

# SOCIAL ASPECTS OF MILITARY POLICY



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Programmes of the majority of Ukrainian political parties contain theses on social security of servicemen and their families, however, from year to year, these problems have been left last in line for resolution. At that, although certain progress has been observed in some military formations, the situation in the Armed Forces remains, as before, close to disastrous by the most of indicators<sup>1</sup>. By and large, the level of social security is insufficient in all military formations, but the worst situation is observed in the Armed Forces *per se*.

## Pay

The level of pay of the Armed Forces servicemen does not cover the basic needs of their families — per capita monthly average income in families of Ukrainian servicemen is a mere UAH 130-170<sup>2</sup>, while the national subsistence (poverty) level is UAH 342<sup>3</sup>. The practice of officers and non-commissioned officers “moonlighting” in their free time and on leave has become customary and widespread. This phenomenon does not allow them to recreate, maintain good health and has a negative effect on the performance of their official duties.

The level of pay of the Armed Forces officers (despite its increase, in 2000, some 1.37-1.46 times, on average) is insufficient to raise their social status. Young people often enter military schools to obtain free education. Many officers remain in the service not for a decent reward or for moral motives offered by the military service itself, but in hope of obtaining housing and a pension afterwards.

Insufficient pay of active duty servicemen of the Armed Forces hinders solution of many problems, in particular, does not allow to:

- ❖ increase the number of trained and disciplined contracted servicemen, as envisaged by plans of reform;
- ❖ eliminate the chronic deficit of junior officers (civilian life offers more and better prospects for healthy and educated young men while improvements in the army are barely noticeable);
- ❖ keep experienced and promising senior officers (their pay is insufficient to maintain their family; employment of retired officers is becoming an increasingly difficult task, so, it is better to leave the service in time, while you are not too old and have at least some prospects in civilian life);
- ❖ remove imbalances in the structure of the officers’ corps, when the number of junior and senior officers is roughly the same;

<sup>1</sup> Razumkov Centre has repeatedly drawn attention to the imbalance between the levels of official pay of officers of Ukraine’s Armed Forces, compared to Ukraine’s Security Service and State Guard Service. See: Military Reform in Ukraine: the Start or Another False Start? — *National Security & Defence*, 2000, No.1, p.6, <http://www.uceps.com.ua>, or an article by Razumkov Centre expert O.Manachinsky: Outside Price of the Military Service. — *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, 2002, No.1, p.5, <http://www.uceps.com.ua>. The pay in Ukraine’s Armed Forces is 1.5-2.0 times lower than in other military formations, although even there, the amount of pay cannot be assumed fair compensation for difficult and responsible service.

The gap between the insured amounts of mandatory state life insurance set for the servicemen and, say, officers of public procurator offices, bodies of internal affairs, customs service and tax administration remains largely unchanged: for the military, they are ten and more times lower. See: Reform in Ukraine’s Insurance System: Conceptual Background. — *National Security & Defence*, 2000, No.4, p.27, <http://www.uceps.com.ua>.

<sup>2</sup> Economic Problems Are the Main Barrier to Reforming of the Ukrainian Army. — *Defense-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/eng/hotnews/?id=2030>.

<sup>3</sup> The Law of Ukraine “On Approval of the Subsistence Level for 2002”. — <http://www.rada.gov.ua>.



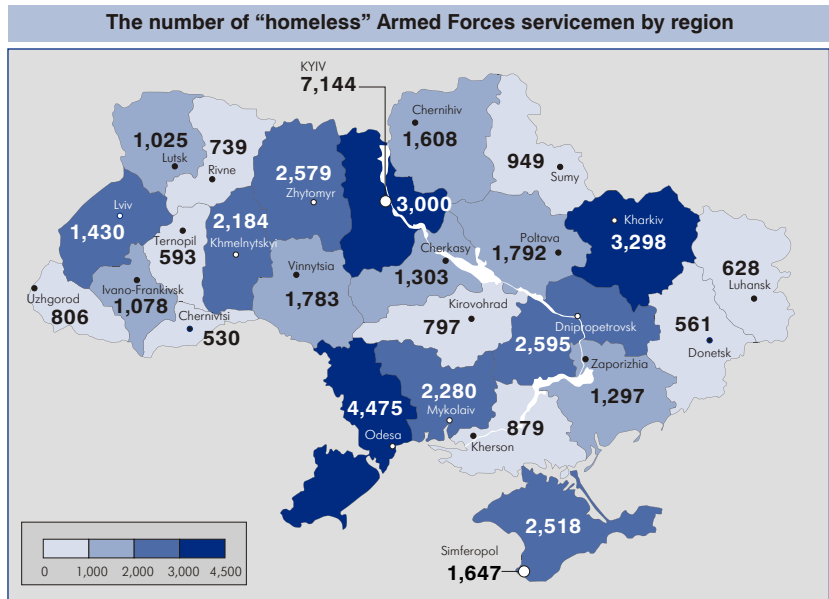
- ❖ radically reduce the number of suicides, which are often committed because of unsatisfactory social protection;

- ❖ ensure enrolment (to the military or civil service) of educated people needed to maintain and employ state-of-the-art sophisticated weapons;

- ❖ fill executive positions of civil servants (intended for civilian control) with qualified specialists (will there be many civilian specialists willing to take a job for a symbolic pay?).

