

UDC 355.273(477):355.48(470:477)“2014/...”  
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.27.281537

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**Bibliographic Description of the Article:** Levchenko, I. & Chubina, T. (2023). Territorial Defense Forces as a Phenomenon of the National Army of Ukraine (from december of 2020 to the present day). *Skhidnoievropejskyi istorychnyi visnyk [East European Historical Bulletin]*, 27, 236–248. doi: 10.24919/2519-058X.27.281537

**TERRITORIAL DEFENSE FORCES AS A PHENOMENON OF THE NATIONAL ARMY OF UKRAINE (FROM DECEMBER OF 2020 TO THE PRESENT DAY)**

**Abstract.** *The article deals with determination of the socio-political factors of the Territorial Defense Forces formation, analysis of legal support for citizens' participation in territorial defense, elucidation of military activity of the Territorial Defense soldiers based on the analysis of sources. The authors analyzed the Territorial Defense Forces of Ukraine formation since December of 2020, when the Draft Law of Ukraine "On Territorial Defense" was registered, in fact the first draft law that defined the tasks of the Territorial Defense Forces, substantiated new concepts that were previously incomprehensible to the majority of the Ukrainians. In particular, in the Project there is elucidated the essence of the concept of "Territorial Defense System of Ukraine", which combined military and civilian components.*

*The main aspects of the regulatory framework, which defined the Territorial Defense rights and obligations have been studied. The Law of Ukraine "On the Basics of National Resistance", signed by the President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyi on July 16, 2021, has been analyzed. The main articles of the*

Law, which provide the Territorial Defense powers and their activities in the course of Russia's armed aggression, have been considered. There have been analyzed the issues, which arose in communities regarding resistance movement organization at the beginning of the war. In the article there have been covered the issues of the Territorial Defense Association of Ukraine formation and development, the creation of an integral system of the Territorial Defense operation.

**The methodology of research** is based on the principles of scientificity, historicism, and objectivity, which made it possible to implement general scientific methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization. **The scientific novelty** consists in a comprehensive study of the topical issues of the Territorial Defense Forces formation, functioning and military resistance to the Russian aggression. **The Conclusion.** It has been determined that the very system of the Territorial Defense Forces needs to be improved under the conditions of the armed aggression against our state. Further development and improvement is required for the legal framework of the Territorial Defense organization and management, which, in our opinion, was adopted rather hastily, without taking into account the basic requirements of the Forces functioning. The experience of foreign countries in the territorial defense formation has been analyzed, which should be used in the Territorial Defense Forces of Ukraine. A leading role of the Territorial Defense Forces in the performance of the objectives for the territorial communities protection of Ukraine has been determined. There has been given the factual material on the death of territorial defense soldiers during combat missions. The facts of awarding and encouraging members of the TrO with combat awards, including the Motivational Banner, have been documented.

**Key words:** territorial defense, armed aggression, national resistance, territorial communities, Territorial Defense Forces, Russian-Ukrainian War, war zone.

## СИЛИ ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНОЇ ОБОРОНИ ЯК ФЕНОМЕН НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО ВІЙСЬКА УКРАЇНИ (від грудня 2020 р. до сьогодні)

**Анотація.** У статті з'ясовано суспільно-політичні чинники виникнення Сил територіальної оборони (далі – ТрО), проведено аналіз правового забезпечення участі громадян в територіальній обороні, висвітлено військову активність бійців ТрО на основі аналізу виявлених джерел. Автором проаналізовано формування Сил територіальної оборони України з грудня 2020 р., коли було зареєстровано Проєкт Закону України “Про територіальну оборону”, фактично першого законопроєкту, який визначав завдання ТрО, обґрунтовував нові поняття, які до цього були незрозумілими для більшості українців. Зокрема, у Проєкті розтлумачено поняття «Система територіальної оборони України», яка поєднує військову та цивільну складові.

