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SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES OF ATO/JFO VETERANS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE PUBLIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF UKRAINE

This article presents qualitative results of a large sociological study “Involvement of veterans in the public and political life: from military victories to personal engagements” (2019). 22 in-depth interviews with ATO/JFO veterans, 20 expert interviews, and 4 focus groups in Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Chernivtsi, and Kramatorsk were analyzed to explain legal aspects of veterans’ situation, to characterize ATO/JFO veteran organizations and conceptualize motivation of veterans to engage in public and political activity. Possibilities for veterans to return to a peaceful life after the war in Donbas are defined through political, employment, education, and creative opportunities in Ukraine. Internal and external challenges of the veteran movement activities are identified.

Keywords: veterans, veteran organizations, political participation, Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO), Joint Forces Operation (JFO), war, Ukraine.

Introduction

The article is based on research conducted before Russia’s full-scale military assault on Ukraine that happened on February 24, 2022. As long as the number of veterans will increase because of the war, the results of this research will be even more important for Ukrainian society and military sociology.

According to data provided by the Ministry of Ukraine for Veteran Affairs as of July 01, 2019, in the first five years of war (2014–2019) in the East of Ukraine, there have been about 370 thousand war veterans of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)¹ or the Joint Forces Operation (JFO). Out of those combatant status holders, women account for 15,000 (4.1 %) (Martsenyuk et al., 2019, p. 42).

ATO/JFO veterans face various challenges related to the employment problems (Dariievska & Martsenyuk, 2020; Martsenyuk et al., 2019; Mramornova & Kharchenko, 2017), reintegration experience (IREX, Veteran Hub & KIIS, 2021, July 14), social inclusion (Bogush, 2018), social protection (Kotenko & Horemykina, 2018), psychological support for themselves and their families (Yablonska & Melnychuk, 2017), lack of

efficient and systemic rehabilitation (Martsenyuk et al., 2019; Sich, 2017), etc.

Some of the veterans want to be an active part of the public and political life as they were either involved in this area before the war or would like to try this new experience. People with combat experience become more public and attempt to resolve problems that the government fails to deal with. For instance, veteran Yulia Kirillova joined the project “New Leaders” in 2019 with a program for veterans’ reintegration and improvement of combatants’ adaptability into society.

During the years of ATO/JFO, around 1,000 veteran organizations have been established across Ukraine, about 50 of them being all-Ukrainian (national in scope). Some organizations terminate their operation, while other veteran initiatives – for instance, the Women Veterans Movement, Ambassadors (Veteran Diplomacy), Veterano Group, etc. – gain momentum. Veterans undergo training to start their businesses or work in the government. New initiatives appear – educational, business, political, cultural, etc., aimed to actively engage veterans in the public area. Social entrepreneurship is considered an instrument of social and economic adaptation for ATO veterans. Veterans, like other citizens in general, get involved in political life.

During our research, one of the key challenges of the veteran movement in Ukraine was the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine. This complicates the institutionalization of the veteran movement as much effort is still directed to the military sector

¹ The anti-terrorist operation in the east of Ukraine (ATO) is a complex of military and special organizational and legal measures of the Ukrainian forces aimed at countering the activities of illegal Russian and pro-Russian armed groups in the war in the east of Ukraine. On April 30, 2018, it was renamed as Joint Forces Operation (JFO).

development and not the veterans' reintegration into a peaceful life. In late 2018, the Ministry for Veteran Affairs was established, a governmental authority that gave rise to different opinions, controversial at times.

Thus, this research aims to identify the successes and challenges of the ATO/JFO veterans' engagement in the public and political life in Ukraine. Besides, it analyzes the development of the veteran movement in Ukraine, considering factors of engagement of veteran organizations in public and political life and successful cases of veterans' civic and political activity. One of the important research results is about veterans who are directly engaged in politics. They proved to be motivated to participate in political life; such veterans are responsible and results-oriented.

Data and Methodology of Research

In this article, some results of the sociological research "Involvement of veterans in the public and political life: from military victories to personal engagements" are presented. The research was conducted in 2019 by the authors with the coordination of the NGO "Studena" and with the financial support of USAID.

