



UKRAINIAN NATIONAL
BAR ASSOCIATION

REPORT

**of the UNBA Committee for the Protection of
Advocates' Rights and Guarantees of Practice of Law
on the identification of advocates with clients in Ukraine**



COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ADVOCATES' RIGHTS
AND GUARANTEES OF PRACTICE OF LAW

**PROTECTION
OF ADVOCATES' RIGHTS
IS A MOVEMENT THAT UNITES**

Hotline phone: + 38 (067) 692-44-43

period of martial law

28.08.2025

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The UNBA Committee for the Protection of Advocates' Rights and Guarantees of Practice of Law (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) is a permanent collegial advisory body established under the Ukrainian National Bar Association in accordance with Resolution No. 74 of the Bar Council of Ukraine dated February 16, 2013.

The main purpose of the Committee is to protect the professional and other rights of advocates, to promote guarantees for the practice of law, and to create the necessary conditions for advocates to perform their professional duties effectively and efficiently.

The special (additional) tasks and powers of the Committee, approved by Order No. 139 of the President of the UNBA and the BCU dated August 25, 2021, include, in particular, the detection, recording, analysis, and systematization of cases of violations of professional guarantees of practice of law that have occurred in Ukraine.

Therefore, in order to fulfill this special task, the Committee has compiled a consolidated report on cases of identification of advocates with clients in Ukraine during the period of martial law.

2. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN 2022

On January 31, 2023, the Committee [published](#) its Activity Report for 2022.

In 2022, the Committee received **59 appeals** from advocates regarding violations of their rights and guarantees of practice of law. As part of its consideration of the complaints, the Committee sent 36 letters, 25 of which were addressed to law enforcement authorities with a demand to stop violating the rights of advocates, as well as to conduct official investigations and bring the violators to disciplinary liability.

The Committee recorded 13 cases of advocates being identified with their clients. Violations of this guarantee of professional activity were accompanied by additional pressure on advocates, both verbal and procedural, as well as other unlawful actions.

The following facts are worth noting separately:

- On March 30, 2022, at 3:00 p.m., advocate B. arrived at the Lviv Lychakiv District Court at the request of the judge to represent O. in a court hearing. On the third floor, he was blocked by prosecutor G., who actively prevented him from entering the office of Judge Zhovnir G.B. After the court hearing, advocate B. went to the emergency room of the 8th City Clinical Hospital, where he was treated and his injuries to his left arm and knee were documented. At the same time, after this provocation by the prosecutor, criminal proceedings were opened against the advocate for intentionally causing bodily harm to a law enforcement officer.

- On September 14, 2022, the deputy mayor of Lviv, Zubach L.L., acting as a representative of the local authorities, publicly made derogatory and offensive remarks about advocate P., who was performing his professional duties. In addition, Zubach L.L. made unfounded accusations against the advocate, claiming that he had allegedly provided false information in connection with the performance of his professional activities.



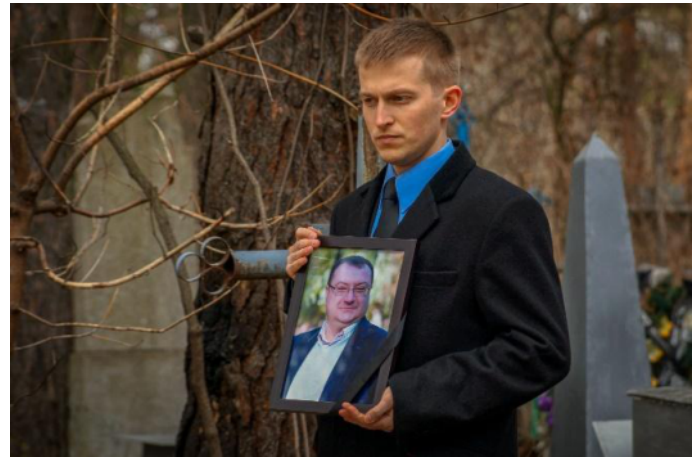
- The case of the **murder of advocate Yuriy Grabovskiy** attracted particular attention from the legal community.

On July 25, 2022, the Shevchenkivskyi District Court of Kyiv concluded its consideration of the case and found two individuals guilty of the advocate's murder.

2. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN 2022

The cynical and high-profile **murder of advocate Yuri Hrabovskyi in March 2016** became one of the most resonant tragedies in the modern history of the Ukrainian legal profession. His death was directly related to his professional activities: he was defending a Russian military officer in a court case that was the focus of international attention. In fact, Hrabovskyi became a target because he was performing his duty as an advocate – providing legal assistance to a person who, regardless of his status or citizenship, had the right to defense guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine and international conventions.

The crime against him was particularly cruel and cynical: the advocate was kidnapped, held in isolation, subjected to psychological pressure and torture, and then killed in an attempt to cover up the traces of the crime. Such an act of violence was a direct signal of intimidation not only to the legal community but also to civil society as a whole, as it undermined the very essence of the principle of independence of the legal profession.



The death of Yuri Hrabovskyi became a tragic symbol of how dangerous the work of an advocate can be if the rule of law is not upheld in a country.

And although the perpetrators of this crime were identified, the story itself remains a painful reminder: without real protection for the legal profession, there can be no fair justice or rule of law.

3. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN 2023

On February 29, 2024, the Committee [published](#) its Activity Report for 2023.

In 2023, the Committee received **98 complaints** about violations of advocates' rights and guarantees of practice of law. As part of its review, the Committee sent 78 letters, 45 of which were sent to law enforcement agencies with demands to stop violations of advocates' rights, as well as to conduct official investigations into the violators and bring them to disciplinary responsibility.

The Committee recorded **21 cases** of advocates being identified with their clients. Violations of this guarantee of professional activity were accompanied by additional pressure on advocates in the media and procedural forms, as well as other illegal actions.

The following facts deserve special attention:

- In February 2023, advocate Z. participated in an investigative (search) action—a search—with the aim of protecting the rights of the owners of the premises. However, immediately after the search was completed, employees of the Solomyansky District Territorial Center for Recruitment and Social Support arrived at the scene and handed summonses to the advocate and his clients. The individuals with summonses, including advocate Z., were photographed and publicized in the media with public condemnation for alleged crimes. Thus, advocate Z. began to be publicly accused along with his clients.



3. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN 2023

- On April 4, 2023, at approximately 1:00 p.m., advocates V. and O. were in the city of Mykolaiv when six employees of the Security Service of Ukraine in the Kherson region blocked the road with a minibus and searched the advocates' car, using physical force against both of them, as a result of which advocate O. suffered bodily harm. In addition, the unidentified SSU employees accompanied these actions with statements that the advocates were defending suspects of collaboration and defending “the wrong people.”



- Advocate Sh. is defending suspects M. and M. in criminal proceedings No. 12019100100000548 dated 20 January 2019.

Despite her status as a defense advocate in these proceedings, on November 23, 2023, at 6:42 p.m., an investigator from the Main Investigation Department of the National Police sent her a summons via WhatsApp to appear on November 27, 2023, to receive a notice of suspicion. Due to inpatient treatment at Kyiv City Clinical Hospital No. 7, advocate Sh. was unable to appear in response to the investigator's summons for valid reasons.



However, on November 27, 2023, a prosecutor from the office of the Prosecutor General arrived at the hospital where advocate Sh. was staying and served her with a notice of suspicion within the same criminal proceedings No. 12019100100000548 dated January 20, 2019, in which she acts as a defense advocate for suspects M. and M.

Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
09.08.2023	<p>In Viktor Medvedchuk's case, his interests are represented by advocate Oleksiy Kalinnikov, who is also a lecturer at the Higher School of Advocacy of the Ukrainian National Bar Association, which, in turn, has been headed for many years by Medvedchuk's associate Lidiya Izovitova.</p> <p>Previously, it was advocate Oleksiy Kalinnikov who represented the interests of another fugitive traitor, Viktor Pshonka, who tried to return items that had been taken from his house in Gorenichi near Kyiv to the National Art Museum. In 2014, Pshonka's advocate flooded the Ministry of Culture with complaints demanding that the former prosecutor general's belongings be returned to his house. These included icons, paintings, statuettes, Fabergé eggs, coins, and books (Triod Tsvetnaya, 1604; Evangelion Naprestolnoye, 1862; Administrativnaya Yustitsiya Rossii, 1910; and others).</p> <p>In addition, Kalinnikov represented the interests of the Novyi Svit publishing house, which published several books by traitor Viktor Yanukovych and paid him the largest writer's fee in Ukrainian history – almost 16.5 million hryvnia.</p> <p>It should be noted that there are a total of 27 members of the IX convocation of the Verkhovna Rada in the Register of Traitors .</p>	Kalinnikov Oleksiy Valeriiovych	Salizhenko Oleksandr CHESNO Movement LINK

4. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN 2024

On February 14, 2025, the Committee [published](#) its Activity Report for 2024.