**Housing**

Housing problems exist in all military and law-enforcement structures (96.9 thousand of servicemen of different agencies have no living quarters). However, the worst situation is again observed in Ukraine's Armed Forces where the number of "homeless" exceeds 56 thousand (Diagram "Provision of servicemen of Ukraine's Armed Forces with housing" drawn on the basis of statements of the Armed Forces command); in the Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs there are nearly 3,000 "homeless"; in the State Penitentiary Committee — over 4,500; in the Security Service of Ukraine — 5,500, in the State Committee of Border Control — 6,000, in the Civil Defence Troops of the Ministry of Emergencies — 1,500<sup>4</sup>.



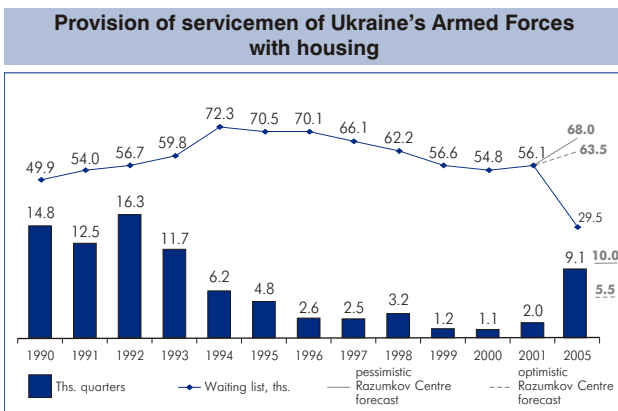
even the optimistically planned rate of housing construction in the Armed Forces (1,100 quarters a year<sup>6</sup>). Given such a rate, those closing the queue have a chance of obtaining quarters in as many as 50 years, and in some regions (Map "The number of "homeless" Armed Forces servicemen by region"<sup>7</sup>) — much later.

Housing problems hinder reforms, as does low pay. For instance, the leadership of Ukraine's Armed Forces announced not too long ago its intention to perform regular rotation of the places of officer service. The idea is good, but has anybody made calculations and envisaged additional funds for the settlement of families after regular transfers?

**Social and professional adaptation of servicemen of the Armed Forces and other military formations retired or transferred to the reserve**

This problem emerged as far back as 1992, but due to the absence of a corresponding State Programme and of the relevant executive body within the executive branch, before 1996, those issues in Ukraine were left to interested governments of some foreign countries, non-governmental organisations and foreign charitable funds.

In 1996, the Comprehensive Programme for Social and Professional Adaptation of Servicemen of the Armed Forces and Other Military Formations was adopted. It came to the end in 1999. However, the above Programme implemented under the auspices of the National Co-ordination Centre for Social and



Half of the Armed Forces' contract servicemen have no housing either. The number of contracted servicemen is presently equal to 29 thousand, but in 2005, there will be some 50 thousand. Therefore, the forecasted rate of growth of the number of "homeless" (according to the estimate of Ukraine's MoD, "by 2006, the army of "homeless" will grow by 17.5 thousand"<sup>5</sup>) exceeds

<sup>4</sup> Homeless People in Epaulets. — *Defense-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/eng/hotnews/?id=1391>.

<sup>5</sup> Departmental Programme of Housing Provision for Servicemen and Their Families within the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine through 2006. — <http://www.mil.gov.ua/ukr/sostav.phtml?gurvkb>.

<sup>6</sup> The State Programme of Reform and Development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through 2005. The data are cited with account of extrabudgetary sources. Given the above-mentioned volumes of budget funding alone, the rate of housing construction for the military will not exceed 360 quarters a year. See: <http://www.mil.gov.ua/ukr/law.phtml?dpbr>. In 2001, Ukraine's MoD obtained UAH 20.6 million for housing construction, some 2,000 apartments were built, 60% of them — at the expense of extrabudgetary funds. In 2002, UAH 15.6 million were allocated to this purpose. See: Construction Is a Concrete Affair. — *Narodna Armiya*, January 25, 2002, p.1 (data of the Press Service of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine).

<sup>7</sup> Departmental Programme of Housing Provision for Servicemen and Their Families within the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine through 2006. — <http://www.mil.gov.ua/ukr/sostav.phtml?gurvkb>.

Professional Adaptation of Servicemen (NCC)<sup>8</sup> only to some extent mitigated the acuity of the problem of social support for former servicemen retired as a result of cuts. It could not resolve the entire set of problems existing in that sphere<sup>9</sup>.

The leadership of Ukraine's MoD speaks about the necessity of strengthening interaction with NCC, better division of tasks and functions, development of an effective system of retraining and employment, formation of the regulatory-legal base<sup>10</sup>. In practice, however, this issue is often neglected both in Ukraine's Armed Forces and other military formations.

The President of Ukraine by his Decree No.717 of May 24, 2000 approved "The Guidelines of Social Policy through 2004" that envisaged the development of the Programme for Social and Professional Adaptation of Retired Servicemen through 2004 and concrete guidelines of its implementations. However, the Concept of Social Policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine<sup>11</sup> approved by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine Board on April 6, 2001, for some reason disregards creation and improvement of the system of social and professional adaptation of retired servicemen.