Досліджено основні аспекти нормативно-правової бази, яка визначає права та обов'язки територіальної оборони. Проаналізовано Закон України “Про основи національного спротиву”, підписаний Президентом України В. Зеленським 16 липня 2021 р. Розглянуто основні статті Закону, які забезпечують повноваження територіальної оборони та їх діяльності в ході збройної агресії Російської Федерації. Розглянуто проблеми, які виникли в громадах стосовно організації руху спротиву на початку війни. У статті розкриваються питання становлення та розвитку об'єднання територіальної оборони України, створення цілісної системи їх функціонування. **Методологія** дослідження побудована на принципах науковості, історизму, об'єктивності, що дало змогу реалізувати загальнонаукові методи аналізу, синтезу й узагальнення. **Наукова новизна** полягає у комплексному дослідженні актуальних питань формування, функціонування та військового протистояння Сил територіальної оборони російській агресії. **Висновки.** Досліджено, що сама система ТрО в умовах збройної агресії проти нашої держави залишається недоопрацьованим процесом. Подальшого розвитку й удосконалення потребує нормативно-правова база організації та ведення ТрО, яка, на наш погляд, приймалася достатньо поспішно, без врахувань основних вимог функціонування Сил ТрО. Проаналізовано досвід зарубіжних країн у формуванні територіальної оборони, який варто використовувати у функціонуванні Сил ТрО України. Визначено провідну роль Сил територіальної оборони у виконанні завдань із захисту територіальних громад України. Надано фактологічний матеріал загибелі бійців територіальної оборони у ході проведення бойових завдань. Засвідчено факти нагородження та стимулювання членів ТрО бойовими відзнаками, у тому числі Мотиваційним знаменом.

**Ключові слова:** територіальна оборона, збройна агресія, національний спротив, територіальні громади, Сили ТрО, російсько-українська війна, зона бойових дій.

**The Problem Statement.** It should be stated that considerable attention and resources of Ukraine were directed to ensuring the national security at the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Russia (February 24, 2022), which consists in the protection of the state sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic and constitutional order, national interests of Ukraine from real and potential threats (Zakon Ukrainy, 2018).

The interaction of resistance movement with the powerful Territorial Defense Force contributed to the unification of the Ukrainian society, patriotic elevation and education of citizens, increase in the level of defense capability of our state, etc. It is the consciousness of the Ukrainian nation that generates the national resistance and desire to defeat enemies.

It is important to analyze the process of establishment, formation and functioning of territorial defense system (hereinafter referred to as “TrO”), which requires a comprehensive support not only from territorial communities, ordinary Ukrainians, but primarily from state administration bodies. It is important to find out weak and strong points of the Territorial Defense of Ukraine, because it was the TrO soldiers in the first weeks of the Russian-Ukrainian War, united, despite the lack of proper weapons, who gave a decent rebuff to the enemy, giving the Ukrainians the opportunity to feel safe.

The system of organizing the Territorial Defense of Ukraine acquired a new form of functioning and practical use under the conditions of conducting hostilities starting from January of 2022. The process of building a system of peace and security requires the analysis of its functioning under the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian War. It should be stated that trained and motivated territorial defense soldiers are not only the military reserve of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, but also the priority of their combat capability.

**The Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** The territorial defense formation began during the period of independence of Ukraine, but this process was inactive, since Ukraine did not suffer from external aggression. Accordingly, the scholars did not focus on this issue. The first studies on territorial defense began to appear in 2007. V. Frolov and I. Romanchenko the first ones who analyzed the Territorial Defense role and place in the defense system of Ukraine (Frolov, Romanchenko & Palii, 2007; Frolov & Romanchenko, 2009). However, the above-mentioned papers were directly related to the issues of legislation and normative legal framework of the Territorial Defense formation, the conditions for joining the territorial defense ranks, their duties and rights.

O. Troianskyi highlighted the legal principles of citizens’ participation in the territorial defense of Ukraine in his research (Troianskyi, 2022), he systematized information on the state of territorial defense of Ukraine at the end of February of 2022, the scholar identified problematic issues faced by the territorial communities in the resistance forces organization in subordinate territories.

The electronic resources are an important source of information on the issue, in which there are highlighted the Territorial Defense Forces problems, their financing, participation in military operations on the front line, information about awards and decorations, and death of the Territorial Defense Forces soldiers. Since the Territorial Defense Forces functioning issues during the period of the Russian-Ukrainian War were partially covered by scholars (Lobko, 2018; Semenenko, Lobko, Kyrychenko & Ovcharenko, 2018; Ianiuk, 2019; Iefimov, Ivakhiv & Kasatkin, 2022), in this study there should be elucidated the phenomenon of the Territorial Defense Forces from various aspects of their activities.