In 2024, the Committee received **86 complaints** from advocates regarding violations of advocates' rights and guarantees of practice of law. In the course of considering the advocates' complaints, the Committee sent 105 letters, 16 of which were addressed to the TCR and the SS with demands to stop violating the rights of advocates, to conduct official investigations and bring the violators to disciplinary liability.

The Committee recorded **28 cases** of advocates being identified with their clients. Violations of the aforementioned guarantees of professional activity were accompanied by additional pressure on advocates in the media, procedural form, and other illegal actions.

The following facts are worth noting separately:

- On June 3, 2024, advocate K. and his assistant M. arrived at the Central District Polyclinic of the Podilsky District of Kyiv, where the military medical commission is located, in order to provide professional legal services to a client.

Members of the DFTG “SPECIAL UNIT SMERCH” prevented the advocate and his assistant from performing their professional duties, took the advocate's mobile phone, and inflicted minor bodily harm on the advocate and his assistant, identifying him with the client.



4. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN 2024

- On July 26, 2024, the website Vgolos published an article titled *“Suspect in Farion murder to be defended by advocate who represents traitors to Ukraine,”* which discusses advocate S.

The article contains the following phrases: *“The 18-year-old suspect in the murder of Iryna Farion will be defended by advocate Ihor Sulyma. He has previously defended people suspected of treason and collaboration on numerous occasions.”*

In addition, the author of the publication effectively identified the advocate with his client, extrapolating to him as a representative a negative attitude and effectively accusing him of bribery.



- On October 27, 2024, advocate K. was stopped by representatives of the patrol police, Zhytomyr TCR, and SS and taken to the premises of the O.F. Gerbachevsky Regional Clinical Hospital of the Zhytomyr Regional Council for a medical examination by the military medical commission, despite the existence of a valid conclusion of the military medical commission.

The advocate's detention was carried out as an identification of the advocate with his clients and revenge for his active public professional activity, as over the last six months he had actively covered all possible aspects of mobilization legislation in the context of citizens' right to obtain a deferral from mobilization, the right to appeal against unlawful actions and decisions of officials carrying out mobilization processes, and so on.

- On November 21, 2024, a publication appeared on the website of the 115th Separate Mechanized Brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine entitled: *“Will the case of a record bribe in the Obukhiv court be the focus of attention of the NACU, SAP, and SBI?”* In the text of the publication, the author expresses negative and untrue opinions about citizen K., whom advocate B. represents in a number of civil cases and criminal proceedings as a victim.



Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
02.02.2024	<p>Update: the draft decision has been updated - they promise to pass it without OPFL, and if there are beneficiaries of this issue, they should come to the Regulatory Commission on 5.02.24 and renew the word for OPFL:) well, come, we will ask you, why do you need it)</p> <p>Mega bustle in the Kyiv City Council - OPFL members are again given positions in commissions Some kind of parallel reality! Recently, my draft law on the prohibition of OPZZhshnykam to hold positions in commissions has just been adopted, and here we are...</p> <p>Medvedchuk's advocate, the one who tried to ban Vakhtang Kipiani's book about Vasyl Stus, is to be appointed deputy chairman of the Commission on Culture!!! My brain is boiling!</p> <p>This is the commission where the families of the victims often come, by the way. And they want to make its meetings dependent on the person whose party tried to destroy us as a state!</p> <p>This draft decision is absurd! And they are also pulling it as an urgent one - for the session on February 8, 2024!</p> <p>They also inserted our own Borys Siklitsky, who recently became a deputy and is supposed to join some commission, thinking that this way they will get EU votes.</p> <p>No, this decision will not pass! I wonder who is the ideologist of this brilliant idea?</p> <p>P.S.: I will propose to the Regulatory Commission to exclude the paragraph about Medvedchuk's advocate as it does not comply with our earlier decision.</p>	<p>Kyrylenko Ihor Ivanovych</p>	<p>Ptashnyk Viktoriia Yuriiivna</p> <p>LINK</p>

Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
02.02.2024	<p>Convict Ihor Kyrylenko, also known as Medvedchuk's advocate, may join the Kyiv City Council's Cultural Commission.</p> <p>Former member of the OPFL party (now banned) and advocate of Viktor Medvedchuk, Ihor Kyrylenko, is to be appointed deputy chairman of the Kyiv City Council's Commission on Culture.</p> <p>This was reported by city council member Viktoriia Ptashnyk on her Facebook page.</p> <p>"Mega mess in the Kyiv City Council -PZZhshchyky members are again given positions in commissions...</p> <p>Medvedchuk's advocate, the one who tried to ban Vakhtang Kipiani's book about Vasyl Stus, is to be appointed deputy head of the commission on culture!!!" Ptashnyk wrote.</p>	Kyrylenko Ihor Ivanovych	<p>ARGUMENT</p> <p>LINK</p>
02.02.2024	<p>Not enough bad news? I'll add more. The Kyiv City Council plans to give the post of deputy chairman of the Commission on Culture to a member of the OPFL, Medvedchuk's advocate Kyrylenko, who actually initiated the ban of my book 'The Case of Vasyl Stus' This Putin's shit should have been in the dustbin of history for a long time. It was he who voiced the wildest, rudest, and most anti-Ukrainian fabrications about the great poet in court. An advocate is a very important public function, but as in the case of the Medvedchuk gebist traitor, we are dealing with Russian rot here. Representatives of a banned (!) collaborative organized crime group should not be given any positions. Thank you to Viktoriia Ptashnyk for informing us.</p>	Kyrylenko Ihor Ivanovych	<p>Kipiani Vakhtang Teimurazovych</p> <p>LINK</p>

Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
02.02.2024	<p>A former member of the OPFL, who defended Medvedchuk in the case against Kipiani, is to be made head of the Kyiv City Commission on Culture.</p> <p>He was a member of the OPFL party until it was banned. This is how it is going to work.</p> <p>"Platform for Life and Peace, which became the successor to this party. On October 25, 2020, he was elected to the Kyiv City Council, where he headed the Commission on Regulatory Policy.</p> <p>Ihor Kyrylenko became better known in Ukraine during the trial of historian Vakhtang Kipiani's book 'The Case of Vasyl Stus.' Back then, the Darnytsia District Court of Kyiv banned the publication of this work with references to Viktor Medvedchuk. The court found that some phrases in the book "humiliate his honor and dignity." Kyrylenko was then acting as an advocate for the pro-Russian politician.</p> <p>Kipiani himself also reacted to the possible appointment of Medvedchuk's advocate as the head of the Cultural Commission. On his Facebook page, he wrote that it is impossible to give any positions to representatives of a banned collaborator party.</p> <p>"It was he (Kyrylenko - ed.) who voiced the wildest, rudest and most anti-Ukrainian fabrications about the great poet in court.</p> <p>An advocate is a very important public function, but just like in the case of the gebist traitor Medvedchuk, we are dealing with Russian rot here," Kipiani said.</p>	Kyrylenko Ihor Ivanovych	hromadske LINK

Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
26.07.2024	<p>Who undertook to defend the suspect in Farion's murder? The advocate's file.</p> <p>The 18-year-old suspect in the murder of Iryna Farion will be defended by advocate Ihor Sulyma. Previously, he has repeatedly defended people suspected of high treason and collaboration.</p> <p>In particular, the advocate commented on the case of his client. According to Sulyma, the detainee's guilt has not yet been proven.</p> <p>"I am defending a right, not a murder, do you understand? Everyone has the right to a defense, his guilt has not yet been proven, he is only a suspect, not even an accused. And the question is whether he is guilty or not, this will be proved by the court, but at the moment, I am defending the law. This is my job, to defend people, no matter who they are," Sulyma said.</p> <p>Previously, Sulyma defended Ruslan Kotsaba, the host of Medvedchuk's channel and a person included in the Myrotvorets base. In 2015, he was accused of treason and obstructing the activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.</p> <p>In May 2016, the Ivano-Frankivsk City Court convicted Ruslan Kotsaba, but after appealing the verdict, the Regional Court of Appeal fully acquitted him and found him not guilty.</p> <p>Sulyma also defended Svitlana Tsareva, who was accused of a crime against the foundations of Ukraine's national security and collaboration. In addition, according to journalists, the register can easily find a dozen cases in which Sulyma defended suspected collaborators.</p>	<p>Sulyma Ihor Romanovych</p>	<p>Vons Rostyslav</p> <p>Chief Commander</p> <p>LINK</p>

Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
21.08.2024	<p>And Shevchuk, who is now the speaker of the Ukrainian National Bar Association, represented the interests of the now deceased traitor, former OPFL MP Ilia Kiva. People like Kravets and Shevchuk will threaten the country's political system not only now, but also in the future.</p> <p>Shevchuk has already run for the Kyiv City Council and continues to campaign on Facebook with an eye on the Obolon district of the capital (where he did not win the election).</p> <p>...People like Kravets and Shevchuk associate themselves with such clients by their actions and communication outside the court process.</p>	<p>Shevchuk Oleksiy Anatoliyovych</p>	<p>Fedoriv Iryna</p> <p>Head of the public initiative "Golka"</p> <p>LINK</p>
21.08.2024	<p>Ihor Kyrylenko, the advocate of Viktor Medvedchuk, who is accused of treason, is still a deputy in the Kyiv City Council.</p> <p>Kyrylenko entered the council as a representative of the now banned OPFL. But the Verkhovna Rada is still unable to pass the government's bill (7476) to get rid of representatives of banned parties in local government. Pro-Russian parties were banned by the courts two years ago, and MPs from these parties still have their seats.</p> <p>With such a state policy, if we win the elections, we may once again face a real threat to our statehood - the carriers of the imperial ideology may re-enter the political system. And they are preparing for this.</p>	<p>Kyrylenko Ihor Ivanovych</p>	<p>Fedoriv Iryna</p> <p>Head of the public initiative "Golka"</p> <p>LINK</p>

Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
21.08.2024	<p>However, to understand the situation, we can focus on two odious individuals - the aforementioned Kravets and Shevchuk, who are still active in the information field.</p> <p>Rostyslav Kravets is Viacheslav Bohuslaev's advocate. The same Boguslaev who headed Motor Sich, who is accused of treason, and who asked the Presidential Office to exchange him for ours abroad. In other words, Boguslayev would gladly be in the dock in his native Russia, not in Ukraine.</p> <p>Boguslaev, who is defended by a non-Ukrainian advocate, Rostyslav Kravets, is accused not only of treason. There is another case that was heard by the anti-corruption court.</p> <p>The plaintiff in this case was the Ministry of Justice. It obtained sanctions, namely, the seizure of Boguslaev's assets: more than 30 units of real estate (residential and nonresidential premises, land plots)...</p> <p>During the hearing in this case, Kravets explained why nothing could be recovered from Boguslaev and his family. And his advocate's statement clearly reads that if there was a supply of components for Russian military and civilian aviation, this does not prove that these components were used for armed aggression against Ukraine. ...At least one of these "Maidan judges" is still represented by Rostyslav Kravets (according to the Unified State Register of Court Decisions, his other judicial clients have mostly failed in the Grand Chamber of the Supreme Court). We are talking about retired judge Oleksandr Khrimli, who sued Automaidan and lost.</p> <p>Yes, an advocate should not be associated with a client. But people like Kravets and Shevchuk associate themselves with such clients through their actions and communication outside the court process.</p>	<p>Kravets Rostyslav Yuriyovych</p>	<p>Fedoriv Iryna</p> <p>Head of the public initiative "Golka"</p> <p>LINK</p> <p>LINK</p> <p>LINK</p>

5. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2025

On July 2, 2025, the Committee [published](#) its Activity Report for the first half of 2025.

The Committee received **43 appeals** from advocates regarding violations of their rights and guarantees of practice of law. In the course of considering the complaints, the Committee sent 24 letters demanding that the violations of advocates' rights be stopped and those responsible be held accountable.

The Committee recorded **32 cases** of advocates being identified with their clients. Violations of the aforementioned guarantees of professional activity took place in the media and were accompanied by other illegal actions.

The following facts are worth noting separately:

- On January 10, 2025, an article entitled "National Security and Medvedchuk's People. Why should the Bar be reformed in 2025? 10 facts." In it, the author publicly identifies the President of the UNBA, L.P. Izovitova, with Viktor Medvedchuk, thereby creating a false impression among an unlimited number of people about the President of the highest body of Bar self-government.

