classified information.

"... It is the lack of information that raises a lot of questions among relatives, because when a service member goes missing, the notice usually contains only a brief description of the incident. For example, it says that as a result of mortar or artillery fire, a service member went missing, and the family does not understand why there is no more information. We cannot provide more information because when a service member goes missing, we also have very little information. The only thing we have is, of course, the coordinates. Families also ask for these coordinates and do not understand why we cannot reveal them. This is because they are located where the service member went missing, in areas where active combat operations are taking place. ... This is classified information. We try to explain this to families, but they don't understand, some of them don't understand..." officer, Department of the Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Thus, to avoid causing additional stress to families due to a military unit's refusal to share details about the circumstances of the disappearance of a missing defender, an enlistment office should in advance inform families about the limitations in the information that can be provided. They should also explain the specifics of the search for missing persons and clarify the role of a military unit in the process.

2.7. Families are concerned about changes in the payment procedures

Another issue in the interaction between families and military units arose on February 1, 2025, due to the entry into force of amendments to the Law On Social and Legal Protection of Military Personnel and Members of Their Families which the Verkhovna Rada adopted in October of the previous year. The document introduces a new algorithm for the payment of financial allowance to the families of service members in cases they go missing or are captured. According to this Law, enlistment offices have the right to obtain extracts from state registers for all relatives of prisoners of war or missing persons who are claiming for financial allowance payment and to provide these extracts to military units. However, this process is gradual. The problem lies in the confusion among families, who lack sufficient information about the organization of the payment process and how the defender's funds are safeguarded.

"...The main issues are that the legislation on payments has now changed, and families do not understand that it is not our fault why there are delays with these extracts from state registers.

Everyone is on edge... In principle, everything is being resolved gradually. We have now been given the opportunity to access the registers ourselves, so I believe the issue will be resolved...", head of an enlistment office.

In view of this, to avoid uncertainty and delays, it is necessary to improve the information provided to families about the new payment algorithm, possible complications in accessing registers by enlistment offices to obtain extracts, and options for resolving such issues.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES OF FALLEN AND MISSING PERSONS:

Ensuring State-Provided Rights and Guarantees;
Informing and Coordinating Families;
The Role of Human Rights NGOs
and Associations of Families

3.1. Support for families has several dimensions; the first of these is **ensuring the rights and guarantees** to which they are entitled [9]

This aspect concerns financial support. Families of service members receive one-time monetary assistance in the event of death of a defender. Disabled family members of fallen service members who were financially dependent on them are entitled to a pension in the event of the loss of the breadwinner.

Families of missing service members have the right to retain the service member's financial allowance until the circumstances are clarified. Payments are issued from the moment the person is declared missing and continue until the status of a defender is officially confirmed.

Disabled relatives may receive a pension due to the loss of a breadwinner one month after the information is entered into the register. Social guarantees are provided for the children of a defender; namely, they are offered priority admission to kindergartens and schools, admission to higher education institutions without competition if their father or mother was a service member who went missing during service. There are also housing and utility benefits, namely, a 50% discount on housing and utility payments for families of missing persons. If a family lives in state-owned housing, they are eligible to receive housing free of charge in order to transfer it into private ownership. Priority improvement of housing conditions, if necessary. The right to a land plot and assistance in building a home. Transportation benefits include free travel on urban and suburban transport for parents of missing defenders, as well as a 50% discount on intercity transportation (whether by rail, water, and road).

Families are guaranteed a 50% discount on sanatorium and resort treatment, along with comprehensive medical and sanatorium care. However, obtaining all these benefits requires proper processing of documents which is complicated by the absence of a unified responsible authority. Families are forced to independently contact numerous agencies to obtain information and confirm the status of a missing person.

According to the study "Needs of Families of Missing in Action" [10], the most accessible rights are the right to receive financial allowance for the service member who went missing (46% — readily available; 41% — available with persistence): discounts on housing and utility payments (40% and 11% respectively), the right to priority admission into local educational institutions (23% and 12%), and the right for relatives to be exempted from military conscription (21% and 10%). It is assumed that after the Government has aligned the procedure for obtaining deferment from military service during mobilization for relatives of persons missing under special circumstances with the requirements of the Law On the Legal Status of Persons Missing under Special Circumstances (note: the corresponding resolution was adopted at the Cabinet of Ministers meeting on January 14, 2025), accessibility of this will increase.