The empirical part of the research was conducted using qualitative methods (in-depth interviews with men and women veterans, expert interviews, and focus groups) and quantitative sociological methods (public polls). Attitudes towards veterans among the adult population of Ukraine, its support for veterans in politics, trust in veterans, and expectations from them are analyzed (Kvit & Martsenyuk, 2020). It also identifies information sources used by the population to form their opinion about veterans. Statistical data were provided by the Ministry of Ukraine for Veteran Affairs.

The field study was done in spring-summer 2019. It consisted of several stages: sample design and finding respondents, interviewing, transcribing interviews, data analysis, and report writing.

To recruit respondents, the "key informants" and "snowball" methods were used. The study included 22 in-depth interviews (among them, there were 7 females and 15 males) with veterans and those involved in civic and/or political activity, as well as 4 focus groups in 4 cities: Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Chernivtsi, and Kramatorsk. The cities for the focus group were chosen from different regions of Ukraine – Western, Central, and Eastern.

In total, the focus groups were attended by 36 men and women veterans. 20 expert interviews (10 women and 10 men) were conducted with

people who have experience working with veterans (educators, governmental officials, public activists, etc.), and with veteran movement activists who represent successful cases of veteran civic and political activity. Survey results (including quotes) are presented anonymously, without mentioning the names of respondents.

The Veteran Movement and Veteran Organizations in Ukraine

The veteran movement in the Soviet and post-Soviet societies is viewed by scholars through the prism of World War II and the war in Afghanistan (Sklokina, 2015). However, the honoring of the fallen and veterans of the ATO gradually finds its way into commemoration policies. The first Ukrainian museum dedicated to the civil heroic deeds of Dnipropetrovsk region during the ATO has recently opened in Dnipro and unites activities of a traditional institution (historical museum named after D. Yavornytskyi) and those of veterans and volunteers (Sklokina, 2018). Similar museums have been established in other cities as well. For instance, the ATO Heroes Museum and the Coordination Center of Assistance to ATO Combatants and their Family Members have been opened at the Kryvyi Rih Economic Institute. Another interesting example of a nongovernmental project is a youth hub that was set up at the premises of a former tobacco factory and named in honor of combatant of ATO, Serhii Ambros from Cherkasy (Ukrinform, 2019, February 19).

As of 2019, there were 55 all-Ukrainian civil unions of war and ATO veterans, including the All-Ukrainian Union of ATO Combatants and Volunteers Civil Association, Ukrainian Association of Disabled in the ATO (an all-Ukrainian civil organization), Union of Veterans of War against Russia, Union of Wives and Mothers of ATO Combatants, the All-Ukrainian Organization "Union of Volunteers", etc. Besides all-Ukrainian civil society organizations, like the Union of ATO Combatants of Ukraine or the Union of Wives and Mothers of ATO Combatants, there are regional centers and unions – like the Kyiv Municipal Union of ATO Veterans.

Civil society veteran organizations operate in the following areas: assistance in receipt of social benefits for ATO/JFO veterans and their families; psychological and physical rehabilitation of veterans; training for psychologists in methods of work with veterans; the national and patriotic upbringing of youth; first aid training; public order maintenance; cultural diplomacy.

The operation of many NGOs of ATO/JFO veterans is developed in cooperation with the state. One of the reasons behind this is that their activities are mostly funded by national or local budgets. The organizations of ATO/JFO veterans interviewed for this study received funding from the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Social Policy to implement various projects within their programs – for instance, children’s camps and events dedicated to national and patriotic upbringing. The government also funds events held in memory of fallen combatants.

The geographical apportionment of veteran organizations also depends on the level of militarization of a certain region. One of the experts commented on this:

“If we consider Zhytomyr Oblast, it is the most concentrated military region because there are three large brigades and the air assault command. Then we should note Mykolaiv Oblast that also has three large brigades – the 79th independent brigade, the command of the naval forces, etc., so civil and veteran organizations react on demand, respectively.”

