

UKRAINE: a Chronicle of Heroes

tvbizz

MIPTV 2022

Слава Україні!
Героям слава!

This is a tribute to the great people of Ukraine.
The proud nation which stood up for the right to be.
To be free. To be independent. To have a state.
To have a home. To have a language. To have culture. To have a future.

The unbreakable Ukrainian spirit has inspired the whole world.
We bow before the Heroes.

Glory to Ukraine!





The President Speaks

President Volodymyr Zelensky is the symbol of Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion both to Ukrainians and the rest of the world. His speeches have inspired million at home and abroad – the former to fight for their country and the latter – to protest and push their political leaders to decisive actions to help Ukraine.

Zelensky made his first remarkable speech during the 58th Munich Security Conference just a few days before Putin gave the order to attack. He said: "Ukraine wants peace. Europe wants peace. The world says it doesn't want to fight, and Russia says it doesn't want to attack. Someone is lying." We all know now who the liar is.

Ukrainians, ordinary citizens and politicians and high-ranking leaders from all over the world have been moved by the speeches of the President who said: "I need ammunition, not a ride". Below is a selection of some of his most powerful lines which will surely go down in history.



To Ukrainians

(Feb. 24) What do we hear today? It's not just rocket explosions, battles, the roar of aircraft. It is the sound of a new Iron Curtain lowering and closing Russia away from the civilized world. Our national task is to make this curtain pass not through our Ukrainian territory, but at the home of Russians.

No one will be able to convince or force us, Ukrainians, to give up our freedom, our independence, our sovereignty. But it seems that the Russian leadership is trying to do this by destroying the potential of their country.

(Feb. 25) Take care of your family and loved ones, but do not forget about

the people around you. Those who are single, those who are older. Help them with food. Help find shelter when there is an air alarm. Help with access to verified official information. Stop the enemy wherever you see it. The fate of Ukraine depends only on Ukrainians. No one but ourselves will control our lives. We are on our land, the truth is on our side. It will not be possible to destroy our character.

Yesterday, unfortunately, we lost our "Mriya" (Dream). But the old "Mriya". And we are building a new one now.

Good morning, Ukrainian heroes!

The fifth day of Russia's full-scale war against the people of Ukraine. We stand firm. During this time, we have experienced as much as other nations may not have in decades. We have been told for a long time that there is something wrong with Ukrainians in this or that issue. That Ukrainians have to do so-called "homework" for decades. Because of this, we often did not notice what we are really capable of. And now we have shown ourselves to the fullest. And it's inspiring. For everyone. In every conversation with our partners, I hear sincere respect. Ukrainians have shown the world who we are.

I thank the ordinary people of Ukraine, who stop tanks with their bare hands, expel the invaders from administrative buildings by force of spirit and make their stay in Ukraine shameful. To prove that they are all strangers here. This is what the people's war is. This is what the people of Ukraine is.

Good health to you, united country! I did not accidentally say "united". The seventh day of this terrible war began. A war we feel the same way. During this time we have had more unity than for over thirty years before. At first we were equally scared, then we felt equally painful. And now we do not care. Except for

victory. Except for the truth. Except for peace. Except for the tranquility we want to achieve. Except for the lives of our people, for whom we are worried. Except for Ukraine. During this time, we have truly become one. We forgave each other a lot. We started loving each other. We help each other. We are worried for each other.

Today you, Ukrainians, are a symbol of invincibility. A symbol that people in any country can become the best people on earth at any moment.

They wanted to wipe us off the face of the earth. They failed. They back-

stabbed us. And we are on our feet. They wanted us to be silent. But the whole world heard us. We've been through so much! And if someone thinks that, having overcome all this, Ukrainians - all of us - are scared, broken or will surrender, he knows nothing about Ukraine. And he has nothing to do in Ukraine. Go home.

We responded to the invasion as we can in times of greatest danger. Responded with heroism. Solidarity. Mutual assistance. We responded in Ukrainian. So that the history of Europe will remember it forever. It will tell children about it. Show it to grandchildren.

But even if you deprive us of oxygen, we will breathe deeply, to say: get out of our land! Even in complete darkness we see the truth. And we will fight until it darkens in our eyes. Because we are the warriors of light. And today no one on Earth will be able to say that this line is pathos.

Our people, our Ukrainians do not retreat. Do not give up. Do not stop the resistance. They shout to the occupiers - go home. Like a Russian ship!

We are fighting for where the border will be. Between life and slavery. And this is not only our choice.

Everything is in our hands! We withstood and inspired the whole world with our determination. There is no such place on earth where they are not aware of the heroism with which the Ukrainian people defend our beautiful land.

These slaves sent by Russia have never seen so many free people in the squares and streets. They have never seen thousands of people who are not afraid of them, of slaves with weapons in their hands. Slaves perceive freedom as savagery, as danger. They are scared. The fear that propagandists know how to turn into hatred. And then - shots at peaceful free people.

The 30th day. It's been a month! If Russia had known it would face that, I'm sure they would have definitely been afraid to come here.



To the World

We believe that NATO countries themselves have created a narrative that the closure of the sky over Ukraine would provoke Russia's direct aggression against NATO.

This is self-hypnosis. Of those who are weak, underconfident. Internally. Although they may have weapons many times more powerful than ours.

How many more deaths and losses are needed to secure the sky over Ukraine? How do civilians in Kharkiv or Mykolaiv differ from Hamburg or Vienna?

(To the British Parliament) Ukraine that saves people despite the terror of the invaders. Defends freedom despite the blows of one of the world's largest armies. Defends despite the open sky. Still open to Russian missiles, aircraft, helicopters. "To be or not to be?" - You know this Shakespearean question well. 13 days ago, this question could still be raised about Ukraine. But not now. Obviously, to be. Obviously, to be free.

Today, when I see the support of the people of each country in the squares of European capitals, I know that the Ukrainian people are already in the Euro-

pean Union. And politicians... I'm sure they will adjust to that. Preferably faster.

The European Union must do more. It must do more for us, for Ukraine. And for itself. We are waiting for that. All European nations are waiting.

(To the Polish Sejm) Just in one day, on the first day of the war, it became clear to me and to all Ukrainians, and, I am sure, to all Poles that there are no more borders between us, between our nations. No physical ones. No historical ones. No personal ones.

Today, I cannot be sure of all the leaders of all European nations, but I am sure that we will definitely be with you in defending freedom. As much as needed. (To Italians and all Europeans) I am constantly asked in interviews: how can Europe help Ukraine? I formulate the question differently, namely: how can Europe help itself? Because this is a war not only against our people, not only against Ukrainians. This is a war against the values that unite us.

(To the US Congress) Today it is not enough to be the leader of the nation. Today it takes to be the Leader of the world. Being the Leader of the world means to be the Leader of Peace. Peace in your country does not depend anymore only on you and your people. It depends on those next to you, on those who are strong. Strong does not mean big. Strong is brave and ready to fight for the life of his citizens and citizens of the world. For human rights, for freedom, for the right to live decently and to die when your time comes, not when it is wanted by someone else, by your neighbor.

Now I am almost 45 years old. Today my age stopped when the hearts of more than 100 children stopped beating. I see no sense in life if it cannot stop death. And this is my main mission as the Leader of my people - great Ukrainians. And as the Leader of my nation I am addressing President Biden. You are the Leader of the nation, of your great nation. I wish you to be the Leader of the world. Being the Leader of the world means to be the Leader of Peace.

(To the Bundestag) You are like behind the wall again. Not the Berlin Wall. But in the middle of Europe. Between freedom and slavery. And this wall grows stronger with each bomb that falls on our land, on Ukraine. With every decision that is not made for the sake of peace. Not approved by you, although it may help.

And you don't see what's behind this wall, and it's between us, between people in Europe. And because of this, not everyone is fully aware of what we are going through today. Freedom and equality. Opportunity to live freely, not to submit to another state, which considers a foreign land its "living space". Why are they defending all this without your leadership? Without your strength? Why are overseas states closer to us than you are? Because this is the Wall. The wall that someone doesn't notice and that we are hammering on while fighting to save our people.

Former actor, President of the United States Ronald Reagan once said in Berlin: Tear down this wall! And I want to tell you now. Chancellor Scholz! Tear down this wall. Give Germany the leadership you deserve. And what your descendants will be proud of. Support us. Support peace. Support every Ukrainian. Stop the war. Help us stop it.

(To the Knesset) We ask you for help... Even for basic visas... What is it? Indifference? Premeditation? Or mediation without choosing a party? I will leave you a choice of answer to this question. And I will note only one thing - indifference kills. Premeditation is often erroneous. And mediation can be between states, not between good and evil. Ukrainians have made their choice. 80 years ago. They rescued Jews. That is why the Righteous Among the Nations are among us. People of Israel, now you have such a choice.

(To the Italian Senate) From the first day of this war, you have shared our pain and are helping sincerely - from the heart. Ukrainians will always remember this. Your warmth, your care and your

strength that must stop one person. Just one person for millions to survive.

(To the Japanese Parliament) We have similar values with you despite the huge distance between our countries. A distance that doesn't really exist. Because we have equally warm hearts.

(To the French Parliament) Ukrainians see that France values freedom as much as it has always been. And you protect it. You remember what it is. Freedom, equality, brotherhood. Each of these words is full of power for you! I feel it. Ukrainians feel it. So that people live their life. Full life. And so that we say goodbye to people not under bombs, not in war, but when the time comes. Only in peace. Only in dignity. Because you have to live so that you are respected. So that you are remembered.

(To the World) This is only the beginning for Russia on the Ukrainian land. Russia is trying to defeat the freedom of all people in Europe. Of all the people in the world. It tries to show that only crude and cruel force matters. It tries to show that people do not matter, as well as everything else that makes us people. That's the reason we all must stop Russia. The world must stop the war. Show your standing! Come from your offices, your homes, your schools and universities. Come in the name of peace. Come with Ukrainian symbols to support Ukraine, to support freedom, to support life. Come to your squares, your streets. Make yourselves visible and heard. Say that people matter. Freedom matters. Peace matters. Ukraine matters.

(To NATO) You have at least 20,000 tanks! Ukraine asked for a percent, one percent of all your tanks to be given or sold to us! But we do not have a clear answer yet... The worst thing during the war is not having clear answers to requests for help. Ukraine never wanted this war. And does not want to fight for years. We just want to save our people. We want to survive! Just survive! Like any nation, we have the right to it. The right to life. The right to this one percent.

(To the Swedish Riksdag) Now the blue

and yellow flag in the world is probably the most popular. These colors are associated with freedom. This is true for different people on different continents. And of course in Europe. The blue and yellow colors of the national flag are not just about Ukraine. This is about you as well, about Sweden. And obviously this is not a coincidence. This is fate. Because we are equally for freedom. We are equally for a peaceful life. We are equally for respect for everyone. We are equally for justice and equally for caring for the natural world in which we live.

(To the European Council) And what about the European Union? I want to thank you - you are united, united around us. But I want to say that it was done in one way or another. But once again, the main thing is that you have united. And we really appreciate that. You have applied sanctions. We are grateful. These are powerful steps. But it was a little late. Because if it had been preventive, Russia would not have gone to war. At least no one knows for sure. There was a chance.

(After Biden's trip to Poland) At risk only because they left only one percent of all NATO aircraft and one percent of all NATO tanks somewhere in their hangars. One percent! We did not ask for more. And we do not ask for more. And we have already been waiting for 31 days! So who runs the Euro-Atlantic community? Is it still Moscow because of intimidation? Partners need to step up assistance to Ukraine. These are the words: partners need!

And it is impossible to unblock Mariupol without a sufficient number of tanks, other armored vehicles and, of course, aircraft. All defenders of Ukraine know that. All defenders of Mariupol know that. Thousands of people know that - citizens, civilians who are dying there in the blockade. The United States knows that. All European politicians know. We told everyone. And this should be known as soon as possible by as many people on earth as possible. So that everyone understands who and why was simply afraid to prevent this tragedy. Afraid to simply make a decision. Vital decision.

The United TV Marathon

1+1 media



In times of war, the information front is often more important than what happens on the battlefield, especially when one is facing the powerful propaganda tools of the Kremlin. Winning the information war in Ukraine and internationally became one of the decisive elements in Ukraine's resistance to the Russian aggression.

Already during the first days of the war, the leading media groups 1+1, StarLightMedia, Inter Media Group and Media Group Ukraine, as well as the public broadcaster Suspilne and parliamentary channel RADA TV joined forces to create the information marathon, each taking turns in producing a 5-hour block of reports, newscasts, interviews and analysis. The United News marathon is available on television, radio, the Internet, social networks and on online TV platforms. After a few days, it also started airing in different languages and became available for free viewing worldwide.

Over a month after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the United News broadcasts continue to provide reliable information and keep up the fighting spirit of Ukrainians 24 hours a day seven days a week.



The media groups had already had the experience of working together, organizing the Unity Day marathon on February 16 - the first date officially reported by U.S. intelligence as the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For all those 8 years, Ukraine had been

under a constant threat of a full-scale invasion, but in February the situation escalated to a whole new level with numerous statements by Western leaders, Russian authorities and media reports, which were constantly intimidating people making them panic. Thus, President

Volodymyr Zelensky pronounced a Unity Day on February 16 with the goal to unite the whole country and show that Ukraine is not intimidated by the Russian soldiers located near its borders. The leading media in the country also united their efforts for a joint nationwide event which

allowed to speak to people in a more qualitative and focused manner than ever and show Ukraine's unity and solidarity. Of course, at that time, no one knew that in about a week Russia will start its "military operation" as the Kremlin calls the war in Ukraine.

On the early morning of February 24, the hosts of 1+1, Yehor Hordeev and Marichka Padalko were the first to announce on the air of *Breakfast with 1+1* that the war had begun. This happened around 6.00 along with the first explosions in Kyiv.

After that, there were several days of continuous broadcasting, non-stop working, so that viewers would receive the most important news on time and be able to trust the information. 1+1 media completely transformed its activity making information broadcasting their priority.

All news are produced independently, in what 1+1 call "a perfect form of liberal democracy": no leader and six editorial offices united by a single mission - the victory of Ukraine. A constant exchange of data, materials and journalists is taking place every day.

The schedule is set up for 4-5 days ahead making a relay race. 1+1 and RADA provide an alternate 24/7 reservation of the signal allowing broadcasts to continue even in conditions of air alarms.

The whole news team of 1+1 is working on the 5-hour block of the group. During air alarms, the journalists move the backup studio in the shelters. there are now two of them hosting on 1+1.

The team consists of specialists of various programs - not only TSN (the news), but also *Breakfast with 1+1*, *Your Day*, *JEDAI*, *X-Files*, *Special Correspondent*, *Money*, etc. A large number of journalists are capable of covering the military actions. Some of them have been covering the events on the Donbas front for the past eight years. They go to various hotspots to make reports and live feeds.