Therefore, it is necessary to simplify the process of obtaining social guarantees, reduce bureaucratic obstacles, and establish a unified coordinating body to support families.

3.2. The second dimension of support is the informing and coordinating of families,

Including on social protection issues, which is carried out through the hotlines of military units, patronage services, social work / social support departments within them, human rights NGOs, and associations of families.

"...In every district enlistment office there are social workers who provide social support to the families of fallen and missing persons.

I manage a small department in a small town. I have two workers. In larger district TRSSCs there are more people, four to five employees who provide support, explain, clarify, and assist families compile the set of documents needed for payments. Families of missing and fallen persons do not correspond with a military unit themselves but do this solely through us. The National Guard supports families of its personnel independently. ... We provide support for the Armed Forces, but when there are no nearby units, so that a person

does not have to travel, we also provide assistance to the families of the National Guard personnel by preparing the required documents, although they then forward them on their own. ... This mechanism is implemented by them themselves: it is the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the "Rubizh" and "Liut" brigades and the National Guard. And we provide support for the families of the Armed Forces personnel...", head of an enlistment office.

The creation of patronage services [8] was prompted by the need of defenders and their families for information about the ways to resolve various issues. In particular, when a defender fails to contact, is injured, goes missing, is killed, or captured. The role of these services is not only to consult service members and their families, but also to resolve problems in communicating with state institutions, agencies, the police, and enlistment offices.

When patronage services provide support to families of missing service members, they engage at the stage when a unit transfers information about a missing person to an enlistment office [5]. For example, a patronage service supporting families (based on the example of the 3rd Assault Brigade) organizes communication with families by verifying contacts at enlistment offices, contacting relatives, and explaining the first necessary steps. They also assist with the collection and submission of documents. All papers are sent to the appropriate agencies without involving the families directly. They maintain records of submitted documents, monitor the progress of procedures, and track the status of each family's case. They inform families about the missing, even if death has been confirmed but the body has not yet been found. They also organize search operations: brigades may conduct searches for missing service members, though this is only possible until re-deployment takes place. Data regarding the locations where service members went missing are forwarded to the General Staff of the Armed Forces for an interactive map, which then guides the search groups.

The Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War (central and regional offices) and the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances (central office and regional centers at Main Regional Police Departments of the National Police of Ukraine) are responsible for the coordination of the families' activities, provision of advice on current issues, clarifications regarding search procedures for missing persons, procedures related to DNA testing, and assistance in communicating with various agencies, military units, and the police. Human rights NGOs and associations of families play a significant role in assisting families with searches and explaining bureaucratic procedures.

Family consultations take various forms — from individual appointments to group meetings and hotline calls.

"...The first thing we did was launch the hotline. Even though we still had a lot of questions among ourselves about how it should operate, we had to train the hotline staff on what to say, how to comment, and how to help people. To date, we have counted that we have received nearly 39,000 calls to the hotline since its creation. ...Next are the representatives in the regions. This was the initiative of the previous Commissioner, and we recognized how important it was to ensure that following the changes in this activity, nothing worsened. That's why we even retained a certain number of employees from the Ministry for Reintegration team. ... as a rule, this involves telephone conversations with specific comments and explanations. Thus, for a general query, the hotline can provide guidance. If it is a specific issue where, for example, you need to contact a TRSSC, a military unit, the police, to correct or adjust something, this is already being done by a regional representative. They are given the phone number, and they get in touch...", the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances.

Due to the large number of agencies that work with families of missing persons and issues related to the search for defenders, many misunderstandings arise. As a result, some agencies have to take on the role of mediators between families and military units, enlistment offices, and other institutions.