Lesia Vasylenko mentioned 1,200 veteran organizations in her speech at Veteran Hub (Kyiv) on May 31, 2019. However, the efficiency of operation of many of them remains an open question.

Legal Aspects of Veterans’ Situation

The legal frameworks to regulate the status of veterans in Ukraine have been in effect since the early 1990s, resulting from the Afghan veteran movement. In particular, the Law of Ukraine “On the Status of War Veterans and Their Social Security” was enacted back in 1993 (Law of Ukraine No. 3551-XII, 1993, October 22). As prescribed in Article 4 thereof, war veterans include combatants, persons with disabilities caused by war, and war participants. War veterans are persons who took part in the defense of their Motherland or any military activities in the territories of other countries. This law stipulates several social guarantees and benefits for veterans, specifically social security and labor guarantees, traveling benefits, medical services, utilities and housing (land) provision, education, tax benefits, etc.

On December 5, 2018, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the State Target Program of physical, medical, and psychological rehabilitation, social and professional re-adaptation of ATO combatants and persons who participated in the events ensuring national security and defense,

driving back and containment of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, provision of their implementation, for the period up to 2022 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2018, December 5).

Human rights activists define the following issues related to working with ATO veterans (Sich, 2017, p. 6): lack of coordination between legislative and sub-legislative regulation levels (this deficiency restricts the functional capacities of the government, whose individual elements start conflicting with each other in the distribution of authorities and competencies); indifference towards life and fortune of others (this aspect is subjective and depends on the level of concern of a particular person in resolving his or her own social, psychological, material and other problems); legal ignorance (quite often, due to not wanting to change the situation in any way, the person does not even show any interest in those rights and freedoms provided to him/her by the state); psychological trauma (causes psychological apathy and loss of any motivation).

Ministry for Veteran Affairs: Cooperation and Attitude

The Ministry for Veteran Affairs of Ukraine was established in late 2018. It is the “main body in the system of central executive authorities that ensures formation and implementation of governmental policy in the area of social protection of war veterans, persons with special merits to their Motherland, affected participants of the Revolution of Dignity (hereinafter referred to as veterans), family members of veterans and persons covered by this authority” (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2018, December 27).

The Veteran Council was founded as an advisory agency at the Ministry of Veterans of Ukraine, consisting of representatives of each oblast. This agency is established to address all problematic issues “from the bottom up”; i.e., this Council is divided into working groups by different areas of competence. Viktoriia Shynkarenko from Rivne was the only woman representative from the Veteran Council. Deputy Minister for Veteran Affairs Oksana Havryliuk points out the prominent level of motivation and self-organization of the Council members:

“...these are representatives of organizations working with families of the fallen, as well as veteran and civic society organizations. There are many of them, and they have worked for a long time now, each in their individual area of competence. Again, they have self-organized

quite fast, formed working groups, and started working in the areas covered by the Provision on the Ministry for Veteran Affairs.”

There was no consistent cooperation with the Ministry for Veteran Affairs as the ministry has been established only recently and was limited in resources. However, veteran organizations are represented in the ministry's public council and actively contribute to the formation of its operation. The veterans interviewed for the research mostly demonstrated a loyal attitude toward the Ministry for Veteran Affairs.

Their attitude is based on three aspects: (1) lack of experience of cooperation with the ministry (thus, lack of negative experience); (2) mostly favorable attitude towards the Minister for Veteran Affairs Iryna Friz, her publicity, collection of information on the needs of veterans from veterans themselves, and reporting on the work results; (3) a positive attitude towards the stated objectives and tasks of the ministry. Still, many of them point out the lack of any achievements in the Ministry's operation, naming this as the reason for the absence of a clear attitude. Respondents had no distinct attitude towards the Ministry. Due to the prospect of a change in the government, and the Minister for Veteran Affairs, in particular, veterans have been careful about their views and opinions.