At the same time, 1+1's staff are involved in tasks related to the information resistance to enemy fakes and propaganda, dissemination of urgent news among international viewers, etc.

The broadcasts are also a type of an active dialogue, aiming to keep



in touch with people and explain what is happening. All those who are responsible for security and protection of the country as well as opinion leaders and stars are continuously in touch explaining to people what is happening.

Additionally, 1+1's flexible and dynamic team quickly adapted to

the war and during this period the broadcaster opened two new studios and two new offices. Some people have been transferred to new locations with relevant equipment, accommodation and working conditions. 1+1's team is actually one of the few continuing its work in Kyiv like the President and the

government. According to 1+1 media, this contributes to the strength and confidence of Ukrainians.

With the common goal to win and do the best to achieve this, the staff have been taken over by an indomitable team spirit, with people sacrifice everything for the common cause – their sleep hours, better conditions and safety. This also includes all those who had not been involved in news creation before the war started, as they are quickly retrained and help their colleagues, making 1+1 stronger and united like never before.

The employees' safety is a priority for 1+1. Most of them moved to the western regions of Ukraine or abroad and perform their duties remotely. The company is now arranging to transport some essential teams to a safer place with constant Internet access and necessary equipment to ensure uninterrupted broadcasting. As for the reporters working on the field, all of them are provided with extra protection (helmets, armored vests, vehicles, etc.).

1+1 is also very active on the international information front by implementing a number of projects and initiatives.

During the first days of the war, the company asked international television providers to stop broadcasting Russian news channels on European satellites, cable networks, OTT platforms and other resources. More than 40 local operators from different countries almost immediately supported that initiative. 1+1 and other Ukrainian and international media recently sent an open letter to the European Commission with a request to impose sanctions on all Russian TV channels broadcasting on the territory of Europe, now we are expecting a positive response.

The amount of news produced by 1+1 media's news resources (TSN.ua., UNIAN and Glavred) has grown tremendously. The key newsbreaks are being translated into various languages so that viewers and readers from around the world have access to reliable information. The photobank of UNIAN – the largest news agency in the country – has made all photos related to the war free to download. In parallel, 1+1 are recording and



collecting all the war crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine by the Russian army. These materials will be presented to the court in the Hague.

Also, there is an active struggle in the digital space. 1+1 have launched the English- and Russian-speaking Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, a number of flash mobs and initiatives. 1+1 has joined various volunteer movements and produces educational cartoons about the situation in the country. 1+1 also organized an “information army” attracting stars and influencers.

Besides providing news, 1+1 media also tries to help people to fight stress. The PLUSPLUS TV channel, the most popular children's chan-

nel in the country, uninterruptedly broadcasts cartoons so that the youngest Ukrainians have access to their favorite cartoons. On March 14, PLUSPLUS became one of the initiators of the educational project *Learning Without Limits* within which school children watch video lessons on national TV channels and platforms during the week. PLUSPLUS also creates a series of thematic cartoons titled *Good Always Wins* in which children are told what is happening to Ukraine at the moment.

On the TET TV channel, 1+1 recently resumed one of the favorite shows of Ukrainians – *Breakfast*, within which the hosts communicate with various experts, doctors, celebrities, politicians, and others. ■

The United TV Marathon

Inter Media Group



Anastasia Daugule, host of *Morning with Inter*, shares:

“On the day of the attack we had a regular morning broadcast of *Morning with Inter* program. This is a light morning show in which we help the country to wake up and start a new day with a smile. The first reaction to the bombings was shock. Despite the acute international tension the day before, the outbreak of the war came as a shock. Many colleagues, experienced journalists, in the first hours simply could not believe, could not realize that the Russian Federation had begun hostilities. As it turned out, it is impossible to be ready for a war.

From the point of view of the television process, it became obvious that entertainment shows, films and programs about travel were out of place. Only news. Only actual, reliable information. The social networks got instantly flooded with thousands of conflicting messages, reports from the front line, alarmist calls - it is easy for an ordinary person to “drown” in this “sea” of information.

The task of professional journalism is to provide objective, timely and - what is very important - verified information in compliance with the standards of fact-checking. This is what most of the major television channels began to do.

However, it quickly became clear that even the big channels cannot keep such an information front around the clock on their own.

First, a lot of TV channel employees urgently began to leave for the safe western part of the country, as well as move abroad to Poland, Slovakia, Romania. Naturally, people thought first of all about how to survive. They thought not about work, but about the safety of their families, they took the children out by any means.

Second, a significant part of those few television employees who did not evacuate from the big cities could not go to work. They were forced to hide in bomb shelters due to the shelling and alarms.

People spent nights in basements and at metro stations. During the day a curfew was introduced and no one moved around the city.

Third, those few television employees who did not leave and who nevertheless risked leaving the bomb shelter were not always enough to provide the complex television process with resources and technical support. During the first days, small groups of those who wanted and were able to get to the editorial offices and studios, worked without sleep and rest. But people physically need at least a few hours of sleep. Journalism requires a sharp mind, attention, accuracy - people just needed to sleep and eat, move away from monitors and working places.

On the second or third day, a systemic organization of a common unified broadcast was launched, to which the leading television channels of Ukraine were connected. Within a few days,

the TV broadcast schedule was built, with each media group taking on two-three-four-five hours of broadcasting (as much as it could provide), after which it transmitted the word and signal to another media group.

Thus, for the first time in the history of Ukrainian television, the competing TV channels united in an unprecedented way. The war made TV channels forget about the eternal competition. All of us, who previously argued for rating points and competed in culinary and dance shows, have now become one united information front.

Our reporters are incredible heroes. Each reportage shooting in war conditions is an act of bravery. The TV hosts do an important job not only by providing information, but also by maintaining our viewers' confidence in their abilities, the spirit of victory.

I realized that in the most incredible conditions it is important to maintain a daily routine - sleep, wash, eat at least once a day, do basic exercises. Before the war I swam a lot - I swam in the pool for several kilometers, this is my favorite sport and a kind of dynamic medita-



tion. I really miss this. So I began to imitate swimming, just without water, in the form of freestyle and butterfly movements. This can be done even in a bomb shelter - find a wider corridor, wave your hands to the beat, close your eyes and imagine the sea coast.

It is incredibly important to keep in

touch with loved ones. One SMS with three simple words: "How are you?" gives a charge of vivacity and tenderness for the whole day. After the war I dream of hugging the dearest people, drinking good coffee (you can't find it now) and swimming across the Bosphorus without hearing explosions and sirens." ■

Broadcasting news "under the protection of two tanks"

Interview with Anatoly Bondarenko, host of Inter TV channel

What was your reaction to the first attacks on Kyiv? Shock. And I think that I was not alone in this assessment of what was happening. Waking up at 5.00 am at first I did not even realize that these were explosions. I turned on the TV and saw Putin's statement about the special operation. I began to monitor the news and realized that the war had begun.

The first confusion passed quickly. A few hours after the first shelling, a letter arrived that journalists and editors were needed to work in the information field. I immediately responded to the call, specifying that I could also broadcast live. A couple of hours later,

I was already invited to come to the studio of the National Information Systems company (NIS, part of Inter Media Group), where a large group of news people work - editors, directors, sound engineers, journalists. To get from the left bank of Kyiv, where I live, I had to walk to the right bank - the bridges were blocked. A car was already waiting on the other side of the bridge, we quickly drove to the studio. And there, together with Anastasia Daugule, we distributed the broadcast time among ourselves.

How did you interact with the other channels? How did you agree so quickly on the joint broadcast?

This was a decision of the Coordinating Center. Since February 26, the channels of all media groups in Ukraine agreed to broadcast in the format of "United News". In order for the flow of information to be uninterrupted, media groups broadcast in turn.

On the first day of Inter broadcasting, we went on the air from 18.00 to midnight, 15-minute news blocks were on the air every hour. The film crew stayed overnight at NIS, as the producer told us "under the protection of two tanks." And the next day, it was decided to come out with news from the NTN studio. We were joined by a director's group from the NTN channel, but the team still turned out to be not numer-

ous, many of them had left. Since we worked in extreme conditions, they sent me information in Telegram, and I read and commented on the news on the air directly from my phone. It was a little unusual, because news came in Russian and I had to translate them directly into Ukrainian. This went on for a couple of hours, after which we were informed that we have transferred broadcasting to 1+1.

Now, Inter's broadcasting is supervised by the *Podrobnosti* team, they have a large staff and extensive experience in news work. And I collect exclusive information for broadcasts. For example, I found an interview with the Israeli special forces, which was made by their public broadcaster Kan. They also sent me an interview with a Croat who fought in the "DPR/LPR" in 2014 and has now returned to Ukraine to defend democracy. All this was on the air of the TV marathon.

Do you broadcast from your own studios?

Each TV channel works from its own studio. This process is managed by a single Coordination Center, where the signal is switched from one studio to another, from another to a third, and so on.

The marathon is in no way similar to the propaganda aired in Russia. Your broadcasts try to take care of

people. The hosts not only inform about what is happening, but also reassure, sometimes crack jokes. Can you share more on the format you have?

The broadcast format is as follows: a 10-15 minute news block is released every hour, depending on the amount of current information. Then the TV marathon begins, other hosts appear and pass the word to each other. Representatives of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the National Security and Defense Council, the Office of the President and other structures on which the course of events depends, as well as special journalists of TV channels from different regions of Ukraine and other countries are connected to the general broadcast. The information palette is very extensive, and as a result, it turns out that TV channels objectively and promptly provide comprehensive information to the viewer from different regions of the country 24 to 7 - they cover events, share useful information, talk about the military situation and the humanitarian situation.

On a personal level, how are you doing? How do you keep in touch with loved ones and family? What is the hardest thing during the war?

Many of my relatives and friends have left, the rest are going through hard times. People are sitting in basements and because of the constant shelling

they cannot even go out. Communication with my sister is a rarity; from the very beginning, she and her husband have been sitting in the basement in Bucha. There is no connection with them. I can only get an answer to my text message the next day, when sometimes she comes to the surface "to take a breath of air". I'm very worried - they are surrounded. Products are running out...

Since the first day of the war in Kyiv, I myself have not gone anywhere, I have been working, one might say, on the general information front. I am making some news and exclusives for the online broadcast that may be of interest to viewers. I fight against fakes - I send truthful information about the war in Ukraine to my friends and relatives living in Russia.

The most difficult thing now is the feeling of excruciating pain from what is happening. These barbaric bombardments are destroying my country. Ukrainians have been sitting in basements without food, water and light for many days in a row. Children are dying. Civilians are promised humanitarian corridors - and they immediately fire at them. It's inhuman! My soul hurts from everything that happens!

There is not even a bomb shelter in our area - ordinary basements with one exit. When the air raid signal sounds, we just turn off the lights and stay at home. In the early days, it was scary when I heard all these explosions. Terrible pictures were spinning in my head of what was happening with people who had come under fire: how houses were collapsing and burning, how children were crying, how confused wounded people were rushing around... everything simply shrunk inside... from every explosion... now we are used to it. Many of our shops are closed, in some places food is delivered occasionally. The last time we went out in the hope of replenishing our food supply, we managed to buy two small bottles of kefir and children's cheese. Another time there was a huge queue for bread. Incredible sensations - the bread was still warm! But we somehow live, we don't think about hunger and we don't feel like eating. I just want this nightmare to be ended. And we will do everything for this! Everything will be UKRAINE! ■



If I don't go on the air then someone has already defeated me personally

Interview with Oleksiy Likhman, host of the news program *Details of the Week*

Oleksiy, what was your reaction after the first attacks? And how did your emotions transform over the next weeks of hostilities in Ukraine?

At first I felt panic and helplessness. It was completely new to me, a very unpleasant sticky feeling. I am a leader in life, all my friends and relatives know where to look for hope and support. And then, perhaps for the first time in my life I felt that I didn't know what to do next. And I realized what real panic was. Acceptance of the fact that there is a war going on in our country has not come yet. This is impossible to accept. But the human psyche has its own defense mechanisms. They turned on and helped to pull myself together in a couple of days, learn to coexist with this horror. To say that now I feel quite myself and control the situation would be stupid, because we all live for the moment. And our main task is to run through this day. And to help the country, whoever can.

At what point did you join the unified information broadcast of Ukrainian TV channels? Who and how is now broadcasting from Inter?

Immediately after the first explosion, Inter began broadcasting in an emergency mode: news with the latest information was released every hour from noon. In the evening I led a 5-hour TV marathon. And the next day after the outbreak of hostilities, the idea of joining forces for a common television broadcast arose. All Ukrainian TV channels that joined the unified information broadcast began to go on the air and pick up the baton from each other. The schedules changed depending on how many media groups joined the air, the last one was the public broadcaster Suspilne. At first, each channel broadcast for 6 hours a day, now the time has been

reduced to 5 hours, then during the day, then at night. Inter is represented by four hosts: Anastasia Daugule, Alexey Fadeev, Alexander Prosyanyk and myself.

How many people are involved in this process?

Unfortunately, not as many as we would like. But all this can be explained by the human factor. Someone needed to save the children and take sick parents out of the war zone. Someone remained blocked in different regions of Ukraine and cannot get to Kyiv, but helps remotely. This is force majeure due to war. Those journalists who remained in the capital are working hard to quickly broadcast the news. Our information service is assisted by an extensive network of bureaus in all regions of Ukraine. We also have a good international network - bureaus in Europe, Israel, America. They communicate with Western politicians - this is also covered on our air.

Do journalists and reporters work under the protection of Ukrainian troops?

No, the army now has something to do on the front lines. Reporters work at their own risk. Of course, the editors of information programs try not to set tasks associated with the risk to life. But cases when our film crews came under fire, escaped from rocket attacks, hid in basements, and evacuated are far from uncommon. Fortunately, everything went without tragic consequences.

No one can force anyone to work at the forefront now. And no one does it, we have no moral right to do so. But if the reporter himself volunteers to go on a mission, then honor and praise be to him. Everyone is working to the limit of their capabilities, with the understanding that this is necessary for the

country, no matter how pathetic it may sound.

What shocked you the most since the beginning of the war?

Shelled houses, the first wounded. It instantly plunges you into a stupor, you experience horror and shock. Your world is destroyed, it will not be as it was before. You don't know if you'll survive, and if so, what life will be like afterwards. In the best case, you will need to start all over from the beginning.

I have these feelings also superimposed thru a personal story. In my country house, located near the Hostomel airport, my two brothers remained in the zone of active hostilities. They have been saving themselves in the basements. Communication with them is constantly interrupted - once I did not hear them for six days. They are still there, it is now impossible to organize an evacuation from Hostomel, since the village is occupied by Russian troops. You can imagine my feelings.

Do you consider the deeds of the Russian army a genocide?