The Ukrainian authorities initiated a number of draft laws that directly related to the Territorial Defense Forces after the beginning of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine

beginning in 2014. Legal acts and orders issued by the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers and the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine are the main factor in functioning and development of the Territorial Defense Forces system. A number of draft laws were developed regarding views on the organizational processes of the Security Council: Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Participation of Civilians in Defense of Ukraine” (Zakon Ukrainy, 2021a), Law of Ukraine “On the Basis of National Resistance” (Zakon Ukrainy, 2021b), Law of Ukraine “On National Security of Ukraine” issued on 06.21.2018 (Zakon Ukrainy, 2018), Law of Ukraine “On the Armed Forces of Ukraine” issued on 06.12.1991 (Zakon Ukrainy, 1992), Draft Law of Ukraine “On the Territorial Defense” issued on 16.12.2020 (Proekt Zakonu Ukrainy, 2020), Order of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine “On Approval of Contract Form of Territorial Defense Volunteer and Certificate of Territorial Defense Volunteer” issued on 07.03.2022 (Nakaz MO Ukrainy, 2022), Regulations on voluntary formations of territorial communities issued on December 29, 2021 (Polozhennia, 2021), “Procedure for Issuing Firearms and Ammunition to Civilians who Take Part in Rebuffing and Deterring Armed Aggression of the Russian Federation and/or other states” issued on 07.03.2022 (Poriadok, 2022), Decision of the National Security Council “On Military Security Strategy” issued on 25.03.2021 (Rishennia, 2021), etc.

**The purpose of the article** is to analyse regulatory and legal framework, socio-political factors that contributed to the Territorial Defense Forces formation, the partner countries experience in territorial defense formation, coverage of the military activity of territorial defense soldiers based on the analysed sources.

**The Results of the Research.** The topicality of issues related to the Territorial Defense Forces of the country should increase significantly, as a rule, during a peaceful period, when there is a decrease in the number of armed forces and their combat capability. Issues on the territorial defense were regulated before the full-scale invasion of Russia only at the legislative level, since there was no real threat to Ukraine’s sovereignty. The concept of TrO is substantiated in the Law of Ukraine “On the Armed Forces of Ukraine” issued on December 6, 1991, in which there are defined separate categories of forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in particular: Special Operations Forces, Territorial Defense Forces, Logistics Forces, Support Forces, Medical Forces, etc. The specified categories should collectively deter enemy aggression against our state (Zakon Ukrainy, 1992).

According to experts, the most economical and expedient reserve for supporting the state’s defense capability is the system of Territorial Defense of Ukraine. According to the calculations of domestic and foreign experts, maintenance of the Territorial Defense Forces is several times cheaper than maintenance of regular, combat-ready armed forces. In order to make a comparison, we could cite the data of several countries to understand how important the TrO system is: in Germany and Denmark, maintaining TrO costs 10 times cheaper, in the USA – 6 times (Iakubets, 2022b). Despite various approaches that would contribute to the objectives solution of providing measures for the TrO Forces formation, European countries share the formation principles of the TrO system with Ukraine, in particular: the territorial troops should be considered as the main part of the regular army; it is more difficult to maintain regular troops than territorial troops; free access to weapons for civilians during wartime; ideological and patriotic education of population (Iakubets, 2022b).

An important draft law that revealed aspects of the Territorial Defense Forces functioning was registered on December 16, 2020. The Verkhovna Rada approved the Draft Law of Ukraine “On Territorial Defense” under No. 4504 (Proekt Zakonu Ukrainy, 2020). The

authors of the Project drew attention to new concepts, such as “military territorial defense of Ukraine”, “headquarters of the Territorial Defence Forces”, “command of the TrO Forces”, “the main civil and military body of the TrO”, “the TrO unit and security of the territorial community”, “head of the TrO staff”, “the TrO district head”, etc.

There are observed some points that contradict the main principles of the TrO Forces, while analyzing the draft law. Considering the provisions of the Project, it should be noted that in it there is suggested a rather confusing and complex system of subordination of the TrO Forces. Thus, territorial defense was to be subordinated to the Minister for Defense, and the latter was to exercise his powers only through the Main Civil Military Body of the TrO (hereinafter referred to as the Main Civil Military Body of the TrO). But this is not the final point of the TrO Forces control. The heads of district and region administrations were supposed to manage the TrO Forces at places with the help of districts headquarters. The relationships among the management units of the state administration, which are responsible for the TrO Forces, is considered to be complicated in this draft law (Romanchenko, Frolov & Paliy, 2009). It should be considered inappropriate to state that the TrO Forces belong to the Ministry of Defense and, at the same time, do not belong to the structure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Taking everything into consideration, it should be noted that various opinions and views on the organization of the TrO Forces formation process were suggested by people, who are far from the fundamental problems of this type of troops.