The Ministry for Veteran Affairs was expected to set up a system to provide services of rehabilitation and reintegration to veterans and improve the availability and quality of such services, as well as to create a positive veteran image. Namely, the main expectations voiced by veterans include the following: employment, socialization, psychological and physical rehabilitation, benefits, legislative changes, coordination of all-Ukrainian veteran events, cooperation with veteran unions and NGOs, regional representative offices, electronic register of veterans, veteran projects funding, assistance in combatant status provision to those having difficulty obtaining it, formation of media images of a veteran, cultural projects, etc. Veterans were not satisfied with the quality of services provided to them by the Ministry of Social Policy and other core ministries, which resulted in higher and more definite expectations concerning the new ministry, considering the previously negative experience.

Veteran Projects and Support of Veterans

The Deputy Minister for Veteran Affairs Oksana Havryliuk commented on the US experience in implementing peer-to-peer projects:

“In the US, when veterans returned after the war in Vietnam, they completely distrusted the governmental institutions; veterans did not want to go to governmental veteran hospitals, did not trust the authorities even in that. So Americans started establishing such veteran support centers where veterans worked with veterans... Our task is to engage the veteran community in the work within such veteran space and train others, because a veteran who meets others wishing to come to the veteran space has to be some kind of a psychologist. Believe me, it is very hard to do. It is difficult to find among veterans those people who have enough motivation for day-to-day work with their sworn brothers who had no motivation whatsoever.”

Such projects also exist in Ukraine, for instance, Pobratymy (Sworn Brothers) – the social adaptation of veterans based on the peer-to-peer principle.

The Legal Hundred NGO website contains instructions with information on social services for veterans. Legal Hundred NGO hosts training to help veterans establish and fulfill activities of veteran NGOs. Lawyers and advocates provided immense support for the projects (approx. 350 volunteers). But the longer the armed conflict is, the smaller the volunteering resource. Volunteer lawyers were getting scarce, and those who would like to take up long-term cases became harder to find. In 2019, a hotline for consultation was established. In 2016, Legal Hundred NGO launched an analytical and legal center to work on the registration and promotion of legislative acts. They also set up the Legal Hundred School to help people gain knowledge in the legal sphere. In summer 2019, the school provided training for those who wanted to work in the local self-government.

There are also quite many initiatives to support men and women veterans of the ATO: “Zavdiaky Tobі” (Thanks to You) national campaign of gratitude to servicemen and veterans, Poruch (Abreast) Center of Social Adaptation of ATO Veterans and Their Families (Studena NGO, Kramatorsk), Free Shop of clothes for families of the fallen and wounded ATO combatants (Dnipro), engagement of veterans in public service (provision of support for training in the Master's Degree program of public governance at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) and many others. The project “Za Veteraniv do Vlady!” (For Veterans to Government) was designed to train veterans to work in public office positions and integrate them into the executive bodies. For this purpose, special training centers were launched in Kyiv and Kramatorsk, also acting as recruiting agencies. After

enrollment, a career guidance specialist starts working with each veteran, providing an analytical reference on such veteran's optimal specialization after studying the experience and interests of the veteran. As Oksana Havryliuk pointed out about a similar project in the USA, *"They say they have around 30 percent or more of veterans who go into public service after their discharge from the army."*

"Bez Broni" (No Armor) is a uniform database of reviewed and inspected centers that provide assistance to ATO veterans, and also an all-Ukrainian project aimed at provision of psychosocial aid, including qualified legal consulting, to servicemen after the ATO.

The challenge of finding veterans to engage them in various projects involves a specific problem of finding veterans in regions (it is much simpler in Kyiv); a lack of motivation: not all of them complete their training (they are not ready to find the time for training); and not all veterans attend free events (they register, but fail to show up).

Return of Veterans to Peaceful Life: Employment, Education, Creativity

The veteran business coordination service provides a lot of examples of how well veterans do in business. Veterans Coffee, Veteranprom, cooperative building societies, and construction businesses are just a few among various startups and employment options for veterans, which are also social businesses.

Employment Center for Free People is an organization created in 2014, working with vulnerable groups of people. One of their focus areas, "Dignified Work for a Warrior," was established in 2015. Their main area of operation is working with veterans and their families (professional consulting, career guidance, training, and personal growth programs, re-training, business development, business incubator, mentorship, and psychologist consultations). Successful cases include: "Cup of Coffee with a Psychologist for a Veteran" – informal conversations with a psychologist on further personal fulfillment, Dmytro Krykun's "Cyborg Massage", mentor support from successful veterans of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, Veteran Networking, work with employers (setting up ties with sympathetic and veteran-friendly employers), All-Ukrainian Informational Campaign "Delighted by Life. Success Stories of ATO Veterans."