Undoubtedly. I can't even call the Kremlin's nonsense about a special operation an official position. I consider it below my own dignity to comment on everything they say in their statements. Fortunately, the whole world understands that this is a genocide. This is a crime against humanity. And Putin's place is in The Hague. While everyone is dreaming that he is dead, I want him to be arrested, to live his life behind bars feeling the hatred of the whole world. Death is too easy a retribution for what he does.

What is your attitude to the decision of the West not to close the sky over Ukraine?

As a citizen of Ukraine, a person



whose country was attacked and your compatriots are being killed, it is extremely negative. It is a disappointment that many Western institutions designed to keep people safe fail in their primary purpose. This means that it is time to restart all these platforms again.

One can only guess what drives Western politicians who still continue to be afraid of Russia. It is strange for us in Ukraine to look at such a reaction, because the vaunted Russian army turned out to be in fact an outdated army of the 80s. Ukrainian troops tear it to pieces now.

In my opinion, the reaction of the West is not tough enough in terms of military relations. What is Putin ready for? We are dealing with a mentally ill person. If you are afraid of him, it will untie his hands more and more. Who will be next if he refuses to comply with his demands? In fact, now the West allows Putin to pursue his policy of appropriating territories. It seems to me that now is the time to give a powerful rebuff to the aggressor, not only with the help of sanctions, but also by destroying most of his army. Of course, I am not a military expert

or an expert on international politics. But for many Ukrainians the actions of NATO and most Western partners are now seen as cowardice.

What is your approach to the viewers in these tough days?

One of the most important tasks is to calm the audience a little. Maintain the belief that we will definitely win. I try to be sincere and honest. Tell people that everything will be fine, the truth is behind us. The audience feels it, my messengers are full of messages like "thank you, we believe you", "thank you, you have become brothers and sisters for us".

By the way, it is not so difficult to share confidence in our victory - we see the successes of the Ukrainian army.

How do you deal with the stress?

I'm not dealing well. The situation with my family, the situation in the country contributes to the fact that I am constantly under stress. I'm trying to pull myself together, but ... I can't watch movies or read books. I live 24/7 in news mode. What saves me is taking care of my inner circle: my aunt

lives next to me and I have to provide her with food and medicine. My dog rescues me. It has become very sensitive lately - she catches my moods and periods of special sadness and kisses and hugs me more. When you call your relatives every day, you get the feeling that you have at least a little control over the situation and your life, the life of your loved ones. It's the only thing that saves now. Well, and work, during which you think less about yourself in this war, you get a little distracted.

Perhaps you have stories from viewers that you would like to share...

I was literally brought to tears by invitations from strangers/viewers from Western Ukraine to come to them. Dozens of messages: "Come to us with everyone who needs to be saved. We are ready to welcome you". This is very eloquent about what a wonderful country we live in. This is worth cherishing!

Many people really left Kyiv, and you have stayed. What keeps you there?

The call of duty. It seems to me that if I leave, I will betray the very idea of fighting for the country. If I don't go on the air, then someone has already defeated me personally. After all, if we all leave, there will be no TV marathon, but it is also important. Now I do what I can do well. And this is exactly what is needed at this moment.

What would you like to tell to the people around the world who are following the events in Ukraine?

I'll ask them not just to watch. Many believe that nothing will change if, for example, the inhabitants of Paris come out to a multi-thousand anti-war rally. Actually, it is very important. As long as your leaders hesitate, as long as they are afraid of the myth of a great and mighty Russia, they still look back at your opinion. And when they see that their voters demand a tougher position from the government, tougher actions, more support, they will start paying attention to the opinion of their people. Every person who comes out demanding decisive action is important. This is what the people of Europe and the whole world can do for Ukraine now. It is very valuable to us! ■

The United TV Marathon

Media Group Ukraine

“Ukrainians are strong, so we treat our viewers as people who have made their choice.”

Interview with Yuriy Sugak, editor-in-chief of News Group Ukraine

Yuriy, what happened at the MGU channels after the first attack?

When the Russian air force began bombing Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities and Putin announced the war, Ukraine 24 started broadcasting in the format of a special news telethon covering the events in Ukraine. It was broadcast on all channels of Media Group Ukraine (Ukraine, NLO TV, Indigo TV, Football 1/2/3, 34 Kanal, international TV channels Ukraine 1/Ukraine 2 as well as the international version of NLO TV). Our digital resources (websites Segondya.ua, Ukraine 24 and Facebook, Telegram and Viber platforms) also joined the 24/7 informational marathon. Everything was happening so drastically that it quickly became clear we must

create a united informational front to resist the enemy, and thus the four national media groups as well as Suspilne and RADA joined efforts to create the common telethon, Yedyni Novyny (United News). This project has no centralized management. Each channel has a 5-hour slot, e.g., today your team works in the morning, tomorrow at night, etc. This is done so everyone can rest and prepare. It is a kind of relay race in which each team passes the baton to the next one. We agree on main events and topics we can and can't cover (subject to recommendations by the Defense Ministry and General Staff of the Armed Forces we can't inform on combats and explosions in real time) in the general chat for all chief editors. Ukraine 24 is broadcasting from its reserve studios. Broadcasting from our main studio complex, at 4 Heroiv Kosmosu St, became impossible on February 25 owing to the constant threat to the lives of our employees, as air strikes and shelling happened very close to our TV center.

What happens during the bombing? How do you keep up the broadcasts?

When air-raid sirens go off or bombing begins, the studio streaming at the moment passes their turn either to the channel's reserve studio or to one of our fellow media groups. While our employees go to hide in the shelter. Both our employees being elsewhere in Ukraine and those working in our mobile newsroom are involved in the production. Some prepare reports or stream live from hot spots that we could never think of before – e.g., from basements in occupied suburbs of Kyiv, shelters in Kharkiv or besieged Mariupol.

We have no problems with exclusive comments from representatives of the government, MPs or city mayors. They are all open to communication – of course if they have time to speak. It's important to us to have speakers who have something to say and we're doing our best to bring important and useful information to our viewers, Ukrainians, who despite all the sufferings in this war are full of faith in Ukraine's victory and are doing everything to achieve it.

It is also striking that most of the time it's very honest talk, not just

news (or even propaganda like the Russians) ...

Our viewers are going through hard challenges, but they are trying to stay strong, decisive and determined. Ukrainians are fighting for their motherland, freedom and future for their children. Ukrainians are strong, so we treat our viewers as people who have made their choice.

How do the reporters work?

All the reporters are informed about basic safety plan measures and what to do in case of imminent danger. They report daily about their position to the main office of our company, about the situation in close-by neighborhoods, probable injuries or other emergencies. We monitor their location, relocation and inform them about possible safe routes in or exits out. If needed- we assist with evacuation.

How is their safety secured?

The frontline groups of reporters are provided with passive protective means and their clothes have the internationally recognized labelling. We regularly conduct psychological support training, develop and share memos in case of close-by military actions. We are currently working on finding the auxiliary safety places in regions in case of bombing/open combats/

other military threats and creating extra-emergency plans for reporters (behavioral, psychological, self-protective, incl. first medical aid self-assistance). So as well, we organized emergency coordination channels with special services and police. Our business priority is the safety for not only reporters but also all our employees and their families. We have always focused and will continue to focus on ensuring the safety and health of our team members and their families.

Are they guarded by the military?

Reporters may rely on full-stack support from our military, though their safety is not the highest priority for them. We do understand that and try to minimize risks especially in combat areas.

Do you cover the news for the international community?

TV channel Ukraine also broadcasts from Warsaw. This is a broadcast for the world. Being a news TV channel, Ukraine 24 became the source for information for viewers both in Ukraine and abroad. The channel's domestic coverage is the biggest in terms of all technologies and Ukraine 24 has leading shares among all the TV channels involved in the telethon. Our international coverage is increasing daily, and our channel is being added to the

existing networks both in Europe and America and even in India.

In collaboration with USTVNOW, our American partners, we launched an English version of the channel. So far we're doing three broadcasts a day but we're aiming at the 24/7 live translation. It will enable all of our American partners to broadcast our channel to broad audiences and raise their awareness of the situation. We're currently working on the launch of the channel on Sling, one of America's biggest OTT platforms owned by Dish. We're also negotiating with Comcast and DirectTV (AT&T). In Canada we have a license from Ethnic Channel Group and VMedia, which helped us to deliver our news to subscribers of Videotron, Rogers, Bell, CCAP, Câblovision Warwick, Déry Télécom, Câble Axion-Digitel, Sogetel and many other platforms.

Ukraine 24 has the maximum coverage possible in the neighboring Poland – over 10 million households. In total, 126 providers gave us their networks. In Slovakia, we're available on Orange SK, Antik Telekom, Slovak Telecom, UPC SK. Regarding operators that cover several nations, we're working with Canal+, Orange, Vodafone, UPC, A1, Sky (new territories are being added daily), M7, VivaCom. In Georgia, you can find us on almost most providers, Magticom and Silknet being the biggest. In Israel, we're available on Hiper Vision and a couple of other networks and projects. In Portugal, it's MEO (Altice Telecom), the most popular national provider. In Bulgaria, apart from network operators (A1 and VivaCom) we're present on Bulsatcom, Neosat DTH, SKAT TV. A great deal of OTT platforms without territorial restrictions, such as Kapang (US/UK), NET1, TVNgo, Zattoo, BossTV, PzazTV.

How about the broadcasts of NLO TV which take care of the children?

On February 25 Ukrainian media groups made a joint decision to keep one channel each for running content for children and family viewing. Novy, TET and NLO TV are now broadcasting family and animation films. NLO TV keeps working for children, broadcasting cartoons and feature films so the kids won't have to listen to the terrible news all the time, while their parents can distract and comfort them with entertainment content.



Yuriy Sugak, editor-in-chief of News Group Ukraine

“I cry my heart out before broadcasting and then stand with red eyes in front of the camera to tell the news”

Olesya Borovyk, Syohodni news correspondent in Sumy



Olesya Borovyk, Syohodni news correspondent in Sumy

Olesya, could you describe how your work day looks like now?

Now the work is 24/7. Last Sunday was the only day off for all these days of war. I got a day off because I got sick. The work continues constantly. We cover mainly the ongoing events because something happens here every day, even every hour. We walk or ride to record reports and contact many people. Sumy is not a big city, so many people know me as a journalist and ask for help: they may need medicine or a car ride. That is why I also deal with humanitarian issues.

What strikes you the most at the scene of events?

What strikes me the most is the consequences of bombings. It is the cynical: the houses that are bombed here belong to ordinary peaceful people. In particular, these are houses located on the outskirts of the city. There are always convoys of Russian military vehicles, which form over there and shoot around. The most

horrifying thing I saw was the bodies of murdered children. They just lie under the bricks of destroyed houses. As I go to film such scenes, I need to get ready for an on-the-spot report. It looks like this: I cry my heart out before broadcasting and then stand with red eyes in front of the camera to tell the news. I realize that I need to talk, not cry, of course, because tears will not help. I need to have a focused mind to describe what I see, to record what is really being done, and who became the target of shooting: these are not military facilities - these are the houses of Sumy residents. On March 8, we suffered from the most massive shelling - 22 adults and 3 children were killed. This was the private sector. An explosive wave picked up some bodies from one place, throwing them into the neighboring houses. This was so heartbreaking. At the same time, I am amazed how Ukrainians are united. They come to the humanitarian headquarters. I witnessed an elderly woman who brought a jar of some canned food - a half-liter jar and a

package of some potatoes. This retired woman said: “I want to help.” In turn, the workers from the humanitarian headquarters offered her something to take, some bread, for example, or else. She insisted: “No, I want to help. I want to be involved.” Now everyone wants to help in some way.

How is your security ensured? Do you have help from the military?

When I need to go somewhere, I coordinate my route with the Sumy Regional Military Administration. The Ukrainian military checks documents at checkpoints. Our people are very polite. They also know me because I usually walk the same streets. I ask them where we can go at the moment. Journalists are always informed. There is a chat where we can ask the administrators where we can go and where we cannot, as well as coordinate the movement with the military so that they can tell us where it is safer. We are also waiting for bulletproof vests. However, in other cities journalists in bulletproof vests with the inscription “PRESS” were killed deliberately, so they would not take photos or make videos. So, I may not even know what to do with a bulletproof vest. So far, when I work, I wear a tank top of TV channel Ukraine with the inscription “PRESS”.

Are your family and friends safe now? How do they support you?

I’m not married. My family is my parents, my brother and his family. They are now, I believe, in a safe place. There was no shelling yet, but it is conditionally so. They are in the Sumy region in my parents’ house - in a place where there has been no military action since the beginning of the war. My relatives asked me to go with them, but I am very stubborn. It seems to me that I need to work, because I will go crazy there - to stay without the Internet and without news. Many friends who went to Western Ukraine support me and also collect humanitarian aid for the Sumy region.



Iryna Antonyuk, journalist at TV channel Ukraine based in Kharkiv

“Half of my reports are now from the basement”

Interview with Iryna Antonyuk, journalist at TV channel Ukraine based in Kharkiv

Iryna, could you share some details on your journalistic activity now?

During these days, I managed to make several recordings on my phone near home. Everything else comes from social networks videos, or from precious people, who record something at my request. Half of my reports (or broadcasts) are now from the basement, and even if it’s quiet at night, you can’t go upstairs and turn on the lights, because you can easily become a target. I have never worked in the wartime before, and honestly, I’m not sure that I would be able to react properly if I witness a shelling next to me. But I truly believe it’s important to stay in the city and tell about the explosions happening every 15 minutes and explain whether this night was harder than the previous

one, even from the shelter.

What is the situation in the city?

In Kharkiv now, it is safer to work in the intensive care unit of the infectious disease ward of the hospital than in any of the city streets. The hospital has a shabby but sturdy basement, and windows are lined with boxes to keep glass from flying at patients. In the city itself, and especially in the street, there are no security guarantees whatsoever. Enemy helicopters, fighter jets, missiles, and Russian artillery have been flying over Kharkiv for 20 days. Of course, rescuers help us very much: they suggest where it is safer to film, and the police ask journalists to warn them about their movements throughout the city. However, such warnings will not save us from an air raid. If the lies of the Russian mili-

tary turned out to be true, and they targeted just the military structures, the safe routes could be developed making it possible to bypass dangerous points. But we have such sad statistics—every 10th apartment building in the city has already been destroyed. People are shot in queues for milk.

The city hospital’s infectious disease ward has now 80 new occupiers. These are workers with their families. Natalia lived with her family on the outskirts of Kharkiv, and they had hoped that their house would survive even when everything around was on fire. But this hope was shattered by a rocket that hit the 3rd floor of her apartment building one morning. She says she had to pick things up, but instead she went to sweep the glass on the stairs between the floors to make it easier for rescuers to carry out the wounded. Natalia, her husband, son, and dog, Oscar, now live in the Covid ward of the hospital. For a long time, Natalia did not want to do an interview because her relatives are nearby, and it is emotionally draining every day to be around all of this suffering. There are patients in the hospital who came here before the invasion, and they do not know if they have somewhere or someone to return to. But everyone who stayed here, in Kharkiv, is ready to stay as long as they can.