In the Ministry for Defense of Ukraine there were singled out three stages of the Territorial Defense Forces formation. The first stage, which can be called a peacetime staff, during which there are about 10,000 people in the TrO: the second stage (a special period staff) should number at least 130,000 people: the third stage (voluntary formation of territorial communities (hereinafter – DFTH) provides for the communities formation exclusively at the request of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and by the decision of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Kalitventseva, 2022). It is important to agree with the Minister’s of Defense of Ukraine opinion that a complete and efficient formation and functioning of the territorial defense system is impossible without cooperation of the Command of the TrO Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the regional military management bodies of the TrO Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Brigades of the TrO Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and Brigades Battalions of the TrO Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

A comprehensive system of the TrO formation was facilitated by “Military Security Strategy of Ukraine” adopted on March 25, 2021, which substantiates the territorial defense interaction with the resistance movement, citizens patriotic education, the level of the state’s defense capability, and defines a leading role in the organization and solving the Military Security of Ukraine tasks (Rishenia, 2021).

On July 16, 2021, the President of Ukraine V. Zelenskyi signed the Law of Ukraine “On Foundations of National Resistance”. The law contains 9 sections and 26 articles, in which there are defined the main terms, ideas of the national resistance legal basis, the purpose and objectives of the national resistance, the basis of territorial defense formation, the basis of preparing the Ukrainian citizens for the national resistance, requirements for the national resistance leadership, the formation and functioning of Territorial Defense Forces military units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and voluntary formations of territorial communities, staffing of the Territorial Defense Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and voluntary formations of territorial communities, non-partisanship of the national resistance, powers of

the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, ministries and other central bodies of executive power, preparation of territorial defense, etc. (Zakon Ukrainy, 2021).

The draft law envisages giving military voluntary formations the status of paramilitary units, which are formed on a voluntary basis. It is noted that citizens of Ukraine, who live within the territory of a relevant territorial community can join voluntary associations. Military and patriotic education of the Ukrainian citizens should be considered as one of the main objectives laid down in the Law. It is in military voluntary formations that ideals of patriotism are the best established.

Article 8 of Chapter III deals with the conditions for voluntary associations formation of the territorial communities, which must be formed taking into account resource and human capabilities of correspondent territorial communities. Territorial defense soldiers must carry out their activities directly under the leadership and control of a commander of a military unit of the Armed Forces of Ukraine according to the principle of territoriality.

It is important to dwell on Chapter VII of the Law of Ukraine “On Foundations of National Resistance”. It deals with the social and legal protection of the military voluntary formations members by the state. There has been a drastic need for it since 2014. According to Article 25, a military volunteer acquires social guarantees, which consist in the fact that close relatives will receive monetary compensation in case of death, which occurred in connection with the resistance movement objectives. Disability or partial loss of working ability will be acquired in a mandatory manner without acquiring the status – disabled, which eases a financial situation of military volunteer formations members significantly and their families in case of an accident in the zone of active military operations (Zakon Ukrainy, 2021).

But there are numerous issues, which are not mentioned in this draft law. Thus, Vitaliy Kuprii, the People’s Deputy of Ukraine of the 8th convocation, an ex-adviser of the Commander of the TrO of the Armed Forces of Ukraine drew attention to the issue of the TrO Forces immediate reform. In his article, he noted many issues of territorial defense, legislative system imperfection, which cannot guarantee material compensation to the TrO military volunteers in case of injury or death. He also noted that the top leadership of the state needs carry out the TrO Forces reform immediately, starting this process with finalization of the Doctrine, in which to draw a line of demarcation between those, who are conscripted and those who cannot be mobilized in the Armed Forces, but want to defend their community based on the territorial principle. V. Kuprii also initiated introduction of a new draft law that would support volunteer movement for organization of mass effective resistance to the enemy, provided for the possibility for the military volunteers to receive a financial support, etc. (Kuprii, 2022).

The state military leadership, along with local self-government bodies, began to take active measures that would speed up the TrO Forces formation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and citizens comprehensive involvement in the national resistance to the aggressor starting from February 24, 2022.