In particular, the author uses the following statements: *"...The association is headed by Medvedchuk's associate Lidiya Izovitova, any criticism of the association's leadership is prohibited..."*



- On August 17, 2025, an article about advocate Sh. was published on the Internet, violating his honor, dignity, and business reputation. In particular, the article contains the following statements:

"...widely known for defending agents of the Russian occupiers, in particular, the traitorous MP Kiva, the editor of the anti-Ukrainian website "Strana.UA" Kryukova, the former owner of "Motor Sich" Boguslaev, who was exposed for collaborating with the enemy and supplying equipment to Russian aviation..."

...And now this pro-Russian top corrupt official will determine the professionalism and ethical standards of Ukrainian judges..."

Thus, **the author of the article publicly identifies the advocate with his clients and attributes to him the political views, actions, and opinions of these individuals.** Moreover, the article is illustrated with a photo with the faces of Portnov A. and Kiva I., who were killed, crossed out, and advocate Sh. marked with a red mark. Such an illustrative image carries the context of a threat that advocate Sh. may be the next murder victim.



5. FACTS OF IDENTIFICATION REVEALED IN THE FIRST HALF OF 2025

- On July 20, 2025, in the city of Cherkasy, advocate S. was stopped by a group of individuals in military uniform, including a police officer, without being presented with the proper documents and without legal grounds for detention, after which he was forcibly taken to the premises of the Cherkasy Separate interregional TCR and SS in connection with the performance of his professional duties.
- From July 20 to July 23, 2025, the advocate was held at the TCR premises, effectively restricting his freedom of movement without any procedural decisions or legal grounds. During his transfer, his mobile phone, which contained information constituting attorney client privilege, was seized without a court decision and in violation of the procedure established by Article 23 of the Law of Ukraine “On the Bar and Practice of Law.”
- On August 21, 2025, an article titled “Kravets, an advocate who is not from Ukraine, joined the expert group at the Temporary Investigation Commission, which deals with corruption in the law enforcement system and courts” was published on the Golka website.

The article violates the honor, dignity, and professional reputation of advocate K., in particular with the following phrases: *“...but why increase the percentage of cotton wool in parliament and add non-Ukrainian advocate Rostislav Kravets to the expert group? Perhaps the people's deputies are not aware of who he is, so it is worth explaining. He shapes the information field in such a way as to undermine trust in the judicial branch of government, and his Telegram channel is part of the Kremlin network along with Buzhansky's channel. What a coincidence...”*. These statements violate the guarantees of practice of law regarding the inadmissibility of identifying an advocate with his clients.