There are cases of usage of a military profession in civil life. For instance, this includes a driver of a remote-piloted vehicle working in the agricultural sphere and using his skills obtained in the military.

The business activity program for ATO/JFO veterans provided by the Kyiv School of Economics is designed as a 2.5-month-long intensive training in the basics of planning, marketing, finance, personnel management, and sales. Besides, the International Organization for Migration issues grants to fund professional training of veterans, and re-training courses are held for ATO combatants. The international fund of social adaptation announces the enrollment of servicemembers and their family members for the training course "Tourist and Hotel/Restaurant Manager."

Another important aspect of engagement is training veterans in social and entrepreneurial activities. Some examples of such training include the program of the Ukrainian Social Academy designed to help ATO veterans start their business and take a step toward new possibilities, training in civil professions under the Ukraine-NATO program in Pokrova, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, and Veteran Academy.

However, before engaging in any business or public and political activity, many veterans need psychological assistance. There are several initiatives operating in this sphere, for instance, the Center of Psychosocial Rehabilitation at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Psychological Crisis Service NGO, and CETA Program – a psychological support program for people affected by the military conflict in Ukraine and undergoing severe stress. Timely and professional psychological assistance is important for successful employment: *"Judging from our experience, people who received psychological aid and then got a job resolved all the issues they had spoken about, and when they had any social problems, these problems were dealt with much easier after getting professional and qualified psychological aid"* (Education sector representative who works with veterans).

In Lviv Oblast, the municipal budget of Lviv provides funds for the rehabilitation of veterans, in particular, to cover treatment for substance abuse, as well as rehabilitation with horses (horse therapy).

Art therapy, Tvorcha Kryivka (Creative Bunker), and Veteran Tent at the Book Arsenal in Kyiv are other examples of veterans engaging in art. Some veterans take up various forms of art after returning from war – first, this involves writing new books. About 20 military writers have delivered lectures and speeches at the military writers' forum in Lviv.

Political Activity of Veterans

Veteran engagement in political activity has several forms: veteran engagement in elective governmental authorities or direct participation in

political activity; veteran engagement in work at political headquarters of other candidates; veteran engagement in election campaigns of other candidates, which does not facilitate the participation of veterans in decision-making and political activity after the elections; as well as work in the executive bodies. Among mechanisms of engagement, experts we interviewed pointed out social ties between veterans (sworn brotherhood), virtual communities of veterans (groups by interests), as well as training under respective specialized programs and courses for veterans (the most trending activity for veterans working in the executive bodies).

The results of interviews held in conjunction with this survey show that veterans who directly engaged in politics are sufficiently motivated, ready to hold responsibility, and are oriented toward results and not the process. Rather than a profession or lifestyle, they view political activity more as an instrument to achieve the goal of change in Ukrainian society. The main tasks they set before them are the effective activity of institutions (following the declared objectives and tasks), high-quality provision of services (to veterans, but not exclusively), improvement of living standards, reformation of the armed forces, preservation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and settling the war in Eastern Ukraine.

“There are people whose values have somewhat changed, it’s practically impossible to bribe or scare them. If you almost died every day under shelling, your attitude towards money becomes different. So if anyone wants you dead, or wants to beat you up or kill you, you just laugh, ‘Oh come on guys, stop pulling my leg’” (Respondent 6).

There were 10 ATO veterans at the Verkhovna Rada of the 8th convocation, six of them being members of the security and defense committee. As of July 2019, 6 ATO veterans were deputies at the Verkhovna Rada. Interviewed veterans think the influence of veterans in politics is still minor. Not all veterans feel inclined to go into national-level politics. Some of the interviewed veterans believe there is more sense for veterans to go into local self-government bodies rather than the Verkhovna Rada, as there are more chances and opportunities to make actual changes at the local level and within shorter terms. Some expressed an opinion that veterans lack professional knowledge and skills to go into national-level politics. Such politics are often viewed as dirtier and more complicated. This is a constraining factor, but not for everyone.