"In fact, our role here at the Public Reception of the Coordination Headquarters is to coordinate not only the work between agencies, but also between families and agencies if there is a lack of communication or if there are families who do not know how to properly contact a particular agency or how to find it. That is, we also explain the rights of families, what they are entitled to, and what information they can provide, or explain why, for example, a military unit might not provide a certain document because this is specified in their official duties. Sometimes we have to explain both sides: we understand certain processes from the perspective of the state institutions, and we also understand that from the families' perspective insufficient communication always leads to misunderstandings. Therefore, we have taken on this role. As you say, and I agree, we act as moderators, negotiators, I don't know what to call it, but those who can communicate with the relevant institutions when necessary...", employee of the Public Reception of the Coordination Headquarters.

Group meetings held by representatives of the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War in the regions and the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances play an important role in informing families. Such meetings help to resolve issues surrounding a specific military unit or bring together families who live in remote communities and are unable to attend a personal reception at the office located in the regional center.

"...the holding group meetings. There is a military unit that is based directly in the region, and as a rule, the issues raised by the families of missing persons regarding that particular military unit tend to be essentially the same: a certain certificate is not issued, Form 5, Form 6, personal belongings are not returned, there is no communication with the Civil-Military Cooperation officer who is supposed to assist and provide current information....", the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances.

"...First, this is so that people who live in remote settlements and communities, and who do not have the opportunity to receive information from the primary source, that is, from the Coordination Headquarters, have the opportunity to ask questions, to communicate, and to see for themselves. First and foremost, it is psychological support: to help them understand that no one has forgotten them, that work is being done, and that we are providing information about the government bodies and the steps the state is taking to search for missing persons and prisoners of war; as well as to provide updates on legislation or even news on international level, in communication with international organizations. It is to make people aware of what the authorities in Ukraine are doing to return someone's relatives or to locate those who have gone missing...", representative of a regional office of the Coordination Headquarters.

In the absence of a unified state coordinating body for families of missing persons, patronage services, the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances have become an essential support link. They help families obtain the necessary information and support, expedite the resolution of issues, and reinforce the understanding that the search for their loved one is important to the state, thus restoring trust in state agencies.

3.3. Support for families of fallen and missing provided by human rights NGOs and associations of families

In addition to military units, enlistment offices, and state agencies, information and coordination support as well as assistance in search efforts are also provided by human rights NGOs and associations of families.

"...Families unite in associations and initiate meetings with them, and such meetings are also initiated by NGOs. Separately, such meetings are held by the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War, the Commissioner for Missing Persons, and, in our region, by the Center for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances at the Main Regional Police Department of the National Police of Ukraine...", lawyer, founder of a human rights NGO.

Their areas of support include, in addition to those already mentioned, legal support and psychological aid, advocacy, cooperation with military units and international organizations, and the creation of contact networks and databases.

"...The media factor that can also be singled out. ...Our leaders of NGOs are quite proactive. They arrange meetings with the Coordination Headquarters, the National Information Bureau, and the Commissioners; we are also invited to these meetings. They can raise issues that we, at our level, probably cannot. This is why it is quite efficient. ...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Thanks to these organizations, families gain access to a systematic search process, do not feel isolated, and find themselves in an environment where every step is supported by experience and professional assistance.

"The challenge in the work of human rights NGOs is that the range of problematic issues is very vast, and these organizations do not always provide a high level of professional service. That is probably the main issue. When working with this group, the primary principle is 'do no harm'...", lawyer and founder of a human rights NGO

"...Families of the missing approach us with an array of issues: this includes legal support when it is necessary to properly file a disappearance report and obtain an official status that affects social benefits and support. We provide legal support, advice on documents, and assistance in cases related to the status of the missing person. This includes searching for information when there is no data on the circumstances of the disappearance or the whereabouts of a loved one. At the same time, families experience severe stress, bewilderment, and despair. We cooperate with state agencies when difficulties arise in interacting with military structures, the police, or international organizations. Families need emotional support and the feeling that they are not alone in their grief. We ensure access to support groups, trainings, and consultations with psychologists specializing in trauma situations... We have an extensive network of contacts: thanks to cooperation with the military, government agencies, and international organizations, our Association has ac-

cess to resources and databases that are not available to ordinary citizens. We conduct advocacy activities: we advocate for the rights of families of missing persons at the national level, draw attention to their issues through the media and public events...", representative of the regional office of the civil society association of mothers and wives of defenders; head of the regional branch of the all-Ukrainian association of families.