Are your family and friends safe now? How do they survive the war?

Before the full-scale invasion, I planned to go to my parents in the neighboring region if something were to happen. They live in a quiet and safe small village, and the missiles don’t reach them yet. My dad and brother joined the local territorial defense from day one. My mother takes care of food, so we aren’t hungry here in Kharkiv. My parents also watch over the families whose men joined the fight for our freedom. Every farmer in my home village does the same. Every single one! So those who fight don’t worry that their children, wives, and mothers are without care or protection. I’m lucky, and none of my relatives have been injured yet. My home stands intact. But there are thousands of ruined lives around.

Oleh Paniuta, TV presenter of TV channel Ukraine

The whole world sees this ruthless Russian war against Ukraine.

Today, Ukrainians are being brutally and ruthlessly killed, taken prisoner, and raped. They destroy our homes and treasured state monuments. But we're not afraid. We won't be stopped before this unprecedented Russian aggression. Today, we are united. Today, we are strong. We are unbreakable and invincible. Each Ukrainian has taken their own front and is ready to defend it. Together we move closer to victory. Of course, our military has the greatest

heroes, who day and night fight the enemy. So, here I remain at the forefront of my professional responsibilities. I know I should be here; I know I am most useful here. My son has decided to defend our capital and I'm proud of his actions and his courage, but, nevertheless, I'm very worried about his safety. For me, this is the most difficult period in my work and my life, when I have to report human losses every day. My heart stops when women and children die from the enemy's missiles. But I can't express my pain and hatred at the enemy all the time. Rather, I want to inspire optimism and I want to talk about how we can win victory—which we will undoubtedly will—for Ukraine. We are the strongest and most steadfast nation in the world.



Oleh Paniuta, TV presenter of TV channel Ukraine



Andriy Kuzakov, reporter of Ukraine and Ukraine 24



Artem Popov, Ukraine's reporter in Mariupol

Artem Popov, Ukraine's reporter in Mariupol

Mariupol has been under severe Russian shelling from the very beginning.

They used the Grad launchers to ruin residential buildings and schools and destroy critical infrastructure. The situation in my neighborhood was quite calm - we only heard explosions and felt trembling. But in a city with a population of half a million it happens that you know many people who suffered different hardships. I know people who can't leave the shelter for even a minute and I know those whose homes have been destroyed completely. I even have friends who are preparing to deliver a baby in a basement. I had to leave Mariupol on March 8. I ran out of diesel fuel and hence I wouldn't have been able to do my job reporting on the situation in the city. So, I went to a nearby area to not lose connection with the city. The trip was risky, as after

I left the city the air raids became more frequent. Russia's fighting violating all the rules. They're shelling hospitals and fire stations, so we can't put out fires and rescue people. They're aiming and bombing shelters - yesterday's drop of a heavy bomb on the drama theater sheltering defenseless civilians affected deeply even the most courageous people. People leave shelters only to cook something on the bonfires and find water. I go on the air from home, as any other options are impossible. All my streams are equally hard and painful, as I have to tell about my home city. About my places and my people. My uncles with their families and my grandma with her cat stayed in Mariupol, and I can't reach out to them. I think I will never forget how I went on air for the first time, when I had to tell people that war had begun in my, our, city. Mariupol went through something similar in 2015. But then only one neighborhood suffered, and I happened to be in a building under shelling by Grads. So, this time when I heard the familiar sounds I realized it began all over again. But I realized this time the war would not be limited to one neighborhood or one city....

“It’s not a local conflict or a special operation. It’s a full-scale war”

Interview with Andriy Kuzakov, reporter of Ukraine and Ukraine 24

Andriy, please, tell us a little about the conditions you're working under. We only have one condition, and it's a big war of the scale Europe hasn't seen since WWII. The most terrible part about war is that it is sudden. Everything may be calm and smooth but in a minute or two there could start shelling and people may die. It's not a local conflict or a special operation. It's a full-scale war Russia is waging against Ukraine. With great losses and great resistance that Ukrainians are showing. Ukrainians will withstand. We see Kyiv is under martial law and people try not to go far from shelters, because they understand a missile can hit them any time and they can die. Air raid sirens are working. When you are in the city outskirts you realize the most intensive fighting is going on where the enemy is

trying to assault the positions of the Ukrainian military. But thank God and the Armed Forces, our soldiers are standing strong fighting off the enemy attacks and winning. These are our conditions. You're highly experienced in reporting from the frontline and hot spots. What are the specifics of such events? Considering the current situation, the full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine, I'll repeat: it's a great war. And we can compare it to WWII, when they used big tank convoys, artillery, aviation, bombs, air raids. These are the things the world, at least Europe, hasn't seen since 1945. After the world wars the world traditionally said, "Never again!". But look at our cities - the "never again" happened again. Yes, it's happening in Europe. But what's most important, the

Ukrainian military, Ukrainian people, Ukrainian Armed Forces are standing fighting off the attacks of Russia. The nation that used to be perceived as very powerful. But the practice shows the Ukrainian army is much more efficient and professional and it is destroying the enemy. I want the whole world to see how the Russians are behaving. Their officials keep telling it's a special operation aimed at defending somebody. But there's no need for them to defend somebody in Ukraine, as we are defended. And what the Russians are doing is not defense but destruction of Ukraine. So, I'm pleading the foreign media and the world in general, pay attention to the crimes of the Russian military and Russian government, which issues such orders. We need our foreign friends to influence those people and help Ukraine win this war.

“If you’re not fighting with arms, you must do something on the informational front”

Interview with Yevhen Nazarenko, reporter of TV channel Ukraine

Yevhen, as a war reporter, how would you describe what is happening in Ukraine?

The conditions are absolutely military and they’re not new to me, because I’ve worked in Donbas for the greater part of the war. The only thing that’s different is that at first it was hard to believe the war wasn’t some 700 km away but here, at my home. For instance, a missile recently hit an apartment building 700-800 meters from my place.

But in general, it’s all identical to what I’ve been doing in Donbas – working with the military, registering Russia’s military crimes, feeling the same anxiety and, of course, fear, as my colleagues are also falling victims. An American journalist was killed recently, while my colleague from Radio Liberty has a concussion. But despite the anxiety you come realize that if you’re not fighting with arms, you must do something on the informational front. This is how I console myself and it is what motivates me to go to dangerous sites. Because I know that I can show to Ukraine, and sometimes to the whole world, what Russia’s doing to

my country. Basically, the conditions are okay, and the military sometimes let you through, sometimes they don’t, while at times they may shoot at you, while at other times not. These are the conditions every military reporter has to deal with.

As a journalist I take it all normally. But as a human being I feel the hardest thing is that you never know what will happen to your relatives who stayed in the capital. Because while you’re away they might be hit by a missile or projectile. It was difficult in the first days of war, when the first missiles were launched at Ukraine and I didn’t quite understand what was going on. I had fear and didn’t know how it would resolve. But now, when I see that thanks to our army the war halted at the borders, I simply keep working.

The work of a military journalist is very simple. It’s dangerous but simple. All you have to do is travel and film the war. Little artistry is required. You simply go where it’s hot and film what you see. When you see ruins or combats against the invaders, you film it. It’s all simple, but you can be killed. This is the reverse side of our job.

What would you like to tell your colleagues from international media?

Actually, there are quite many foreign journalists from all over the world working here. Among them are those who have seen many wars and can witness what Russia’s doing to Ukraine. What matters most is to call things their proper names, and I am grateful to the foreign media for doing so calling the war and Russian aggression what they really are.

After my American colleague was killed, I’d like to ask my foreign colleagues to take their work seriously, as it is a terrible war with air raids and missile strikes. You must be careful and never try to film Russian soldiers, as the American journalist did. The Russians have no mercy on anyone, so for journalists it’s silly to believe they can film on both sides simply because they’re from a third country not involved in the war. They won’t have problems with the Ukrainian military, but the Russians can simply kill them. Russia is a terrorist state, so these people don’t care whether you’re a civilian or a journalist. Be careful and always wear the vest and the helmet! ■



Yevhen Nazarenko, reporter of TV channel Ukraine

The United TV Marathon

StarLightMedia

StarLightMedia was preparing for the invasion to the extent it was possible, understanding its important role in the information war. During the first day of the war, SLM united the facilities of all of its channels to start news broadcasting on all resources 24/7. Later, all media companies launched the United TV broadcast. All channels have altered their standard programming; advertising and sponsorship blocks left the TV screen. In the first days, all channels conveyed to citizens only the most important and crucial information.

During the United TV broadcast, viewers receive exclusively truthful and official information from the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the President, the Cabinet of Ministers, the National Security and Defense Council, the Security Service of Ukraine, etc. SLM focused its activities on expert news. For the sake of sharing objective information about Russia’s war against Ukraine, the Ukrainian TV channels give permission to retransmit their signal outside Ukraine in the networks of all types of providers for free. StarLightMedia launched an additional broadcast of its international channel ICTV Ukraine in the open on the Amos 3 satellite for temporary expansion to reach as many viewers as possible with verified information. Ukrainian media groups also expanded their Russian-language broadcasting. This was made possible by the 100% teamwork, which is an outstanding example of self-organization. People from different projects united their forces. “Everything is possible together” — this is a combination of the pre-war slogans of channels STB and ICTV that are even more relevant today. We believe that with this approach we will win.

There is no single studio for all channels. Each media group organizes



the broadcasting of its TV channels independently. The channels work in shifts, so that journalists, presenters, directors, camerapeople and others have a chance to rest.

Due to the regular air raids, when it is necessary to go down to the shelters, our teams have ensured uninterrupted broadcasting - our presenters and journalists work live from the bomb shelters. There is a war in Ukraine, and sometimes there are difficulties with connecting with invited speakers, for example, there may be interruptions in communication. The work of the media during the war is unpredictable - the connection maybe fine today, but there could be problems with it tomorrow. But the media manage and continue to work on the information front, informing the world about the events in Ukraine.

Everyday things like flawless makeup, neat costumes, high-quality lighting or the state-of-the-art studios are

irrelevant today. Now the main thing is to inform the population about the events in the country.

The journalists who work in dangerous places have special markings and wear protective equipment. They talk not only about the acts of shelling by the Russian military. The channels broadcast a lot of stories about ordinary people - those who were left homeless, who lost their loved ones, who were forced to become refugees, who live in shelters. All our materials are about people and for people. The goal is to show the whole world the truth about the fate of Ukraine.

From the first day of the war, channel Novy altered its programming, and from February 25, the channel devoted its airtime only to kids content. Now, Novy broadcasts favorite family movies and cartoons where the good always wins. This is done for the children, providing them with a safe broadcast around the clock. ■

Joint appeal of the Ukrainian media groups, participants of the special TV marathon United News, to the international business and media community

On behalf of Ukrainian broadcasters, we plead for solidarity and support.

On February 24, 2022, Russia unleashed its treacherous invasion of Ukraine and the largest war in Europe since WWII. On this fateful day, the biggest Ukrainian media combined forces to fight the enemy on a united information war front. For four weeks we have been broadcasting a special TV marathon we called United News. Together we bring the truth about the struggle of the Ukrainian nation and the Russian war crimes to millions of viewers in Ukraine and the world.

United News are co-produced by the newsrooms of 1+1 Media, Media Group Ukraine, StarLightMedia, Inter Media Group, and state-owned Suspilne and Rada channels. An important direction is provision of foreign broadcasting of Ukrainian channels and their wide international distribution. Risking our lives, we bring news stories straight from the front line, from under artillery attacks, and bomb shelters. As the information front is just as important now.

We applaud the support that the Ukrainian government provides for the state media, in particular to the creation of a telethon on 'Suspilne' and 'Rada'. However we, the independent Ukrainian media, to keep fighting the good fight are in dire need of additional financial help. As our typical source of funding—advertising and content distribution—has become unavailable for us.

Today to be able to hold our positions in the information warfare by creating the United News marathon we critically need your help. We are talking about costs that are directly related to the production of news. To help our newsrooms and our broadcast technicians, that are on the job 24/7. Our crews report live from the sites of active hostilities, the IT and engineers keep up uninterrupted 24-hour transmission despite regular shelling by the Russian air forces and artillery.

Now we call upon our long-time advertiser and distributor partners, and the global media community for financial support of the independent Ukrainian media that stand in the way of Putin's propaganda and Russian military aggression.

You can make payments to the accounts of our partner, charitable foundation SMART ANGEL, which implements a related charitable program to support the media in time of war.

The expense reports will be published on each media group's website and on website support-unitednews.org.ua.

Partners, colleagues, thank you for your support of Ukraine and independent Ukrainian media.
Together with you, we are strong!
Together with you, we will win!

#STANDWITHUKRAINE

Addendum:
Details of the charity organization «SMART ANGEL»
for crediting funds for the charity project «Support UA United News»

Please make sure to state the following purpose of payment:
“Charitable contribution to support the Ukrainian media, (donor email address)»

For payments in USD:
Company Name: CO “SMART ANGEL”
IBAN Code UA683052990000026004016209872
Name of the bank: JSC CB “PRIVATBANK”,
1D HRUSHEVSKOHO STR., KYIV, 01001, UKRAINE
Bank SWIFT Code: PBANUA2X
Company address: Tarasa Shevchenko blv 38, apt.51, Kyiv, Ukraine 01032

Correspondent banks:
Account in the correspondent bank: 001-1-000080
SWIFT Code of the correspondent bank: CHASUS33
Correspondent bank: JP Morgan Chase Bank, New York, USA

Account in the correspondent bank: 890-0085-754
SWIFT Code of the correspondent bank: IRVT US 3N
Correspondent bank: The Bank of New York Mellon, New York, USA
For payments in EUR:

Company Name: CO “SMART ANGEL”
IBAN Code UA073052990000026004026203716
Name of the bank: JSC CB “PRIVATBANK”,
1D HRUSHEVSKOHO STR., KYIV, 01001, UKRAINE
Bank SWIFT Code: PBANUA2X
Company address: Tarasa Shevchenko blv 38, apt.51, Kyiv, Ukraine 01032

Correspondent banks:
Account in the correspondent bank: 400886700401
SWIFT Code of the correspondent bank: COBADEFF
Correspondent bank: Commerzbank AG, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Account in the correspondent bank: 6231605145
SWIFT Code of the correspondent bank: CHASDEFX
Correspondent bank: J.P.MORGAN AG, FRANKFURT AM MAIN, GERMANY

For payments in UAH:
Company name: БО «СМАРТ АНГЕЛ»
IBAN UA123052990000026006036219099
Bank name: в АТ КБ «ПРИВАТБАНК» (UAH)
Company address: 01032, м.Київ, бул. Тараса Шевченка, будинок 38, квартира 5

On the 30th day of Ukraine’s resistance President Volodymyr Zelensky said:

“I would like to express special gratitude to our journalists today. To all those who ensure the work of the national telethon "United News", to all our media people. Correspondents, presenters, editors, media managers, cameramen, directors, video editors, make-up artists, producers - everyone without whom it is impossible to imagine television. Everyone who united and together with other defenders of our people provides Ukrainians with truthful information and, last but not least, confidence 24/7.

