

3 MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

in human rights development since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine



RATIFICATION OF THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION

1 On 20 June 2022, the Parliament of Ukraine ratified the Istanbul Convention. Without a doubt, this was a historic moment for Ukraine, which became the climactic point of 11 years of feminist activism for the Convention ratification ever since Ukraine signed it in 2011.

According to the official statistics from the Ukrainian government, the national police received over **200 000** reports of domestic violence in 2020, 86% of them being from women.

Before the ratification of the Convention, violence in Ukraine was subject to administrative and criminal legislation. However, an offender who hasn't been charged with at least two administrative fines within a year cannot be held criminally liable. The Istanbul Convention corrects this deficiency. Moreover, the Convention also criminalizes harassment and stalking, which are currently not regulated by Ukrainian legislation.

The importance of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention is hardly to be overestimated as it is a legal confirmation of Ukraine's desire to fight domestic violence, which would include stricter legislation, funding of shelters for women and training of social workers.

WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES

2 According to the Deputy Minister of Defence of Ukraine, **Hanna Maliar**, there are 37 000 women in the Ukrainian army: 7000 of them have joined the Armed Forces after the start of the full-scale invasion (in October 2021, there were only 31 000 women in the army); **1 000 women** have already become commanders. These numbers make Ukraine's percentage of women in the army one of the highest in the world.

The increasing number of women in the army has been reflected in the language of mass media and Ukraine's government, who are now actively using feminitives – typical for Ukrainian nouns of female gender – while giving honors to the defenders of Ukraine.

For the first time in the history of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, women in the army are to have a standard female military uniform. Previously, **uniforms** were sent to some women from abroad; it was almost impossible to buy them in Ukraine.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

3 On 8 July 2022, a **petition** on the legalization of same-sex marriages has reached 25 000 signatures. With the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, many LGBTQ+ people went to the front-lines to defend their country from the Russian occupiers. However, according to the current Ukrainian legislation, LGBTQ+ families are now more vulnerable than ever – they cannot officially get married, get children's custody, inherit their partner's assets and are even denied the right to bury their partner's body.

Although it would be impossible to legalize same-sex marriages while the country remained at war, since it would require a change to the Constitution, the President Zelensky has replied to the petition with an alternative solution of the legalization of same-sex civil partnerships.

The overall attitude of Ukrainians towards the LGBTQ+ community has also witnessed some **major positive changes**: in the last six years (2016-2022), the number of Ukrainians who have a negative attitude towards LGBTQ+ people has decreased by 1.5 times (from 60.4% to 38.2%), the number of those who have a positive attitude has quadrupled (from 3.3 % to 12.8%), and of those who are indifferent - increased from 30.7% to 44.8%.