“It’s not even a psychological or ideological thing, you see. Don’t go to the Verkhovna Rada to just sit there and try to fight those political sharks who know all the schemes, all the structures, and stuff. These things have to be dealt with at the local self-government level, here at home. Just think about it, if you come home, you put things in order, you make your bed, and so on. Until we learn to make an order at home, there won’t be much sense in trying to make it anywhere else, and that’s the first thing we need to do” (Respondent 20).

Another institutional way of influencing the implementation of governmental policies for veterans is public service. Veterans start working in the ministries, and regional and city administrations. Public service for them is a way to influence the implementation of policies and their quality. This is also a way to work towards a certain result – for the good of the state, and to see this result. The veterans who work as governmental officials said that, although changes require time, they can already see positive results from their work. For example, the implementation of educational projects in cooperation with NGOs, new developments in health care, etc. The survey results also show that the presence of veterans in the executive bodies facilitates cooperation between the government and NGOs as veterans are more open to working with them.

Public service, like political activity, requires specific training. The survey shows demand for training in public administration, law, and political science that would facilitate professional training of veterans for further political activities. Currently, there is a scholarship program running for ATO/JFO veterans in the master’s degree Public Administration Program at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. Training programs “For Veterans to Government” were held across various regions of Ukraine by Studena NGO, etc. Yet, current opportunities have limited capacity, training programs can only accept a limited number of students; also, the training schedule and city are important – training courses are usually held in large cities or during working hours, which is not always convenient or available for veterans. Besides training, there is a demand for training programs and internships at the governmental bodies where future public officials will work. Veterans say that, from their experience, it is an effective way to get the skills and knowledge necessary for work in public service and politics.

The Motivation of Veterans to Engage in Public and Political Activity

The reasons for men and women veterans' involvement in public and political activity may be divided into personal and social. Personal reasons include (1) desire to be around "your people" – like-minded people with similar experience, which is normally the first reason to join a veteran union or organization, but not the main motivation to uptake public activism; (2) desire to fulfill oneself in social or political activities; and (3) a feeling of duty. Social reasons include (1) desire to help veterans receive services and benefits guaranteed to them by the state, as well as other services needed by veterans in terms of reintegration into peaceful life; and (2) a desire to change society and the country for the better.

Going into politics, veterans are mostly motivated by the desire to make changes in the country and initiate and implement them:

"...the motivation is that we have fought for a better country. And after you have fought on the front line, you come back, you don't see any changes and think, 'What's wrong with this place? Have I lost my sworn brothers and sisters in the war for nothing? I've seen a lot of things I did not need to see just so that nothing changes here?' And then you roll up your sleeves and start working and changing things" (Respondent 4).

Some believe that the veterans' public or political activism is just an extension of their fight taken from the actual battlefield to public offices. The veterans interviewed for this study who are successful public activists and members of working NGOs, or those who started a political career, have been active citizens, and many of them engaged in public activism before the war. The experience they received at war only makes their motivation to be activists stronger, fueling their desire to make a change in society, and providing new knowledge and skills. However, it is hardly the main reason.

The veteran survey also showed that low-quality services designed for veterans were not the only driving force behind the veteran movement and the establishment of veteran organizations. The fight against the low quality of services (or total lack of them) is the focus of many (if not all) organizations, but it is not the main objective for everyone. Many of the veterans interviewed for the study view their public and political activity as having a more global sense. It includes complete integration of veterans

into the society, financial and personal fulfillment, success, and more extensive goals: increase of safety level in the society, improvement of the economic situation and education level in the country, cultivation of certain moral values, and efficient work of governmental institutions, i.e., intensive development of the society and the state in general.