"...For example, as a civil society organization, we are primarily focused on getting the guys out of there, on drawing attention to this! Together with relatives, we administer a group of more than 800 participants, where people can get any kind of advice for free...", head of the all-Ukrainian association of families of missing persons and prisoners of war.

Public associations largely relieve the organizational and facilitative burden on government agencies and military units. They act as a small group at official meetings, raise issues, and advocate the interests of the larger group they represent.

"...If you invite 10 - 15 heads of NGOs to communicate with a representative of the Coordination Headquarters, for example, so that they can then convey the information to the members of these organizations...", representative of a civil society association of families.

"...the NGOs we work with show quite a strong potential. They have separate groups. I am in constant contact with the heads of all these organizations. If any questions arise, I discuss them with competent people, we consolidate the information, and then they make announcements or similar communications in their groups so that people are informed. ...We maintain continuous interaction with them, especially concerning the issues of 2022, as I have been in this role since 2023 and joined this battalion in 2023, while many issues from 2022 remain, such as outdated phone numbers of relatives when, for example, DNA test results arrive and I cannot contact the family to inform them personally, and this is where NGOs come to help...", officer, Department of Civil-Military Cooperation within a military unit.

Human rights NGOs cooperate with government agencies and contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the search for missing persons. They provide highly professional free legal support, propose and competently argue the need for changes in legislation, and draft legislative proposals.

"Issues on which we cooperate... Firstly this is the issue of verification: determining if somebody else should be searched for but is not currently on the search list. Secondly, many have formed well-organized search teams which compile relevant lists and provide them for us, and we double-check them. There are organizations that can offer quality legal support. We can also disseminate information about such lawyers through our representatives, with the understanding that there will be

no commercial motives involved. There are already several draft laws, and we also advocate the position that families of missing persons should be provided with free legal support specifically on issues related to the exercising their rights as families of persons missing under special circumstances. Therefore, we understand that it must be this way... Furthermore, even this issue of changes to the Criminal Procedure Code has been developed in most cases in cooperation with human rights groups that have strong legal expertise. That is, they were able to provide us with legal support. ...There are proposals for the future legislative amendments. Let's say that we are also using their legal experience and asking them to provide legal expertise. For example, there is the issue of using the results of expert studies conducted abroad. Our legislation poses certain obstacles to the use of these findings. ... International organizations say that we may conduct examinations abroad, but the Criminal Procedure Code states that, according to our law, the findings of such examinations do not constitute an official expert opinion. ... We are moving in that direction, so it is logical that we should already be adapting our legislation to European standards. And we need to draft such a law, and in order to draft it properly, I have reached out NGOs: please take the regulatory framework of European countries, provide a professional translation if possible, so that we can analyze it and make the necessary changes", the Commissioner for Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances.

"...In our region, the Center for the Search for Missing Persons works in collaboration with the public sector, meaning that they don't have staff positions for lawyers, attorneys, or psychologists, but they engage NGOs.

Currently, we hold group sessions with a psychologist for families as well as individual consultations. In complicated cases, an individual is referred to NGOs that provide legal support i.e. provide explanations, offer assistance, and accompany the person in court. The free legal aid system can also perform this role, but a person must first be referred to there. In fact, there is such a center at the Main Regional Police Department of the National Police of Ukraine. They have a full-time position. A leading or chief specialist, whose role is to provide consultations and make such referrals. In cases where a person sometimes even needs humanitarian or financial assistance, this specialist refers them to communities and the public sector....", lawyer and founder of a human rights NGO.

Thus, human rights NGOs and associations of families play a key role in supporting the families of fallen and missing service members. They address the needs of families for quality legal support, psychological aid, and coordination assistance, complementing the work of state agencies through services, expertise, and advocacy activities. In doing so they participate in expert groups contributing to changes to legislation that governs search procedures, social protection, and financial payments.