I am grateful to all of you! And, I'm sure, I can say this on behalf of all Ukrainians.”



The War on Film

The war in Ukraine did not start in February 2022. The country has been fighting with the aggressor state and its terrorists since 2014 following the illegal annexation of Crimea and the creation of the two “republics” in Donbas. During these 8 years, a number of feature, series and documentary productions have been released telling the stories of Ukrainian war heroes and ordinary people affected by the war. These are some of them.

Cyborgs. Heroes Never Die

*4-episode war drama/UFD (UA),
The Annex Entertainment (CA)*

In September 2014, Russian forces attempted to take over the airport of the Ukrainian metropolis Donetsk. Along with the Ukraine army, a small group of Ukrainian volunteer fighters, now dubbed 'Cyborgs,' stood their ground to defend their homeland for weeks while the airport lay in ruins. What happened to them, shaped their lives forever - they were an inspiration around the world.



The Earth Is Blue as an Orange

Documentary/ CAT&Docs

To cope with the daily trauma of living in a war-zone, Anna and her children are making a film together about their life in the most surreal surroundings.



The Guard

6-episode war drama/1+1 media

The events of the series begin during the Euromaidan, where the heroes were on different sides of the barricades: one - an officer of the Internal Troops, the others - protesters, but when the Russian intervention in Ukraine begins, the former opponents happen to serve together in the National Guard. Different, and sometimes conflicting young people have to go through the school of a real fighter. Will the professional militaries and young recruits, who were “enemies” yesterday, be able to become one team capable of defending their country?



U311 / Cherkasy

Feature war drama/FILM.UA Distribution

February 2014. The occupation of the Crimean Peninsula begins. The U311 Cherkasy minesweeper, along with other Ukrainian ships, is blocked in Lake Donuzlav - the path to the sea is closed by the flooded vessels of the Russian fleet. It is a trap. Ukrainian Navy ships begin to surrender to the Russians. It seems that there is simply no other way. The movie is based on real events. The story of the last Ukrainian ship in Crimea, which resisted and continued the courageous fight.



Raid. The Power of Unbroken

Documentary/FILM.UA Distribution

The main character is a colonel, Hero of Ukraine, presently the airborne forces commander, and up until March 2015 the commander of the 95th air brigade. The plot is based on the longest crackdown in military history, which took place in August 2014 from Mariupol (which was reached after breaking the enemy's defense) to Sloviansk; 470 kilometers in total, out of which 170 kilometers were to the other side of the front line.



Call Sign “Banderas”

Feature war drama/FILM.UA Distribution

In fall 2014 in the ATO zone East of Ukraine, a group of counterintelligence agents led by experienced captain Anton Saenko “call sign Banderas” tries to prevent sabotage and neutralize the Russian emissary “Khodok” (Walker). The task is complicated by the fact that the events take place at the home village of Banderas, which he left a long time ago. Local residents see him as a traitor, and the Ukrainian military - as a hostile force.



Beshoot

Feature war drama/101 Films International (UK)

Based on a true story. Two fighters of the Donbas Volunteer Battalion get locked inside the city of Ilovaysk after the regular Russian army enters Ukraine and shells the surrounded divisions of the Ukrainian Army in the infamous would-be 'green corridor'. The fighters survive thanks to the help of the locals and manage to break out through the front line to reach the freed territory. Half of the actors and extras are real Donbas volunteers who survived the battle.



White Raven

Feature war drama/FILM.UA Distribution

This is a story about a pacifist-eco-settler from Horlivka who wants to live in peace and harmony with nature, but war comes to Donbas. The main character having a keen sense of justice does not want to put up with lawlessness and becomes a Ukrainian sniper-volunteer.



Frost

Feature war drama/Luxbox (France)

The young Lithuanian Rokas accepts the order to deliver a lot of humanitarian aid for the Ukrainian army, plunged in full separatist conflict with Russia. In the company of his girlfriend Inga, he will discover the horrors of war. After an episode involving a group of journalists living in a strange hedonistic bubble, this couple of travelers will go through a crisis that will transform their lives.



The Forgotten

Feature war drama/Directory Films, Wide

A Ukrainian language schoolteacher and a rebellious teenage student, both from the eastern city of Luhansk, fall for each other during the tumultuous time of the city's occupation by pro-Russian separatists.



The War of Chimeras

Documentary/People's Film Distribution

The story of war, love and death that was documented by the immediate participants of events. Off screen and later on it are the two - a boy and a girl. He volunteered for the front; she went to the place just after the battle. He got into the Ilovaysk cauldron, lost his closest brother-soldiers. She, while travelling along the ruined towns, strives to understand the essence of war and love.



Mother of Apostles

Feature war drama/Golden Fleece Studio, Media Move (Poland)

In search of her son, whose humanitarian plane was shot down over the occupied territories of Ukraine, a mother finds herself in a completely alien and aggressive world, where everything is permeated with hatred and suffering. In this hell, she is not only looking for her son, but, having great love and a merciful character in her heart, she changes everyone she meets on her way. And most importantly, she changes herself, gaining truly sacred power.



Invisible Battalion

Documentary/Tabor Productions

Despite the stereotypes, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine involves Ukrainian women too. The film protagonists are different by their life experience, age, military, and civil professions, but all of them were united by this war, and their stories create a panoramic picture of the woman's status in the Armed Forces.

The Future of Ukraine's Content Industry

An interview with FILM.UA CEO Victoria Yarmoshchuk

Victoria, Slava Ukraini! Thank you for finding the time to answer our questions. Our team hopes that everyone at Film.UA is safe and that the war will end soon and Ukraine will prevail! How is the team of Film.UA holding up?

Heoriam Slava! For us, as for many, the war came as a surprise. Everyone knew about the pulling of troops to the borders of Ukraine, but no one thought that the invasion would be so full-scale and rapid. We were not prepared for the war. The first days were particularly difficult because of uncertainty about our people: we have more than 500 full-time employees, for whom I feel a huge responsibility. Therefore, the first thing I wanted to do was to collect complete information. Today I have a document with the current status of our employees and freelancers. There were a few urgent requests (help with transportation, money, medicine), and we made everything possible to fulfill them as quickly as we could. I am constantly in touch with most top managers of the group, and people know that they can ask for any help.

Realizing that the company will not have any income for a while, we immediately decided that we would pay salaries for at least the next two months in full. Further cuts may be needed, but in the coming months, we will not cut payments to zero or massively lay off people.

What does the wartime work process of the company look like?

The key team members recovered

from the shock caused by the war very quickly; we resolved life support and security issues, including the studio complex, during the first two weeks. Special thanks to all the film studio service workers who remained there and continue to work – these are technical services, security, and more. There is a small bomb shelter on the territory of the film studio; in peacetime, it was used as a warehouse for props. On the first day of the war, we cleared its premise, provided water, installed a toilet – we arranged the shelter for everyone who could reach it during an air raid. In the first two weeks, there were 80 people there – mostly women, children, older people, our employees, and residents of the nearby houses.

If we talk about the company in general, now everyone who can work is working. Those who have a stable Internet connection and technical equipment can do it remotely – we, in turn, provide everything needed. The computer infrastructure is fully operational: most employees left without their work laptops, and the company's IT department quickly set up remote access and all the necessary processes.

From the first days, our production team threw all efforts into up-to-date content production: generating ideas, collecting materials, editing, drawing in talent. At the same time, we are actively working on the international direction; we collect ideas, stories, project applications – everything we can offer to the international market. Our second direction is thinking about content for the future. As world history shows, creative industries

will play a major role in rebuilding the country. After the war, no one will want to watch war movies: people will need uplifting stories about love, hope, faith, and we are already collecting incredible stories in which war is not the main topic but rather a setting.

Dealing with security issues, we thought about businesses that can operate remotely. These are primarily post-production, animation, VFX – we are now actively engaged in their relocation. Animation work is well-established by 80%, we continue to make *Mavka*, although the project team is scattered in different locations.

Naturally, we understand that business related to physical production in Kyiv will not work for some time. However, we do not ignore it, and last week we even filmed something in Kyiv. We are preparing a documentary project about volunteers – it is being filmed and slowly edited. We are also thinking about organizing filming in Lviv – Patriot Rental has some equipment there.

Businesses directly tied to infrastructure (movie rentals, etc.) are still shut down, and the top managers are thinking about what the companies can do in such conditions. I understand that it is necessary to restructure FILM.UA Group, changing all business models. So now I'm looking at employees in terms of competencies that will help us to do that. The priority now is to retain the team as much as possible. We believe that after the war, our country will attract investments, and now it is crucial to get through it,

bring victory in all ways possible, and keep the team together.

At the same time, amazing things happen. One would have thought that the company Tak Treba Production (service for adaptation and localization of foreign content) can't work without having access to recording studios. But they actually manage to make translations, send them to the customers, then make sound mixing, and all that from the shelters. That is, most people have adapted well. Our weapon is content, and we are using it.

The whole back office works: financial officers and lawyers provide strong support, and I want to mention them separately. They make new forecasts and restructure processes under legislation that is constantly changing due to the military action (now the country has a completely different tax and labor legislation).

If we talk about services, it is clear that in the nearest future, Ukraine, as a filming location, will attract only war films for a while; so our high-tech companies are now much more active in developing services to provide to the international market. For example, even before the war, we were going to set up the conversion of materials from older formats to modern ones – 4K, etc. This service is uncommon, although many film studios all over the world have archives to work with.

After the war had started, FILM.UA announced that revenues from selling content abroad are going to funds supporting the Ukrainian army and also to war victims and refugees. Tell us a bit more about this initiative. What titles have you managed to sell during this period?

Military drama *Ужін* was widely sold in Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and other countries. In addition, the series *The Sniffer* (4 seasons), *Love in Chains*, *Dr. Baby Dust*, *Twist of Fate* were sold to various territories. Our partners, namely ZDFE, TVP, our colleagues from Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, have purchased the FILM.UA Group catalog. Other partners (for example, in South Korea) have extended the rights to already acquired content.



Victoria Yarmoshchuk



Shelter

In a week we managed to raise more than \$200,000, which were transferred to three funds – the Ukrainian army support fund, the Red Cross, and war victims assistance fund.

Despite the war, you are still bringing Ukrainian content to MIPTV in Cannes. Who will be present at the market, and what do you have in the catalog?

Regrettably (and this is what I have been talking about constantly while attending international events), Ukraine is greatly underestimated around the world. Despite the

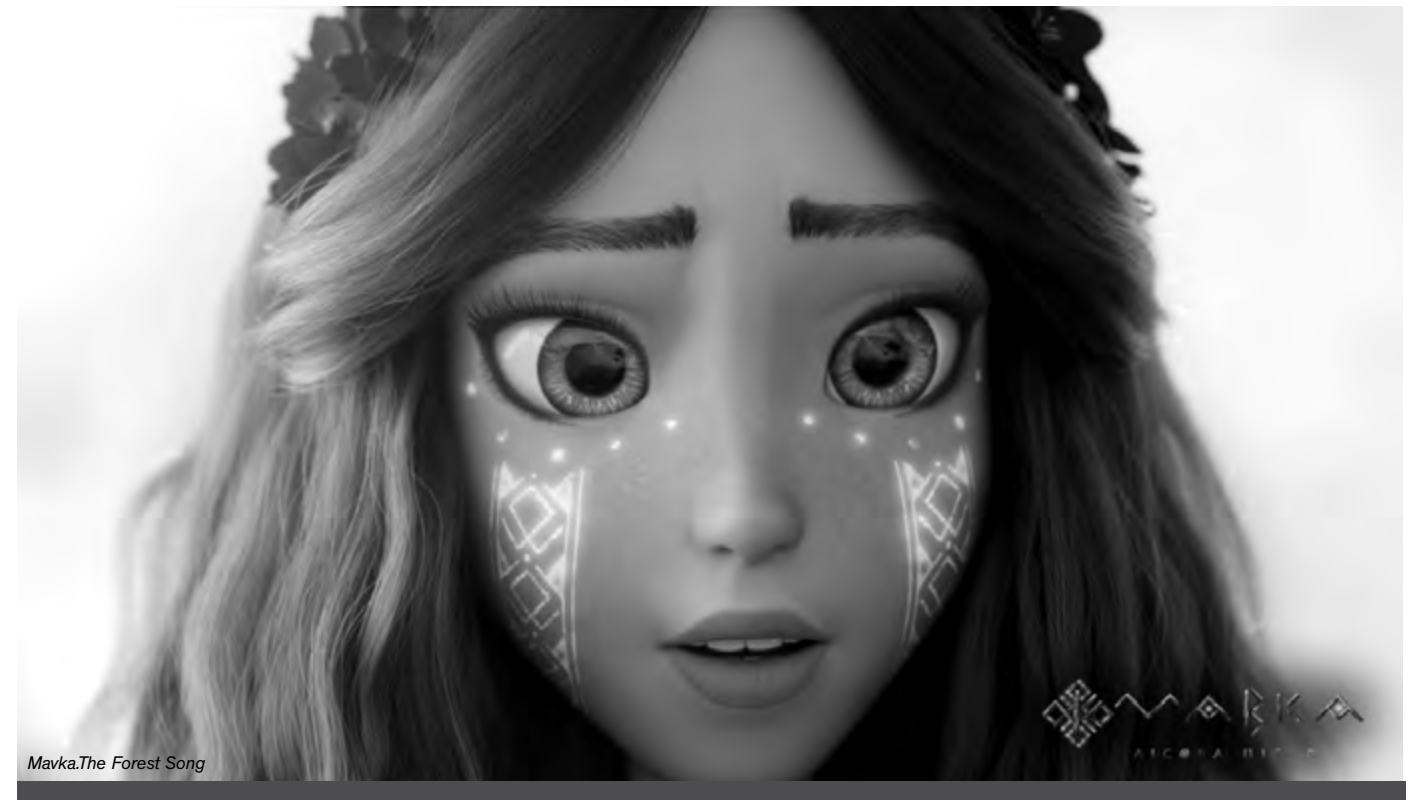
constant presence at all international markets, festivals, and events, Ukraine is known for on-point projects, and the full potential of our industry is not realized. And now we have a unique chance (unfortunately, given at such a terrible price) to attract maximum attention to Ukraine. So we decided that it was necessary to attend MIPTV not virtually but in person: to explain who we are and what we can give to the world for the common good and shared benefit. The three largest Ukrainian TV groups (Media Group Ukraine, StarLightMedia, and 1+1

media) joined FILM.UA's initiative to be present on the market.