Also, the survey respondents distinguished between the organizations that work to improve veterans' access to social and medical services, and organizations that declare such goals but are only temporary formal structures aimed at someone's personal enrichment. They misappropriate government funds to finance NGOs or receive material benefits, such as land plots and housing. The survey respondents believe such NGOs affect the reputation of the veteran movement and cannot be representative in terms of veteran NGOs. Such NGOs and unions whose aim is material enrichment of their individual members usually do not exist for long. They also influence the statistics of veteran NGOs by slightly overestimating the real indices of active veteran NGOs.

Virtually, unsatisfactory work of the government at the national and local levels, and the desire to set up such work properly, are the main driving force for the veterans wishing to participate in public and political movements. NGOs of ATO veterans cooperate with the state and sometimes even replace services provided by the state, for instance, veteran employment, rehabilitation, reintegration, etc., thus compensating for inadequate quality or an insufficient amount of services provided to veterans.

Challenges of the Veteran Movement Activities

The development of the veteran movement in Ukraine faces numerous challenges rooted in the veteran community itself and the external circumstances. The **internal challenges** include the solidarity of the veteran movement, its advance, and professionalism. The veteran movement is not solid. First, there are many organizations of various orientations that sometimes do not even share the same values. The veterans themselves say the most significant difference between various veteran organizations is the aim for profits and social development. The interviewed veterans condemn the actions of temporary civil society veteran organizations aimed at material enrichment. There are also differences between the political views of veterans and veteran organizations; their readiness for intense public activity may vary as well.

Public and political activity requires clear skills and knowledge, as well as readiness to work in

conditions of turbulence and uncertainty when there are no certain terms set for the achievement of expected results. The interviewed veterans stated the need for such skills as the ability to write project proposals, project reports, knowledge of legislation, procedures, and decision-making processes of local and national authorities.

In terms of psychological aspects, a stable psychological condition and realizing what exactly public and/or political activity is especially important. Excessive bureaucracy processes that are too lengthy, prejudiced attitude and failure of government officials to help resolve issues, restricted and unstable financing, and fluid social and political situation in the country are some of the widespread problems faced by veterans in public activity, the problems that affect their sympathy towards the public sector and politics, and their readiness to work in this area. The ability to negotiate and control one's emotional condition could also be considered a skill that would facilitate the public and political activity of veterans.

Among the **external challenges**, one should note the lack of financing, instability of the political, social, and economic situation in the society, and the media image of an ATO/JFO veteran.

Lack of financing is one of the main problems. Veteran organizations are short of funds for their institutional development. The respondents noted that, based on their experience, neither the State nor international organizations assign funds to support or help develop organizational capacity (office rent, purchase of equipment, formation of strategy, plan, the system of monitoring and assessment of the organization's activity, salary, etc.) of young veteran NGOs.

The respondents note that budget funds assigned for veteran NGOs before 2018 were meant to cover statutory activity and were more accessible to veteran NGOs of an older generation rather than ATO/JFO veteran NGOs. However, some of the interviewed veterans say that the transition from financing statutory activity of veteran NGOs to financing specific project activities is more favorable for the public activity of ATO/JFO veterans. Based on the experience of interviewed veterans, funding from international organizations is the least accessible to veteran organizations. Other types of financing, crowdfunding or voluntary aid, in particular, were mentioned by the respondents. However, they are barely relevant for NGOs, as they cannot provide stability and the necessary amount of financing.

The ambiguity of the (geo)political and social and economic situation in the country is the factor that boosts motivation to go into public and political

activity and prevents it at the same time. Unsatisfactory living standards, lack of educational opportunities, lack of employment options, the war in the Donbas, and uncertainty are some of the few aspects requiring regulation and being the focus of the public and political activities of some veterans and veteran NGOs. On the other hand, these are the factors that affect veterans personally: their financial independence, and their ability to be fulfilled on professional and personal terms. The respondents say that lack of funds for public activity, inability to achieve desired results of public and political activities in the scheduled period, disappointment, probability of call to military service, or going into voluntary service in case of escalation of the situation at war are some of the motivation-sapping factors that have a negative effect upon the participation of veterans in public and political activity.