CONCLUSIONS

Families of missing and fallen service members face a lack of timely information about the whereabouts of their loved ones when they are out of contact for a long time. This forces families to conduct their own searches, which is an additional psychological burden for them.

Delays in the information exchange between a military unit and an enlistment office regarding confirmation of the death or missing status of a defender, as well as errors in the notices, affect the process of documents processing for the payment of financial assistance to families, and further deteriorate their psychological state.

Issuing a notice requires additional verification of information by representatives of a military unit, an enlistment office to prevent the reissuance of documents. Although, thanks to electronic document management, the exchange of information between an enlistment office, and a military unit is efficient, errors in notices do occur, and their correction slows down the process of issuing payments to families.

The procedures for delivering notices and identifying the bodies of the fallen are traumatic for both families and military personnel. Lack of psychological training for service members and the absence of medical professionals and psychologists in notification teams worsen communication. Violations of ethical standards, such as communication through third parties, also amplify the stress for relatives of the fallen.

The process of processing payments to families of fallen defenders is bureaucratic, dependent on subjective factor – the attitude of an enlistment office and military unit personnel towards the timely processing of documents and requires additional oversight over their transfer.

The effectiveness of families' interaction with military units and enlistment offices depends on the personal responsibility of personnel who explain bureaucratic procedures and advise families on document processing. Despite the complexity of document collection caused by the multi-level approval system, personal communication and support from representatives of military units helps resolve or even avoid conflicts. Maintaining contact with families is extremely important, especially during

the initial stages following the receipt of the notice, as the families are in a state of stress.

In conducting official investigations, procedures and documentation must be reviewed to prevent formal approach, reduce the number of errors, and speed up the process. It is also essential to ensure compliance with legislative norms, to strengthen the accountability of military units for the timely provision of information, and to clearly regulate the process of command investigations. A proper and thorough investigation process requires the involvement of more service members assigned to these duties, as the number of missing and fallen in each unit is significant.

On February 01, 2025, amendments to the Law On Social and Legal Protection of Military Personnel and Members of Their Families came into force. According to the Law, enlistment offices have the right to obtain extracts from state registers for all relatives of prisoners of war or missing persons who are claiming for financial allowance payment, and to provide these extracts to military units. However, the process is gradual and requires time to clarify the access specifics and other nuances – a point emphasized by representatives of enlistment offices and military units during interactions with families.

In the absence of a unified state coordinating body for families of the missing, patronage / support services, the Coordination Headquarters and the Commissioner for Persons Missing under Special Circumstances have become an essential supporting link. They help families obtain necessary information and support and expedite the resolution of issues. Their work restores trust in state institutions and reassures families that the search for their loved ones matters to the state.

Human rights NGOs and associations of families play a key role in supporting the families of fallen and missing service members. They address the needs of families for quality legal support, psychological aid, and coordination assistance, complementing the work of state agencies through services, expertise, and advocacy activities. They also contribute to legislative changes in areas directly affecting the resolution of the issues faced by these families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a unified information center for families of missing defenders.
2. Enlistment offices must have standardized informational materials which are easily understandable for families. These materials should include up-to-date contact information of the responsible agencies and a clear step-by-step description outlining what families must do to collect and submit necessary documents. Furthermore, it is important to establish and maintain contact with the families of newly mobilized defenders and provide them with the contacts of the patronage service or the civil-military cooperation service of the military unit for prompt response in case of death or disappearance of a close family member.
3. Ensure that notifications regarding the death or missing status of a defender are delivered directly by authorized personnel who have been trained in communication ethics and psychological support. Involve crisis psychologists and medical professionals in notification teams to provide first psychological and medical aid.
4. Enlistment offices and military units should refer families of fallen and missing defenders to psychologists and support groups. It is crucial to emphasize the importance of psychological support, especially in the first two to three months following the receipt of the notice. If families refuse psychological support, it is necessary to establish and maintain steady contact to provide support during documents processing phase. This support should be provided using effective psychological support techniques.
5. Support the practice of patronage services, designating a responsible person in each military unit and enlistment office to assist families in collecting and submitting documents for the registration of payments, involving professional psychologists and representatives of NGOs offering legal and psychological services.