FILM.UA has agreed with MIP-TV that the stand, which has been attached to the company for more than ten years, will become a joint Ukrainian stand, the country's representative in the market. Also, the four organizing companies will present a joint catalog, including their selected projects (both ready-made and in development). Representatives of these companies will work at the stand; a digital platform, where you can find relevant information about Ukraine, content catalog, contacts, and quickly reach the stand participants (and later market participants) is also being prepared. Today, international partnerships are critical to rebuilding our industry and then our country. But we are not presenting ourselves as a victim – we have a lot to offer the world, foremost Europe, in terms of content co-production. We have enough creative resources to make a significant contribution to the development of the European audiovisual market. We will talk about this and prove it with examples of projects developed in Ukraine.

You also announced you were providing content that showcases Ukrainian traditions and culture for free. Has there been interest in that offer?

Approximately on the third day of the war, it became clear that we must take up weapons that we had, namely our stories and content. So we picked up our Back to Basics project, which was well known in Ukraine, but never widely released – it wasn't published in full on YouTube. We added special subtitles with a global message to this content: here is the Ukrainian culture, the existence of which is denied by the Russian Federation – look what the aggressor is trying to destroy. Our distribution has started offering this content worldwide for free to tell who we are. Various territories snapped up the Back to Basics project – in addition to Eastern and Western Europe, the list includes, for example, Latin America, South Africa, India, and Mongolia. In Ukraine, Back to Basics first appeared on both television and digital platforms.



What other kinds of support are you getting from your international partners?

We feel the support of international partners from the first days of the war: large companies bought content in packages, paying large sums – \$20-50 thousand. Out of competition, the Series Mania Festival has given our project a place in its pitching program; and we are confident that our projects will take part in other pitchings and festivals we are currently planning to apply for. We cooperate with countries that hospitably receive and help our compatriots. For example, the distributor ACME Film purchased our children's content (*The Stronghold*, *Foxter & Max*, etc.) to organize cinema screenings for refugees.

In addition, partners from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Iceland, France, Poland, Romania, Lithuania, Germany, and other countries offered assistance with evacuation, transport, housing, visas, and other issues as moral support. Also, many partners offer Ukrainians jobs, to which we are very grateful, but we still ask you to procure our services, instead of luring away our employees.

Special thanks to the international industry publications who wrote about

us and offered their information platforms for placement.

According to your data, how many ongoing productions were there in Ukraine before the war started? Do you expect those to be resumed shortly after the war ends?

I can only give some general figures: about 50 series, more than 200 films (feature and short feature, documentary, animation), more than 100 advertising projects. It is hard to make any predictions about a possible resumption today. But the advertising market that provides for TV channels will be down at least until the end of the year. Without being well-developed, the pay TV market will lose its previous revenues in Ukraine, and the income from international distribution is insufficient to support its activity. There will be no film distribution for some time, and when it is restored – no one expects the pre-war level of revenues. Accordingly, it is essential that after the end of the war, the state creates the conditions for the resumption of production. Everyone in the market, including FILM.UA, actively develop the international component, but it would be hard without the support from the state. Although, I emphasize

that we do not give up, we do not leave the country, and we are ready to work and believe in the potential of our industry more than ever.

We know that you are already working on a plan to re-start the production segment when the country returns to peace. Can you mention some of the key points in this strategy?

After the war, there will be a demand for entertainment content, so we are already collecting stories and creative ideas for local products that will help Ukrainians recover mentally. The international direction is the source where we can find financial resources, so today everyone is working on projects to be offered to the international market. Here, I would like to say something about our animated film *Mavka* – we are rethinking and restarting the program of its sales to streaming services because this content is more relevant than ever. Today, Ukraine protects not only its borders but also the principles of humanism, common sense, universal values – and this is exactly what this cartoon is about. The project is almost ready, it contains a vast number of Ukrainian narratives, and it is just a matter of honor for



Documentary about volunteers



Back to basics

us to arrange Mavka on the global platform so that as many people as possible can watch it. But, of course, we desperately need resources to finish production.

As I said, we plan to continue to actively develop animation, as its infrastructure can be relocated away from the hot spots. Additionally, before the war, we launched an information campaign about the potential of uniting the countries of Eastern Europe into an alliance, as, for example, the Scandinavians once did. In practice, this means that countries could set up a general fund; even at the production stage, the producers of the co-financed projects would know for sure that all the alliance member countries would provide them with airtime. It would make finding the missing funding in other territories possible. Alone, no Eastern European country has made it to the top of the industry, and together we have a great chance at it.

How will the state be involved in the process?

As I have already noted, content production companies need support from the state, and the state, in turn, needs help from international organizations, as the local resources are not enough. We need help to implement as many international projects as possible, namely participation in pitchings, festivals, etc. It would be great if we could offer educational programs to Ukrainian specialists on preferential terms. In general, do everything so that people survive and save the resources for future work.

Are you working on projects that focus on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the war crimes that are being committed by the aggressor?

In the first days of the war, we had an impulse to create content for the Russian audience – to tell the truth, to convey what was really happening. It turned out that even Russian media professionals, people we have

known for many years, do not believe that the Russian army bombs peaceful Ukrainian cities, shoots unarmed civilians during the evacuation, and kills children. They are sure that we are bombing ourselves here! We realized that this was a dead-end that could not be broken through. And a week later, we stopped wasting resources on this pointless work, directing all efforts to produce content for Ukrainians (to maintain morale) and the international community (with calls for help, close the sky, and so on). This is what we continue to do now.

We were one of the first to start making morale-boosting commercials, almost all of which ended up being shown in the 'United News' information marathon, which is co-produced by the country's leading TV channels.

Animagrad, together with 1+1 media, created an animation for children explaining in a very accessible, understandable language what is happening and why we are being attacked. Hu-

morous animated videos playing with folk art associated with the war are produced separately for adults. Humor helps us all not to go crazy, so besides scary and truthful videos, we also try to make comic content about whatever can be made fun of.

We started shooting a documentary project about volunteers; several more documentaries are in development; our Research and Innovation Department is developing a project to recreate the destroyed Ukrainian cities (Mariupol, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, and others) in augmented reality.

We are trying to place all currently produced content (both ours and from other Ukrainian market players) on all possible platforms. These include FILM.UA Group entertainment Pay TV channels broadcasting in Moldova, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus, Spain, Israel, Poland, and the international service Kartina TV. We reformatted our FILMUALIVE brand channel which now features a lot of relevant con-

tent showing what is happening in Ukraine, helping to strengthen the spirit and counter Russian propaganda. Our distribution team received a lot of requests from European providers to include Ukrainian entertainment TV channels in their networks, and today we are actively working in this direction.

There were a lot of Russian-Ukrainian co-production and format deals in the past. Is that just a page in history now? If so, which markets do you see as potentially replacing Russia?

It is important to be clear here: since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and occupied part of the territory in eastern Ukraine, there has been less and less cooperation. FILM.UA, like many other market participants, even then refused to cooperate with the Russian Federation. Every year we have less and less in common: the themes, narratives, and messages of Ukrainian content, created over these

eight years, are radically different from those acceptable in Russia. It is a big mistake to believe that the gap in our markets has taken place just now.

Talking about replacement, Ukraine has been in the world market context for many years. We have been selling content to all territories and streaming services for a long time. Ukrainian films receive prizes at international festivals, Ukraine co-produces projects with other countries. Unfortunately, due to the small volume of the domestic market, this is not enough. Therefore, we will continue to develop cooperation with the global market, strengthen our presence in the European audiovisual market, and build close partnerships with Eastern European countries. During the war, Ukrainian media players are all united around common goals. Together we are stronger than ever and will overcome any challenges. And then we hope to unite neighboring media markets with a similar unity of purpose. ■



„Peace, Love, Empathy“, bTV

How CEE countries fight Russian propaganda?

By Yako Molhov

Europe stands united against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, even more so in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, with some exceptions like Hungary and Serbia. And while the former has not vetoed the EU sanctions against Russia and has condemned the aggression despite its government considered pro-Russian, the latter, which claims it wants to join the EU, can justly be called Russia's Trojan horse in Europe.

These "allegiances" and trying to play the "neutral" card are also reflected in the media landscape in CEE, with many countries taking a firm stance against Russian propaganda, banning most of its channels; others adopting EU's ban on some Russian TV nets but allowing other Russian channels to continue

to spread their propaganda and... then there's Serbia where RT can be watched on some of the major operators freely (SBB being the only exception as it replaced RT with Ukrainian channels).

On February 27, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, released a statement outlining certain measures in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Among these measures, she announced that the EU would ban the state-owned media outlets Russia Today and Sputnik. On March 1, the Council of the EU adopted a decision by which it prohibited "operators to broadcast or to enable, facilitate or otherwise contribute to broadcast, any content by the legal persons, entities or bodies listed in Annex XV [RT- Russia Today English, RT-

Russia Today UK, RT - Russia Today Germany, RT - Russia Today France, RT- Russia Today Spanish, Sputnik], including through transmission or distribution by any means such as cable, satellite, IP-TV, internet service providers, internet video-sharing platforms or applications, whether new or pre-installed".

Reports about blocking Russian propaganda outlets around the world appear every day; but the process of removing Putin's lies in media is far from over.

Open satellites in Europe block only Russia Today and Sputnik radio. A lot of TV channels are still available unscrambled and may be watched for free anywhere, including Ukraine. There is a score of unscrambled Russian channels available on open satellites. Also, Russian channels

are included in the packages sold by pay TV providers. Certain European states, like Lithuania, Latvia, and Poland, have started banning Russian channels on all possible platforms. However, broadcasting from open satellites remains a big issue as internal sanctions do not affect them.

Most satellites that broadcast Russian channels are under the jurisdiction of France; those are Hotbird 13B/13C, Eutelsat 36B, Eutelsat 7/8, and Eutelsat 16A. The four Astra satellites are the responsibility of Luxembourg. There are also satellites within the jurisdiction of the USA, Turkey, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Malaysia, and the Bermudas.

According to Valentyn Koval, First Deputy Head of the National Council of Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine, currently (as of mid-March, e.d.), only Russia Today, its local versions RT UK, RT DE, RT France, RT Spanish, and Sputnik radio have disappeared from all satellites that transmit signals available to Europe. So far, the calls by Ukrainian and European media and journalist organizations to impose sanctions on all Russian channels and ban their broadcasts have not been heard by the bureaucrats in Brussels.

Apart from the endeavors to stop the broadcast of Russian propagandist channels on open satellites, several European states are limiting their showing at their own territories via various technologies.

On February 25, the Polish media regulatory authority Krajowa Rada Radiofonii i Telewizji deleted Russian channels Russia Today, RT Documentary, RTR Planeta, Soyuz, and Russia 24 from the registry of permitted media. According to Valentyn Koval, Poland is not blocking the channels on IPTV stream, but national providers that cover about 90% of the Polish audience have stopped re-broadcasting them.

On February 25, the regulating authority for protecting consumer rights of Estonia (CTRA) banned the broadcasting of RTR Planeta, NTV Mir, Belarus 24, Russia 24, and TVCI. The same was done by Lithuania and Latvia. "Our letters to European regulating authorities were most earnestly met by the Latvian and Lithuanian ones," Valentyn Koval says.



"They stopped broadcasting dozens of Russian channels. Those countries know well what Russia is and they're aware that they may be next right after Ukraine."

The Latvian regulating authority NEPLP banned the channels RTR, Russia 24, TVS, Mir 24, RTV, TNT-Comedy, TNT4 International, TNT, TNT Music, Pyatnitsa, KKhL TV, Kinopremyera, Kinosvidanie, Muzhskoye Kino, Avto Plus, Nostalgia, Kto Est Kto, Malysh TV, Russkaya Noch, TVCI, and Belarus 24.

The Lithuanian regulating authority LRTK banned RTR Planeta, Russia 24, NTV-Mir, Belarus 24, Mir 24, RVK (First Baltic Channel), and TVS. It also asked the government to give a legal permission to ban the broadcast by Gazprommedia, a company affiliated with the bank that had been sanctioned by the EU.

According to the National Broadcasting Council, Romania, Greece, and Moldova have also stopped all broadcasting of Russian channels via the legal pay TV platforms.

On March 1, the Bulgarian Council for Electronic Media (CEM) issued

a resolution to temporarily restrict the retransmission of Russia Today and its subsidiaries, as well as Sputnik and its subsidiaries. However, those two channels are the only ones banned in the country – cable operators still carry Channel One and other Russian propaganda networks.

Hungary has also suspended the broadcast of television channels Russia Today (RT) and Sputnik on all platforms, including online.

As of March 2, the EU measure banning the distribution of the Russian state-owned disinformation channels Russia Today and Sputnik entered into force in the Czech Republic. Some operators like T-Mobile and O2 removed the channel a week earlier.

On March 3, the Slovak Ministry of Culture announced that by the time the EU regulation and decision came into force, all major national operators had already suspended the retransmission of RT, after Slovak regulator CBR had offered to assist any such operators with legal interpretations surrounding the matter.

In Moldova, on March 2, the Committee for Extraordinary Situations

of the Republic of Moldova issued a decision providing the suspension of programs originally produced in countries that did not ratify the European Convention on Transfrontier Television, with the exception of films and entertainment programmes (and EU, US and Canadian programmes).

Unlike their Serbian counterparts, TV broadcasting companies in Kosovo started the withdrawal of Russian channels following a decision from the Independent Media Commission in the hopes of quelling the spread of Russian propaganda. The decision came four days after Russian troops invaded Ukraine. In North Macedonia, AAVMU told operators to remove all Russian channels in the country.

The EU urged Montenegro on March 9 to suspend the broadcasting of Russian Today and Sputnik in line with the bloc's restrictive measures on Russia. On March 1, Montenegro said it had joined European Union sanctions on Russia over the Ukraine war, but most of the restrictive measures, including a ban on Russian media, remain on hold.

The situation in Albania is unclear. While the country stands with EU sanctions, information on whether it has banned Russian channels is not found on the website of the country's Audiovisual Media Authority (AMA). It declared on March 4 that it was following how the Albanian media are covering developments in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Belarus (Russia's ally in the war) started airing RT in the country.

Central and Eastern Europe's support for Ukraine is not only limited to banning Russian propaganda and reporting impartially about Russia's invasion and war crimes and the situation with the millions of Ukrainian refugees in different countries. CEE broadcasters started organizing charity concerts, offering content in Ukrainian language for the refugees, with focus on kids content; operators in many countries are retransmitting Ukrainian channels; launching or re-launching news channels; acquiring Ukrainian-produced content, with one notable mention being Volodymyr Zelensky's popular sitcom *Servant of the People* which features him playing the role of newly elected president; some broadcasters also stopped airing Russian content.