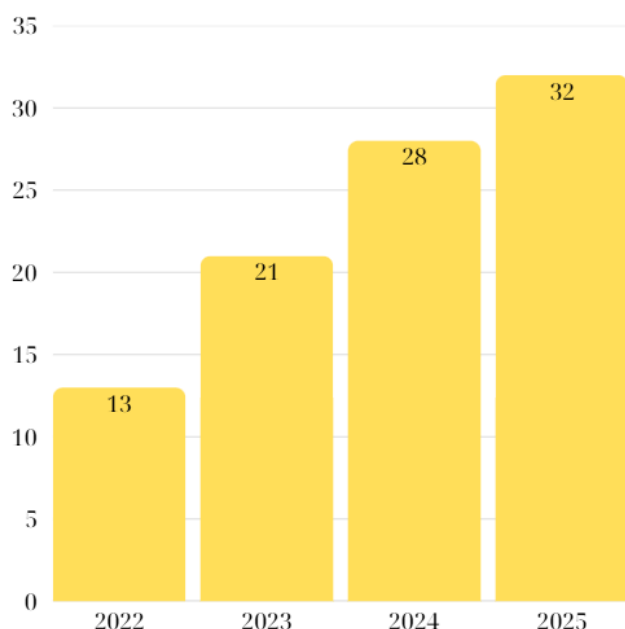


Date	Content of the article/message	Advocate identified with the client	Entity/person who committed the identification
20.01.2025	<p>Due to the unprofessional actions of SAP head Oleksandr Klymenko, the state is forced to pay €15,000 to the advocates of fugitive former MP Onyshchenko.</p> <p>Oleksandr Sergienko is the advocate of former MP Oleksandr Onyshchenko and is standing trial alongside him in a case involving gas fraud at the state-owned company Ukgazvydobuvannya.</p> <p>According to the investigation, the suspects, including Sergienko, participated in obtaining gas under a joint activity agreement, which was classified as embezzlement and document forgery.</p> <p>Onyshchenko's "gas case" is one of the largest corruption schemes in the history of Ukraine, organized by former MP Oleksandr Onyshchenko with the participation of 28 other individuals. They caused the state losses totaling nearly UAH 3 billion.</p>	<p>Sergienko Olexander Petrovych</p>	<p>Soniuk Volodymyr</p> <p>Political scientist, journalist</p> <p>LINK</p>
14.05.2025	<p>We can also add to this list Yanukovych's traitorous advocate, Vitaliy Serdyuk, who told journalists in an inter view that only Yanukovych could bring peace back to Ukraine.</p> <p>Moreover, the Aver Lex firm, represented by Serdyuk, has a section called "About Us" that includes a point called "Communications Specialists" – "strengthening client protection in the media sphere, providing the media and the public with information through the creation of news stories and the provision of comments."</p> <p>In other words, the advocates write that they will shape the information field for their clients, such as with statements like "peace will only return with Yanukovych," and journalists will not be able to write about traitor advocates because they will be afraid of legal liability?</p>	<p>Serdyuk Vitaliy Anatoliyovych</p>	<p>Fedoriv Iryna</p> <p>Head of the public initiative "Golka"</p> <p>LINK</p>

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on an analysis of recorded cases of advocates being identified with their clients in Ukraine during the period of martial law (from 2022 to the first half of 2025), the Committee for the Protection of Advocates' Rights and Guarantees of Practice of Law of the Ukrainian National Bar Association has reached the following conclusions:

1. Growing trend of violations: the number of recorded cases of identification of advocates with clients shows steady growth: 13 in 2022, 21 in 2023, 28 in 2024, and already 32 in the first half of 2025. The total number of appeals by advocates also increased from 59 in 2022 to 98 in 2023, with further fluctuations (86 in 2024 and 43 in the first half of 2025), indicating a systemic problem exacerbated by martial law conditions. This identification is often accompanied by additional pressure in the form of physical violence, media attacks, procedural abuses, and unlawful actions by law enforcement agencies, the TCR, and the SS, which undermines the independence of the legal profession.



2. Forms and perpetrators of violations: Violations take various forms, including physical exclusion from court hearings, bodily harm, unlawful summonses and detentions, criminal proceedings against advocates, media campaigns to discredit them, as well as public insults and threats. The main perpetrators of violations are law enforcement officials (prosecutors, the Security Service of Ukraine, the police), local government bodies, the TCR and the SS, as well as the media, which often extrapolate accusations against clients to advocates, identifying them as “traitors,” “evaders,” or “pro-Russian elements.”

3. Impact on the practice of law and the rule of law: such violations directly threaten the constitutional guarantees of the practice of law, in particular the principle of advocates' independence (Article 23 of the Law of Ukraine “On the Bar and Practice of Law”), the right to defense, and attorney client privilege. They create an atmosphere of intimidation that prevents advocates from effectively performing their professional duties, especially in cases related to war crimes, collaboration, or mobilization. High-profile cases, such as the murder of advocate Yuriy Grabovskiy (2016, verdict in 2022), highlight the dangers of the profession and signal systemic risks to the rule of law. In times of war, this increases the vulnerability of the legal profession, undermining trust in the judicial system and international human rights standards.

6. CONCLUSIONS

4. Recommendations and response measures: The Committee emphasizes the need to strengthen the protection of advocates through:

- Conducting independent official investigations into all recorded cases and bringing those responsible to justice (law enforcement agencies, the TCR, and the SS).
- Developing and implementing legislative changes to strengthen guarantees of the independence of the legal profession, including prohibiting media identification and responding quickly to threats.
- Cooperating with state bodies (the office of the Prosecutor General, NACB, SBI) to systematically monitor violations.
- Informing international organizations (CCBE, Council of Europe, IBA) about the situation in order to obtain support in ensuring standards of justice.
- Conducting educational campaigns for law enforcement officials and the media on the principles of legal ethics.

Thus, the adoption of the draft Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offenses, the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine to Ensure Compliance with Guarantees of Practice of Law (reg. No. [12320 of 16.12.2024](#)) is of particular importance and urgent need.



UKRAINIAN NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION



COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ADVOCATES' RIGHTS
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