6. To avoid the risk of “secondary trauma” (*that is, indirect trauma that a person may experience from exposure to images or stories of those who’ve experienced traumatic events*), provide psychological support to enlistment offices and military units personnel, involved in delivering notices, organizing funerals, or regularly counseling families.
7. Simplify procedures for processing documents to receive payments. This involves increasing accountability and establishing control over the accuracy of documents filed out by military units to avoid errors that delay payments. Automate the process of processing documents to receive one-time monetary assistance ensuring that applications can be submitted via an e-cabinet of a family or a state web portal.
8. In light of the changes to the procedure of payments to families of missing service members, provide enlistment offices and military units with clear instructions and guidance on their responsibilities and the steps families must take. Keep families informed through patronage / support services of military units, paying particular attention to security guarantees for money held in MUs until the defender returns.
9. Regularly issue informational materials about the activities of human rights NGOs and associations of families working with the families of missing. These publications should focus on the rights of families, the types of assistance provided by NGOs, the issues being addressed, legislative changes, and clarifications of procedures for interacting with state agencies, military units, and enlistment offices. Hold joint roundtables and facilitated decision-making sessions involving human rights NGOs, associations of families, and representatives of military units and enlistment offices to discuss current challenges and collaboratively seek solutions.

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Annex

The procedure for notifying families in the event a service member goes missing is regulated by:

1. Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 464 dated September 14, 2018. The document establishes that the commander of a military unit must inform the head of the Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Center (enlistment office) at the family's place of residence on the day the service member goes missing. After receiving this information, the head of the enlistment office must officially notify the family members about the missing status of the service member within seven days.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1137-18#Text>
2. Instructions on the Organization of Personnel Records in the System of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, approved by the Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 280 dated September 15, 2022.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1407-22#Text>

The procedure for notifying the family of the fallen service member is regulated by:

1. Instructions on the Organization of the Funeral of Service Members Who Died During Military Service, approved by Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 185 dated June 5, 2001, and registered with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on June 19, 2001, under No. 524/5715. This document determines the procedure for notifying about the death of a service member, outlines the duties of military unit commanders and military commissars regarding the notification of the families of fallen, as well as the organization of funerals with military honors.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0524-01#Text>
2. Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 138 dated July 8, 2024, which approves the new Instruction on the Organization of the Funeral of Service Members. The Order clarifies procedures for notifying family members (or other close relatives) of the fallen service member, including notification formats and the coordination between military organizational structures and local enlistment offices.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z1064-24#Text>

Regulatory framework describing the procedures for providing social guarantees, benefits, and compensations for the families of fallen and missing service members, as well as determining the procedures for searching and registering such persons.

1. The Law of Ukraine On Social and Legal Protection of Military Personnel and Members of Their Families. The document defines the rights and guarantees for the members of families of fallen or missing in action service members. In particular, Articles 9, 9-2, 16, 16-1, 16-2, and 16-3 address benefits, compensations, and social guarantees for such families.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2011-12#Text>
2. The Law of Ukraine On the Legal Status of Persons Missing Under Special Circumstances describes the legal status of persons who have gone missing under special circumstances and provides legal framework for issues related to their registration, search, and social protection of their families.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2505-19#Text>
3. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 884 dated November 30, 2016, On the Approval of the Procedure for Payment of Financial Assistance to the Families of Service Members Captured as Prisoners of War or Taken Hostage, as well as of Those Interned in Neutral States or Missing in Action.
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/884-2016-п#Text>
4. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 168 dated February 28, 2022, On Certain Payments During Martial Law to Military Personnel of Enlisted and Senior Staff, to Police Officers, and to Their Families
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/168-2022-п#Text>



The Media Initiative for Human Rights (MIHR) is a Ukrainian NGO that combines journalism and human rights advocacy to expose Russia's war crimes in Ukraine and respond to human rights violations related to Russian aggression. MIHR investigates war crimes, torture, enforced disappearances, and violations of civilian and military rights in the context of war. The organisation also documents other human rights violations, monitors war-related trials, prepares analyses and recommendations, and engages in national and international advocacy to achieve justice and ensure human rights and freedoms.

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