In late February, just days after the start of the war, Polish pubcaster TVP, Czech pubcaster CT and Romanian commercial net PRO TV launched campaigns in support of the Ukrainian people following Russia's invasion of their country.

TVP held Solidarity with Ukraine – a live concert organized with Caritas, a gesture of support for Ukraine with a fund-raising for victims of aggression and an expression of opposition to the criminal attack by Russia. Meanwhile TVP Sport did not broadcast the fight of the Russian MMA



Ursula von der Leyen

fighter. TVN Discovery and Polska Akcja Humanitarna (PAH) collaborated to help those fleeing the war and those still in need of support in Ukraine, organizing the charity concert „Together with Ukraine“, which was aired in more than 50 countries and featured Ukrainian artists as well.

Since March 14, on weekdays TVP1 has been airing the new program “Give Ukraine a Hand”. It is intended to be a guide for those who are looking for help, but also for people who want to give it. Also an International Charity Concert-Marathon aimed at supporting Ukraine and named “Save Ukraine – #StopWar” organized by TVP, Poland's public broadcaster, took place on March 27 and was aired on major channels around Europe. Broadcasters from many countries around the world, including Estonia (EBR), Lithuania (LTR), the Czech Republic (ČT2), Georgia (GPB\First), Albania (RTSH 2), Montenegro, Slovenia, Latvia (LTV), Croatia (HRT), the Slovak Republic (RTVS), Austria (Puls 4), Cyprus, Canada (OMNI) and others rebroadcasted

the marathon on their local channels.

Czech pubcaster CT also organized a charity concert. The live event from Wenceslas Square in Prague was broadcast by ČT1 and commercial net Nova. Czech Prima Group is also involved in active assistance to Ukraine. On March 6, the net aired a charity concert for the children of Ukraine, which took place in the Karlín Forum in Prague.

Romanian commercial net PRO TV also started a campaign supporting the people of Ukraine. Many media outlets in Romania joined humanitarian campaigns for refugees. After PRO TV, Digi 24, Kiss Fm and Căndul, Prima TV also announced such an initiative in early March. Prima TV is involved in a fundraising campaign for refugees in Ukraine, in partnership with Save the Children. The “We Are One” charity concert organized by PRO TV on the National Arena raised 4.5 million lei for refugees. This is about 900.000 euros. Part of that money was advertising broadcast by PRO TV during the broadcast, which was

donated in full.

Lithuania's LNK reached out a helping hand to its colleagues in Ukraine by donating TV equipment. LNK's employees delivered the equipment themselves to an emergency collection station at the border near Peremisl and made sure that it would reach their Ukrainian colleagues safely, according to a press statement.

The Baltic broadcasters also organized campaigns in support of Ukraine. Estonia's ETV aired a 2-hour charity program, calling for support for Ukrainians and organizations helping Ukraine. The special show “Let's Help Ukraine!” focused on various ways to support and to provide those, who escaped from the war in Ukraine with the much-needed assistance and a safer life and future. Kanal 2 also aired a concert, raising nearly 700.000 euros.

On February 25, Latvian Television (LTV) aired a special concert dedicated to the freedom of Ukraine, in which Latvian musicians as well

as members of the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration movement - choirs, brass bands, folk dance and folklore groups - dedicated their performances in support of Ukraine.

On February 28, the Hungarian broadcaster MTVA launched the campaign “Hungary is Coming Together” on all of its platforms. The campaign gathers donations for Hungarians living in Transcarpathia and those fleeing the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. On March 7, RTL Hungary started providing 5 free appearances on its most watched channel, RTL Klub, as well as 15 additional free appearances on other channels of its linear portfolio for fundraising organizations whose aim is to help the people of Ukraine.

Together with the Slovenian Red Cross and Caritas Slovenia, RTV Slovenia organized a charity concert to help the refugees from Ukraine, which raised over 799.650 euros three days after its broadcast, and donations are still accepted.

In Bulgaria, commercial net bTV aired a charity show and concert called “The Good Example”. The charity program started at 12.30 on Sunday, March 6, and was broadcast on bTV and bTV Radio. The concert „Peace, Love, Empathy“ was part of the campaign. Pubcasters BNT and BNR also organized a charity concert called “Together for Ukraine” on March 28. The concert organized with the National Theater will air on BNT1 on April 3.

Also, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) announced that members from across the continent - including Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland - are organizing fund-raising concerts in collaboration with the Red Cross and other NGOs; with further initiatives including live vigils, special performances of Ukrainian music and regular broadcasts of the Ukrainian national anthem.

Behind the scenes, the EBU has also been co-ordinating technical support for UA:PBC and working, with assistance from Members, to ensure public service media can continue to broadcast and reach Ukrainian citizens. ■



EPRA Nacrada

From PR manager to volunteer, info war soldier, refugee

On February 18 I had just finished the drawing up of the PR strategy of the upcoming festival season of the company Vulichna Izha (Street Food). We were planning to hold a total of six festivals between April and October. It had to be big, expensive, with lots of lights, and technology on the stages.

My second project Comic Con Ukraine, the festival for geek and pop culture in Ukraine, was in the stage of final strategic meetings before the launch of a PR company.

My third client – the holiday residence Osocor Residence were preparing to invite guests to the opening of the spring season in the flower garden – the location was ornamented with living flowers, the actors were working on their performance. The spring season was planned with six concerts of top Ukrainian and European artists. Nobody believed that war could start in the year 2022.

On the TV channels they were talking about how many different weapons America had sent to Ukraine. But I thought to myself – do they really talk about the exact amount and capacity of the ammunition. It's all a manipulation. There will be no war. All in all, they will reach an agreement.

Already three months earlier, I decided that I want to celebrate my 34th birthday in Berlin and bought tickets.

On February 22 I flew to Berlin.

On February 24 I woke up in the Hollywood hotel and read a message which made my stomach writhe: “Are you sleeping?) don't know anything yet? lucky. A war began here!”

And then, all of the psychological states inherent only to the times of war took over. I tried to act according to the slogan of crisis management: “This is not a problem, this is a task and you have to find a way to solve it.”

As a volunteer already from the days of the Revolution of Dignity (2014), I got together with everyone I knew in Berlin and went to look for information from the German volunteers. In

Berlin, the union Vitche was organized the fastest. During the first week of the war we collected contacts of people who wanted to help and were ready to host people in their homes, we raised humanitarian aid, met Ukrainians, and closely studied all of the rules in Germany and how they were changing. I solved the most important issue for Ukrainians which were left behind the borders: I sent a message to all telecommunication operators with the request to allow a sufficient amount of gigabytes of free roaming. Lifecell reacted the quickest, and increased that from 1 Gb to 5 Gb. To consult, help with the resettlement and hold my hand on the pulse of the rules for registration I continue now as well.

As a soldier on the informational front, I worked as a spy: I found out all about the current events from the only adequate PR manager from Russia who I knew. I sent important information to the honest Russian media: social media groups with bodies of soldiers, videos of POWs sending messages to their parents, etc. They were sending me back information on the work of social media and in general, until they knocked on their doors... she did not answer any more questions of my questions...

As a PR manager who until the war worked with two agencies at the same time, I united the team into one. We worked on news about medicines and pharmacies. Among the important cases: the chain of pharmacies Good Day were ready to open if they could find pharmacists willing to come out and work. Thanks to our news distribution, we managed to find around 100 people.

At the same time, the music industry and the organization of collective management which takes care of royalties, and also my clients, ended all of their contracts with Russian companies and got an incredible support from out international partners in the form of more torn contracts with Russia, soon there will be an upcoming news from us on this in the media.



Anastasiya Volokita

In three weeks, I changed 4 countries and collected information on how the system works in the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. In Poland, where my family had stopped, taking the opportunity, I helped the volunteers to systematize the work of the boarding house for refugees.

At the same time, as a person who has to formalize her temporary refugee status, I am dealing with the question of my registration and the related medical and social support. Being an absolutely independent person prior to the war, right now I am feeling very uncomfortable. But thank God, in the world there are a lot of good people. And even though, the system for the registration of refugees in Germany is not fully operations, because after all they were not prepared for this, the help of European people and volunteers is felt at every step.

There is a lot of gratitude in my heart.

I believe strongly that victory is already near, and after that we will rebuild an even better Ukraine and the whole world will come to see it

I invite you as well!

Anastasiya Volokita
19.03.2022

ICM on the social and information front



The Institute of Cognitive Modeling (ICM) is a research and development organization, engaged in social technologies and providing services in the field of social communication, and one of Ukraine's leading companies in this field with offices in Kyiv and Brussels.

In a matter of hours, the Telegram and Viber channels of the ICM were transformed into a powerful information eco-system that notifies promptly verified information about the course of the war. From bomb shelters, on the road, in different parts of the country, day and night – the ICM team is working to ensure that Ukraine and the world receive truthful information and fight Russian propaganda. For

this purpose, the channel is already being conducted in several languages.

Initially, ICM had 45 employees. Volunteers have also joined the institute's team, including journalists, designers, SMM. The ICM works in union with the government and publishes only verified information.

Public figures have also been engaged with their audience to help fight propaganda.

More than 5 million readers follow ICM's channels and the number is growing.

Already on February 27, less than three days after the start of Russia's aggres-

sion, the ICM launched the free 24/7 psychological consultation bot Rozkazhi Meni (Tell Me). It was launched in cooperation with Ukraine's Ministry of Health and the President's Office. On the website <https://tellme.com.ua/> people can get free consultation and emotional help. The team of the platform works with the method of cognitive-behavioral therapy, which is one of the most common forms of psychotherapeutic care for people with various psychological problems. A team of qualified specialists openly discuss people's problems. In five days, more than 1500 hours of free consultations were realized by 200 volunteering psychologists. In three weeks, more than 40000 people used the free service.

A day later, on February 28, the education channel School_info was launched. It contains tasks in English, mathematics, logic, literacy, science, reading, physical education. Every day it publishes tasks for students from first to fourth grade, which help children who hide in shelters to study online for free. It currently counts over 572.000 followers. Since March 7, lessons for those in the fifth to ninth grade have been added to the educational platform Modern School.

The ICM work with a simple, well-proved model in cooperation with the official institutions. If the information does not come from government agencies, it is being checked with several official sources in parallel before publishing.

The responsibility for each channel has been equally distributed: there is a schedule and hierarchy of approval for each channel, common working groups for fact checking and approval. ■



School Info

Italian Media and the War

By M. Chiara Duranti

When one is preparing to tell epochal and large-scale events, such as the war in Ukraine, the probability of making mistakes is very high for anyone, but a little more for the Italian media.

The invasion of Ukraine caused a great demand for information and all the linear and pay TV channels tripled their ratings. Sky Tg24 benefited most of all, both via decoder for subscribers (+293.8%) and digital terrestrial (+283.9%), while Rainews24 grew by 220% and TgCom24 by 142%. There was also a boom for the traditional bulletin of news: Tg1, with 6.3 million viewers, was growing more than the others; followed by Tg2 that increased its audience to 4.1 million viewers vs Mediaset's Canale 5 with 4 million viewers. During the first week of war, the average audience of Tg1 was around 6.7 million viewers, followed by Canale 5 (Mediaset) with 4.8 million.

On the first day of Russia's invasion, February 24, the main broadcasters changed completely their schedules offering long marathons in the studio like Rai 1 with Monica Maggioni director of Tg1 (the oldest and most prestigious TV news program in Italy) and La7 with its director Enrico Mentana (#MaratonaMentana). As soon as they launched the marathon, it was evident there was a total inability to provide news and video images of what was really hap-

pening in Ukraine, at least during the first days. As usual, the social media coverage especially on Twitter and Facebook was more efficient.

Mediaset's satirical news program *Striscia la Notizia*, on air for over twenty years, challenged Rai with its segment "Rai Scoglio column" asking the reasons why, despite the presence of seven Rai journalists in Ukraine and neighboring countries, Tg1 didn't send anyone to the capital of Kyiv. Initially, to cover the Russian invasion, Tg1 was relying on external journalist - Valerio Nicolosi of Micromega (a political &

cultural magazine probably inspired by a tale by Voltaire), or asked Tg2 for a hand with the tireless journalists Piergiorgio Giacobazzo and Leonardo Zellino.

Anyway, the most embarrassing moment of the Italian public television was reached during a live broadcast on Rai 3, when two important journalist like Lucia Annunziata and Antonio Di Bella commented - probably thinking not to be on air - that the Ukrainians are a people of "waiters, caregivers and lovers". This emerged off-air during a live con-

nection of Tg3 outside the Russian embassy in Rome. A bad sentence considering that many Ukrainians have studied, graduated and over the years have reached Italy in search of a better future, adapting, and doing even more humble jobs for sustaining their family at home. However, according to the words spoken by Lucia Annunziata, host of the show *Mezz'ora in Più*, the comment came during the Tg3 special on the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which exploded in the middle of the night of February 24 after President



Vladimir Putin's order. Of course, the episode created a series of negative comments and indignation on our social media.

Unfortunately, there was more. During a live feed with a correspondent in Ukraine talking about the first bombs, Tg2 broadcast some video footage of the *War and Thunders* videogame and once again the social media exploded.

More controversies were unleashed by the correspondent in Moscow, accused of being too pro-Russian, for a "politically incorrect" phrase pronounced by Marc Innaro (head of the correspondence office in Moscow since 2014) during an interview with a documentary filmmaker, Sara Reginella, who justified the invasion with the repression of the Russian-speaking population in Donbas. Immediately, the political reaction was strong: the political secretary of the PD Enrico Letta promised that the case will reach the Rai Surveillance Commission, putting the journalist's job at risk. In the same hours, on RaiNews 24 - the all-news channel directed by Paolo Petrecca, close to the Fratelli d'Italia (political right party) - the journalist Gianluca Semprini was interviewing the writer Sara Reginella, author of the book "Donbas, the Ghost War in the Heart of Europe". And once again, another political member of the left party was asking the parliamentary supervisory commission to verify what was happening during the public news programs. The independent journalist and researcher based in Kyiv, Olga Tokariuk, immediately tweeted: "Unbelievable that while Russia is bombing Ukrainian cities, killing children and other civilians, there are journalist on the Italian public TV RAI who are spreading disinformation on air about mythical Ukrainian Nazis and justifying Putin. They are enablers in this war".

Another controversy was between the world-wide known writer Roberto Saviano (*Gomorrah*) and Anne Applebaum, a Polish American journalist that has written extensively about Marxism-Leninism and the development of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe, during the show *Che Tempo che fa* on Rai 3 on Sunday, February 28, in primetime.

