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COMMUNICATION

by

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on

“Ensuring the safety of MPs and parliamentary staff”

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The war has fundamentally changed the life of our country and the daily operations of all state institutions.

On February 24, 2022, from the very first hours of Russia's full-scale invasion, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine faced an unprecedented challenge — how to preserve the continuity of parliamentary work under conditions of real danger.

Despite the threat of a direct assault on the capital, the Parliament did not cease its activities. On the contrary, it demonstrated unity and efficiency.

In February 2022, the Secretariat, in cooperation with the leadership of the Parliament, parliamentary factions and groups, as well as Members of Parliament, established a special working regime that ensured both the swift adoption of decisions and compliance with security requirements.

From the first days of the invasion, the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada, together with the Department of State Protection of Ukraine, developed new security protocols.

Their goal was to protect Members of Parliament and staff, and to ensure parliamentary operations even when the enemy was merely twenty kilometers from the building.

We ensured:

logistics;

communication;

backup power sources for parliamentary buildings in case of damage to the main networks;

reserve workplaces;

the digital solutions introduced during the pandemic were upgraded with additional security measures, which made it possible to operate both online and offline;

an alternative satellite communication system to guarantee stable communication even during power outages.

The Verkhovna Rada deliberately refrained from adopting remote voting — neither during the pandemic nor under martial law.

The Parliament continued to work in the session hall while following all safety protocols.

In case of an air raid alert, the session is suspended, and work resumes only after the official “all clear” signal. This was a principled decision.

We demonstrated that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine works, the state functions, and democracy does not stop — even in the darkest times. The Parliament’s work became a symbol of the country’s resilience and the strength of its institutions.

Today, the Parliament continues its work despite ongoing security threats. Missiles and drones have on multiple occasions been shot down in close proximity to the Verkhovna Rada buildings.

In early 2025, a drone strike blast wave damaged the parliamentary committee buildings. Moreover, in October, debris from a downed missile fell only 50–70 meters from the session hall.

After one of the massive attacks that left Kyiv without water, the Parliament did not stop — we continued working using backup power systems.

This demonstrates our sense of responsibility to the state and readiness to act under any circumstances.

Today, the Verkhovna Rada is an institution capable of operating autonomously. We have implemented a modern electronic document management system, data backup, and secure tools for remote work by MPs and Secretariat staff.

Based on our experience, we also recommend ensuring the reliable preservation of original legislative acts and historical documents essential for institutional memory.

Security of Key Individuals and Delegations

Special attention is given to the security of the Verkhovna Rada’s leadership, its buildings, and foreign delegations.

According to the Law of Ukraine “On State Protection of State Authorities and Officials,” the Department of State Protection of Ukraine — a special law enforcement body subordinated to the President and accountable to the Parliament — carries out these functions.

In many parliamentary secretariats worldwide, the security department is part of the Secretariat itself. In Ukraine, professional contract military personnel perform this role.

In April 2022, the list of persons entitled to state protection was expanded. Previously, the Department of State Protection of Ukraine ensured the security of the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada and the First Deputy Speaker; now this also includes the Deputy Speaker.

After leaving office, these officials remain under protection for one year, except as otherwise provided by law.

At present, this issue requires further refinement, and in our opinion, the period of state protection should be extended.

In addition, Members of Parliament may be provided with state protection in cases

where there is a threat to their life or health.

The Administration of State Protection of Ukraine has a specific procedure regulating this matter.

Special attention is paid to the security of foreign delegations.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Verkhovna Rada has hosted over two hundred delegations.

Each visit is thoroughly organized — the Secretariat of the Parliament, in cooperation with the Department of State Protection of Ukraine, the National Police, and other authorities, plans the program, coordinates it, and accompanies guests until they cross the national border of Ukraine.

Evacuation, Air Raid Procedures, and Medical Support

Ensuring the safety of MPs, Secretariat staff, journalists, and members of foreign delegations working in the Parliament is our top priority.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada has implemented a clear algorithm of actions during air raid alerts.

Every staff member uses the “Air Alert” mobile application, which provides real-time notifications about the start and end of alerts.

The app is synchronized with Ukraine’s national alert system, including within parliamentary buildings.

Shelter locations have been identified and verified, and their capacity calculated. All evacuation routes, procedures, and alternative workplaces are predefined and practiced to perfection.

We also devote particular attention to medical support.

Medical professionals and ambulances are permanently stationed within the Parliament buildings.

Secretariat employees regularly undergo training in first aid, evacuation, psychological support, and emergency response.

All these measures ensure the safety and stability of the Parliament’s work, even in the most challenging circumstances, and guarantee readiness to act in any emergency.

Information Security and Media Access

Safety is not limited to shelters. During the war, we pay special attention to information security.

From the first days of the full-scale russian invasion, media access to the Verkhovna Rada was restricted.

Live broadcasts of plenary sessions were temporarily suspended, and real-time information was released with a delay.

This was done primarily to ensure the security of Members of Parliament.

These measures, implemented in accordance with parliamentary resolutions of 2022 and 2023, made it possible to balance security with public communication.

On May 6, 2024, media representatives regained partial access to the work of the Verkhovna Rada. On September 16, 2025, live broadcasts of plenary sessions were resumed.

Countering Disinformation

A few words about countering disinformation.

The Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine operates a Monitoring and Analytics Department.

Its staff continuously monitor the information space regarding parliamentary activity using specialized analytical tools and prepare daily and periodic analytical reports.

If the media publish materials containing false or misleading information about the Parliament's work, they are officially refuted after verification.

At the national level, efforts to counter information threats are coordinated by the Center for Countering Disinformation under the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine.

The Center's main task is to detect, analyze, and neutralize disinformation that may threaten national security.

It also coordinates cooperation among government institutions to ensure a unified and effective information security policy.

Cybersecurity

Finally, an essential aspect — cybersecurity.

Since 2022, our IT division has repelled more than 1,300 cyberattacks targeting internal networks and public systems.

The Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada has established a Security Operations Center (SOC) to respond to cyber incidents.

We have also signed a cooperation agreement with the European Parliament, allowing for technical knowledge exchange and urgent assistance.

Additionally, we cooperate closely with the Cyber Police and relevant units of the Security Service of Ukraine.

It should also be noted that the official website of the Verkhovna Rada has ranked among the most visited government websites over the past three years.

All these measures, together with those mentioned earlier, ensure that the Parliament continues to work uninterruptedly and effectively, despite the severe conditions caused by the war.