The issues of social and professional adaptation of former servicemen are actually unaccounted in the revised State Programme of Reform and Development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through 2005<sup>12</sup>. The same can be said about the programme documents of reformation of other military formations of Ukraine.

### Morale and discipline

Due to the lack of information, it is difficult to assess the level of morale and discipline in the majority of military formations, but regarding the Armed Forces, the conclusion is distressing — this level is evidently low.

At the same time, in the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine they believe that recently, the moral climate and indicators of discipline among the military have somewhat improved (thanks to repayment of arrears, increase of the basic pay, restoration of some privileges, etc.). In 2001, the number of infringements in the Armed Forces fell by 30%<sup>13</sup>. However, the level of officer discipline and observance of statutory relations remains low<sup>14</sup>.

Insufficient funding and provision with resources often force commanders to engage in business, and the deficiencies of applicable laws tempt some commanders and executives to operate on the brink of law or even beyond its limits<sup>15</sup>.

As servicemen are permanently busy thinking how to feed themselves and their families, this surely affects the morale of military servants and combat efficiency of troops. According to the latest large-scale sociological survey conducted in the Armed Forces at the end of the 1990s, close to 55% of the polled servicemen of the regular army assessed the state of affairs in the Armed Forces as "bad" and suggested that fundamental changes are needed; 31% of the military saw no prospects for the better whatsoever. It is no wonder that more than 70% of the Armed Forces servicemen called the attitude of the central authorities to the army "indifferent", 10% — "hostile and scornful"<sup>16</sup>.

According to the recent poll held in 2001 by the Main Department of Mentoring of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine in six military institutes, only a bit more than 57% of last-year cadets are willing to serve as officers, while 37% of the polled reported that they were dissatisfied with the state's care about the army, and the degree of social protection. Only 4% of respondents are fully satisfied with the present state of affairs<sup>17</sup>.

### Conclusions

**The social protection of servicemen of Ukraine's military formations is insufficient, while that of Ukraine's Armed Forces per se is extremely poor.**

**The issues of social and professional adaptation of former servicemen are still not receiving due attention, they have not become an important element of the process of Ukraine's Military organisation reform.**

**The low level of social protection affects the morale and discipline of military servants. Many active duty servicemen from nearly all categories see no weighty reasons to remain in the military.**

**The problems of social protection are turning into an increasingly strong impediment to military reform. Unless their urgent resolution is commenced, one can hardly expect any will and enthusiasm of servicemen necessary for the success of the relevant reforms. ■**

<sup>8</sup> That organisation has recently been liquidated. A new one was established on its basis — the National Co-ordination Centre for Adaptation of Servicemen Retired or Transferred to the Reserve and Conversion of Former Military Sites. See: the President of Ukraine Decree No.49 of January 19, 2002. — <http://www.rada.gov.ua/laws/pravo/all/maindocn.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Tkachuk A. Proposals to the research projects of the Bonn International Centre for Conversion "Demobilisation and Restructuring of the Armed Forces in the Eastern Europe", Germany, 2001. Draft, quoted with the author's permission.

<sup>10</sup> See: Kaminskyi M. The Issue of Extreme Importance. Notes from the expanded meeting of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine Board. — *Narodna Armija*, April 14, 2001, p.4.

<sup>11</sup> For the content of the Concept of Social Policy in the Armed Forces of Ukraine see: *Armija Ukrainy*, May 26, 2001, p.7.

<sup>12</sup> This issue deserved only two lines in Ukraine's MoD document titled "The State Programme of Reform and Development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through 2005 and the Main Results of Its Implementation": "For adaptation of servicemen retired or transferred to the reserve to the new conditions of life, a relevant Comprehensive Programme was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No.918 of August 5, 1996, implemented in course of three years". — <http://www.mil.gov.ua/ukr/law.phtml?dpbr>.

<sup>13</sup> Tuliakov D. Mentoring People Professionally, Working with Them in an Active and Creative Manner. — *Armija Ukrainy*, November 20, 2001, p.3.

<sup>14</sup> "The blots of crimes related with abuse of power, embezzlement of army property, bribery have not been washed yet from the military uniform". — From the speech of the President of Ukraine L.Kuchma at the expanded meeting of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine Board on November 14, 2001. See: <http://www.kuchma.gov.ua/main/?speech-53>.

<sup>15</sup> "The army should not be converted into a big co-operative society or trading house — this is not its business. Furthermore, such practice is just one step away from abuses and transgression of the law. Some are making or have already made this step. I tell them frankly: you are playing with fire". See: *Ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> Razumtsev O. Social Aspects of Armed Forces Reform: the Spirit of Ukrainian Officers. — *National Security & Defence*, 2000, No.2, p.41-42, <http://www.uceps.com.ua>.

<sup>17</sup> 12% of military school graduates are unwilling to serve as officer. — *Defense-Express*, <http://www.defense-ua.com/rus/news/?id=1143&prn=yes>.