Still, despite the obstacles, veterans have enormous potential both in public and political activity. This opinion has been shared by the experts and veterans interviewed in this research. The respondents are not prone to defining certain activity areas as more prospective for veterans, but they stress that everyone must do what he/she can do best and wants to do. Public activity requires organization, skills, and determination. Not everyone can engage in this kind of activity, and the same goes for politics. The respondents say that supporting veteran initiatives does make sense, but there is no sense in encouraging veterans to go into a public activity and force it upon them. This has to be their initiative.

Conclusions

Men and women veterans participate in the social and political life of Ukraine. This activity is motivated by the desire to achieve social changes in the country, locally, or in specific sectors, for instance, all types of support for veterans and the desire for self-fulfillment. However, there are also temporary veteran NGOs that pursue purely financial goals and whose activities are condemned by the veteran community. The influence of veterans in the political sector is limited. Veterans see more prospects for themselves in the local level political activity rather than at the national level, due to the relative speed and simplicity of local decision-making processes. To be efficient in political and social activity, veterans need specialized knowledge in legislation, state governance, etc. The veterans' achievements in public activism and business are considered more significant. Veteran NGOs mostly work to provide support to veterans and their families, and organize educational events, in particular in the area of patriotic upbringing, public order maintenance, and the like. Veteran business

bears signs of social business in Ukraine. There are examples of companies engaged in charity and employment of veterans, thus providing support to other veterans and families of the fallen. There are initiatives and organizations that unite and support veteran businesses in Ukraine.

The development of the veterans' movement and the veterans' influence in politics would benefit from better financing of veteran NGOs, education programs for veterans, efficient psychological rehabilitation and employment programs, and other aspects of reintegration of veterans into civilian life.

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УСПІХИ ТА ВИКЛИКИ УЧАСТІ ВЕТЕРАНІВ АТО/ООС У ГРОМАДСЬКОМУ І ПОЛІТИЧНОМУ ЖИТТІ УКРАЇНИ

У статті наведено якісніські результати великого соціологічного дослідження «Залучення ветеранів до суспільно-політичного життя: шлях від військових перемог до особистого» (2019). Проаналізовано 22 глибинні інтерв'ю з ветеранами АТО/ООС, 20 експертних інтерв'ю та 4 фокус-групи в Києві, Житомирі, Чернівцях та Краматорську для пояснення правових аспектів становища ветеранів, виявлення характеристики ветеранських громадських організацій (ГО), концептуалізації мотивації ветеранів займатися громадсько-політичною діяльністю тощо. Повернення ветеранів до мирного життя після війни на Донбасі визначається через політичні, економічні, освітні та креативні можливості. Виявлено внутрішні та зовнішні виклики діяльності ветеранського руху.

Згідно зі статистичними даними Міністерства у справах ветеранів України, станом на 1 липня 2019 року нараховувалося майже 370 000 осіб, які отримали статус учасника бойових дій (УБД) із числа осіб, які захищали незалежність, суверенітет та територіальну цілісність України і брали участь в АТО, забезпеченні її проведення. Жінки серед них становили 15 000 осіб (4,1 %). Ветерани та ветеранки беруть участь у громадському і політичному житті України. Ця діяльність умотивована бажанням досягти суспільних змін у країні на місцях або в конкретних секторах (наприклад, забезпечення ветеранів), а також бажанням самореалізації. Проте існують і тимчасові ветеранські ГО, які мають суто фінансову мету, їхню діяльність засуджують у ветеранській спільноті.

Вплив ветеранів у політичному секторі обмежений. Ветерани бачать для себе більше перспектив у політичній діяльності місцевого рівня, а не національного, через відносну швидкість і простоту процесу ухвалення рішень на місцях. Успішними й перспективними є також приклади залучення ветеранів до виконавчих органів влади.

Розвитку ветеранського руху та впливу ветеранів у політиці значною мірою сприяло б краще фінансування ветеранських ГО, освітні програми для ветеранів і ветеранок, ефективні програми психологічної реабілітації та працевлаштування та інші аспекти реінтеграції ветеранів і ветеранок у цивільне життя.

Ключові слова: ветерани, ветеранські організації, політична участь, Антитерористична операція (АТО), Операція Об'єднаних сил (ООС), війна, Україна.

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