Roberto Saviano, guest of the show was talking about the connection between Russian mafia and Ukrainian organizations for gas: "The negotiation that took place before the Maidan's revolt for gas between Ukraine and Russia was done by the largest Russian mafia organization, governed by Semion Mogilevich, the Solncevskaja bratva, which means brigade of the sun," he explained. Semion Mogilevich is the real Ukrainian leader of a Russian organization. The gas sold to Ukraine was gas brokered by the Russian mafia. Well, it was the Maidan revolt that blew the bank. When the Ukrainian people rose, the agreements with the company that sold gas to Ukraine (a company founded by Putin, among other things) were blown up". The reaction of the Pulitzer's journalist was immediate: "I have just been on an Italian TV show where someone speculated that this whole war is a battle between the Russian mafia and the Ukrainian mafia. I sense that we all see events through a national lens," she wrote on Twitter. Later, after a few hours the reporter deleted the post, writing instead that it was a bad translation and wrote: "update to my (deleted) tweet about the Italian journalist: he was @robertosaviano, a genuine and brave expert on organized crime; his words were mistranslated to me. He was explaining that Crimea and Donbas were literally colonized by the Russian mafia, which is of course true".

Despite all of these controversies, I would like to spend a word for the many Italian correspondents in Ukraine: men and women who every day risked their lives to tell the news, sometimes they were overwhelmed by the ego of their directors, but in most of the cases they were able to convey the horror of what they were seeing.

In the end it is always the public that makes its judgment. The narrative of the Italian correspondents moving from one city to another, under Putin's bombs, was sincere and real, despite the arrogance of some self-centred Italian news directors.

When politics doesn't enter the narrative, journalism triumphs and luckily, we have many examples of good journalism also in Italy!

Don Paolo Pezzi, Archbishop of the Catholic Church of Moscow, was expecting to face the period of Lent with some difficulties, given by the deaths from covid, instead he had to deal with one of the most terrific tragedies of the century: the war.

"On Wednesday, March 2, Day of Ashes for many Catholics around the world, the church was full of astonished people. After two years of pandemic, the cathedral was crowded" - remembered the high prelate - "but the most unexpected (or perhaps kept silent) event was in front of me. Another tragedy struck us. The war at the gates has undermined that timid, but desired, revival of relationships. Even among the most faithful I have noticed a sudden reappearance of distrust just because we belong to different peoples.

My sensation was as if Jesus Christ had come in vain, as if faith, baptism could not make us take that small yet infinite "jump" which is forgiveness, mercy. Like in the hit song of Italian singer Lucio Dalla, which has come back in recent days, a song from the



The Church and the War

time of the Balkan war whose lesson we too quickly forgot, "I believe it is love that will save us". It is a very true intuition, so much so that according to Saint Paul everything will disappear except love (cf. 1 Cor 13,8). But in this life, seems forgotten".

Those were the thoughts of the archbishop in Moscow and without any fears he ordered to ring the bells of the Church and to fast and pray as Pope Francis suggested to do around the world: a clear message of vicinity to the Ukrainian people. The prelate of course was not able to talk and to write openly.

In the same week, his native church in Italy (which by chance is in my city of Ravenna) started the cooperation and collaboration with the Orthodox Church of Faenza and Ravenna. Together, they started to organize humanitarian aid with groceries,

blankets, food, clothes for babies and milk. Trucks driven by Ukrainians loaded with all the boxes and packages drove to the borders in Poland. Here, in Italy the local Ukrainian community was organizing the first welcoming for several groups of moms and their kids. The Romagna Riviera famous for its beaches and hotels was ready to welcome the people. Women and men from every religion and ethnicity were packing, collecting, and driving, doing all their best to help. One voice in unison: We must help and support

Ukraine! All the catholic parishes, churches and communities were referring to the Orthodox Church.

The archbishop in Moscow is putting his life in danger for supporting the Ukrainian and he is doing that just as he is following the words of Francis Pope, but his community in Italy is acting in connection with the Orthodox Church and this is unusual, because as we know, the Orthodox Church in Moscow is totally devoted to Putin. ■



What is happening in Russia?

Yako Molhov

Russian media have been operating in a parallel reality for many years, based on state propaganda, fake news and fake “reference points” (a.k.a. “opor-ki”) and since February 24 this reality has been given a name: “Z”.

While the entire world (except for North Korea, Eritrea, Syria and Belarus) has condemned Russia’s invasion of Ukraine thru a UN resolution which called for the immediate withdrawal of its forces, Russian media have been presenting a narrative dictated by Vladimir Putin, calling the awwhose goal is the “demilitarization” and “denazification” of Ukraine. The “Nazis”, however, are not in Kyiv but in Moscow, judging by the use of propaganda on national TV. Not only the TV air but the entire country has been flooded with fascist-type emblems which signify a militarized society loyal to those in power and their “special operation Z”.

Why “Z” - since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, and particularly in the last couple of weeks, the letter Z has become the increasingly ubiquitous symbol of support for the war, for the military, for the Kremlin’s policies, and most of all for President Vladimir Putin. TV hosts are wearing “Z” on their clothes, graphic elements on TV include the symbol, it is all over social networks (those that are not banned in Russia), the state-controlled television network – RT - began selling merchandize emblazoned with the symbol, slogans with the letter Z have been put on billboards, used in concerts, put on the back windows of cars, worn by Russian sportsmen and, in Kazan, terminally ill

children were lined up to spell out the letter Z in the snow (something which happened also in Nazi Germany with the swastika)... Perhaps the most puzzling (and perhaps ironic) element in this “adoption” is the fact that “Z” is a letter from the Roman alphabet and there is no such letter in the Cyrillic script used in Russia - a country that relies on purism and everything anti-Western, especially after February 24...

The letter Z is painted on many of the Russian military vehicles that have invaded Ukraine over the past month. The Russian military has not explained the use of the letter, analysts believe it is used to indicate forces from the Western (Zapadny) Military District. Other vehicles bore different symbols that seemed to refer to the Eastern, Southern, and Central military districts, or even Chechens.

While in the beginning of the war “Z” was exclusively used to show support for the Russian military, its later use has morphed into an unconditional support for Putin. The recent concert on March 18 aired live on TV dedicated to the annexation of Crimea, featured the slogan “За Россию” (written with the Roman alphabet Z; its meaning being “For Russia”) seen on the stage behind Putin, while posters “За Путина” (“For Putin”) could be seen among the audience. „За Родину, за Сталина!” (“For Motherland, for Stalin!”) was a particularly popular political slogan used by some as a battle cry in the Red Army and Navy during the Second World War. And while “Z” may mean a plethora of things, one thing is certain – it signifies the “stalini-Zation” of media in Russia, as The

Economist wrote, a process which has been slowly but steadily crawling in the past years, with its culmination during the “special military operation” against Ukraine.

In Russia everything is controlled by the state now – including media – and this is not an exaggeration. On March 3 the last independent TV channel – Dozhd (Rain) – went dark. The last thing it aired was a Soviet-era recording of “Swan Lake”. The choice was symbolic. It is what Soviet television channels showed on August 19, 1991, as the KGB and the army attempted a coup against Mikhail Gorbachev and declared a state of emergency in Russia. It was at that time that Echo Moskv, Russia’s main liberal radio station, was briefly taken off air and newspaper printing presses were stopped. Today there is no Echo Moskv either. Additionally, respected international media like BBC News, Deutsche Welle, RFE, Radio Liberty etc. have been blocked and so are Facebook and Instagram (on March 21 a Moscow court ruled that they were “extremist”), Twitter, TikTok. Russia’s internet was not totally free before the invasion. LinkedIn is banned, and TikTok was already censored. But state censorship has escalated with the war, as the Kremlin attempts to hide the fact that the war (its “special military operation”) hasn’t so far gone as planned from Russia’s estimated 122 million internet users.

For many people unfamiliar with the situation in Russia, the latest state censorship may seem extreme and sudden but the reality is that the process has been gradually growing in the past 10 years. At the beginning



Marina Ovsyannikova holding a sign during newscast

of Putin’s third term as president in 2012 (he has been in power since 2000) many laws were passed which facilitated censorship and prosecution of independent media. The new legislation also lead to self-censorship and not only in media but in other spheres of culture and arts. In 2019 the Russian government introduced also the so-called “fake news law” which criminalizes publishing “unreliable” information as well as opinions that show “disrespect for society, government, state symbols, the constitution and government institutions”. The government has also been using legislation again “extremism” to suppress freedom of speech. After Russia took control of Crimea, the Russian parliament also passed a law making it a criminal offense to question Russia’s territorial integrity within what the government considers its borders.

What is the current situation with TV in Russia? One word – abysmal, or at least when it comes to democracy and freedom of speech. All but

one national TV channel are fully or partially owned by the state. All major nets (save for entertainment and niche channels) have extensive newscasts, “with the focus being special military operation that the Russian armed forces are conducting in Ukraine; live - reports, eyewitness accounts and the latest official data on what is happening in Ukraine”, as the description of one of the marathons reads. Alongside passionate reports from journalists, state TV often uses the same footage that is seen around the world: shelled cities, destroyed houses, dead civilians, bleeding children but it blames it all on the Ukrainian “Nazis”. The newscasts also feature reports from the “Donetsk People’s Republic” and “Lugansk People’s Republic”. While during the beginning of the invasion the focus was on providing round the clock info on Russian army’s “successes”, now the predominant accent is put on showing stories from Luhansk and Donetsk, about the suffering of the Russian population there and

also about the humanitarian action of Russia in Ukraine while showing the atrocities of the “Nazis” who are bombing and destroying their own country.

Russian nets also air numerous talkshows which run for hours and feature representatives of government agencies, state organizations and “experts” who are all supporting Putin’s war in one voice. But this voice, one cannot help but notice, gets increasingly angrier. Guests often talk over each other aggressively but not to present their different point of view, they are passionately trying to convince who has the better arguments to support Putin’s agenda. That point of view is accompanied by lies, heroic music, historic flashbacks, and stories of Russian volunteers heroically sacrificing their lives in their fight against fascism, just as they did during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45.

If there are no newscasts or talkshows, major Russian nets air documentaries (which could easily be



Photo from official site of Kazansky Hospis

described as “pseudo” documentaries since the propaganda in them can be seen even by kids and fiction and facts are difficult to be set apart in them) about the heroic past of Russia and the Soviet Union, the savior of Europe who beat the Nazis. Russian nets have also been airing a lot of period dramas lately, focusing on the glorious past of the Soviet Union, the early days of Russia; etc. The Western world is presented as “the enemy”, Russia is not only battling Ukrainian “nationalists” and “Nazis”, it is also bravely standing against the Western powers who threaten its integrity and freedom...

There are news that are missing from the TV reports, however. The regular Russian viewer, relying on TV, won’t learn about the anti-war protests in Moscow and other Russian cities which have resulted in thousands of arrests. Another reality that is hard to disguise is the economic consequences of Putin’s “special operation”. The picture painted on TV is that the state is trying its best to secure the Russian economy against the evil West that has imposed unfair sanctions against the country.

Missing from the newscast is also the number of killed Russian soldiers. Nevertheless, Russian military is strongly present in newscasts – both with regular reports about heroism

and awarding brave soldiers; regular briefings from generals and officials about the “successes” of the “operation” and video segments with military strikes as well as numerous reports by reporters embedded with Russian military forces – interestingly enough the reports are mainly if not only from Donetsk and Luhansk...

The intensity of the propaganda and its presence on all channels, genres, are all designed to overwhelm the audience, without any room for questions and doubt. All who dare to question the state policy are deemed traitors. A simple example – the so called main “newscast” on Perviy (Channel One) on March 20 featured a total of 5 segments with Putin 4 of which were aired in the first 20 minutes of the newscast, occupying roughly one third of it. It is also worth noting that the newscasts are not newscasts at all – those are propaganda reels, with music, selective information, paid journalists and people with dubious past presented as “experts”, without differentiating between facts and opinions.

Despite all these efforts, some cracks in state TV propaganda have been observed. On March 14, a woman holding an anti-war sign ran on to the set of Perviy’s main newscast Vremya (Times). The sign, clearly visible behind the presenter, read: “No war, stop the war, don’t believe



Putin concert For Russia

the propaganda, they are lying to you here.” The woman was later identified as Marina Ovsyannikova, an editor at the channel. Her voice could be heard during the broadcast saying, “No to war! Stop the war!” before the director of the newscast cut early to a recorded news report. Before the protest she recorded a video in which she called events in Ukraine a “crime” and said she was ashamed to work for what she called Kremlin propaganda. In its main newscast on March 20, roughly around one hour after its start, Perviy made an interesting statement on the case, thru its head of news who stood next to the host and called the editor “a traitor”, making reference to the biblical “thirty pieces of silver” and signing off by wishing health to all, without exceptions, even to traitors who have to live with their guilt.

Earlier, on March 10, viewers heard a part of the truth regarding the war in Ukraine during one of the country’s most-popular state TV programs An Evening with Vladimir Soloviev on Rossiya – hosted by one of Russia’s most-popular journalists and “Putin’s propagandist-in-chief” (who is now on the sanctions list of people close to Russia’s president). Semyon Bagdasarov, a MP of the State Duma, called on the Russian president to end the attack, while warning allies like China and India could soon turn

their backs on Moscow. “Do we need to get into another Afghanistan, but even worse? There are more people and they’re more advanced in their weapon handling”, he said, “We don’t need that. Enough already.” “This public opinion, with which they’re saturating the entire world, can play out badly for us. ... Ending this operation will stabilise things within the country.”

On the same show, filmmaker Karen Shakhnazarov said: “I have a hard time imagining taking cities such as Kyiv. I can’t imagine how that would look”.

A number of Russian journalists have also started leaving state-controlled Russian TV channels. Lilia Gildeyeva, a well-known host of NTV Russia, who hosted the Segodnya program for many years, quit her job and left Russia. The woman wrote a termination statement from abroad, because she was afraid that she would not be let out of the country.

Is Russian state TV propaganda working and to what extent? Overall, across the series of initial polls, a “silent majority”—about 60% of Russian respondents—indicated that they endorsed the “special military operation” in Ukraine... watching television news positively linked in Russia with trust in Putin and positive perceptions of Russia’s role in the world. By contrast, using the internet

and “social media” in Russia produces the reverse pattern, with less trust in Putin and more negative views of Russia’s influence. With radio and newspaper use the patterns are more mixed.”

A more disturbing survey, made by Ukrainian agency Active Group, paints a terrifying picture of Russian society: “86.6% of Russians tolerate and support the potential assault on the territory of the European Union, including: Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and others. 75.5% of Russians approve the idea of a military invasion in the next country and believe that it should be Poland. According to respondents, this is a logical continuation of the so-called “military special operation of the Russian Federation”.

Most likely, state propaganda is not the only thing to blame, and the words of the Belarusian Nobel Prize for Literature laureate Svetlana Alexievich are true: “...a country obsessed with war, a country with a military psyche... The Russian man is not accustomed to a peaceful life. He has always lived in war and in the name of the state - he has never lived for himself. The Russian man has a special attitude to death. And the country itself is deeply incapable of leading a civilian, normal, peaceful life...” ■



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*Respectfully yours,
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