In February of 2022, there were formed only 70% of the TrO military volunteers units in 13 regions. Even during the war, TrO was staffed (Terytorialna oborona, 2022). The process of encouraging the reservists to join the ranks of the TrO was not easy. According to S. Kryvonos, 70% of reservists did not show up for military training for a number of reasons. And this is not surprising, imperfection of a regulatory and legal support of the TrO, inadequate material and technical support of divisions, the lack of material and technical base could not instigate the Ukrainians to join the TrO ranks (Levko, 2021).

In addition, there were numerous appeals by the territorial defense personnel to the President of Ukraine with complaints. We can come across numerous videos on social networks and other information resources, in which the TrO soldiers explain that it is impossible to complete the objectives, and sometimes their absence at combat positions, commenting on problematic moments with weak training of personnel, ill-conceived management decisions of commanders, certain miscalculations in the staffing of battalions of the TrO, inadequate provision of portable anti-tank means, etc. (Troianskyi, 2022).

Combat military General, Serhiy Kryvonos, who holds the position of Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, is concerned with the territorial defense issues. Having devoted many years to service in intelligence and special purpose units, S. Kryvonos tries to form the Ukrainian Defense Forces according to the best world models. In his opinion, territorial defense is capable of protecting our homes, children, parents, etc. (Kryvonos, 2022).

Major General S. Kryvonos cited the practice of Estonia in order to conduct effective military training of the TrO troops, noting that Estonia Defender Day is held once a week, which is an incentive to every Estonian to express patriotic stance. He focuses on material provision of military training for the soldiers, which consists in availability of shooting ranges, good military bases for training, inter-territorial training centres, etc. In addition to a physical and moral training of the TrO Forces, it is important to consider a material component to encourage potential members, because a decent salary will guarantee a social security to their families. Hence, experience of Poland, Canada and the USA showed effectiveness of a quantitative indicator of the TrO members owing to the monetary reward (Kryvonos, 2022).

In March of 2022, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine “On Ensuring Participation of Civilians in the Defense of Ukraine”. What is the essence of this law? The goals and objectives of the project are supposed to provide an opportunity for citizens of Ukraine to obtain firearms, which is a necessary factor for deterring the enemy. The deadline for returning weapons is also prescribed within 10 days after the end of the martial law (Poriadok vydachi vohnepalnoi zbroi, 2022).

Legislative Act No. 6521 “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine” “On the Basics of the National Resistance” issued on 28.04.2022 refers to the provision of the opportunity for the TrO Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to participate in the combat zone. It should be mentioned that 338 people’s deputies supported the draft law, having hope in a voluntary formation of the territorial communities (Teroboroni dozvolily vykonuvaty zavdannia, 2022). It should be noted that the “changes...” were made already after the actual presence of the TrO soldiers on the front line of fire .

Hence, at the briefing “Current Situation at the Front”, which took place on May 17, 2022, Brigadier General Serhiy Sobko, acting as the Chief of the Territorial Defense staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, noted that about 25 out of 32 TrO brigades took part in combat operations actions (Teroborona v zoni boiovykh dii, 2022). The General noted that before units come to combat zones, territorial defense soldiers undergo a proper military training. He also provided indisputable facts about an important role of the TrO Forces in the defense and liberation of Sumy, Chernihiv, and Kyiv regions. According to him, the TrO members were considered to be light infantry, on whose shoulders lie the important duties of defending the borders of our state. It is the soldiers of the infantry units, who bear heavy losses and need to be replenished. The fact which is of the greatest importance that the TrO Forces began to be provided with necessary weapons, which consists in provision of heavy machine guns, anti-tank systems, grenade launchers, mortars, portable anti-aircraft missile systems, etc.

Brigadier General S. Sobko emphasizes that the TrO Forces are a component of the Armed Forces of Ukraine together with other branches of the military and are subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, carrying out his orders. There was a false judgement among a significant number of citizens of our country that the TrO Forces should perform the task of defending their regions exclusively. The matter is that there is one war for everyone. Ukraine is also one country for everyone. And victory will be one for everyone (Teroborona v zoni boiovykh dii, 2022).

There are numerous facts, which testify to the TrO military forces participation in the combat zone, which speak of a heroic death of territorial defense soldiers for the sake of saving independence and integrity of our country, the national identity of the people of Ukraine, etc. Zaporizhzhia community lost 5 soldiers of the Territorial Defense already at the beginning of April. The following soldiers died during combat missions: Volodymyr Marakhovskiy, Oleh Yakymenko, Roman Filoboka, Olesandr Malyshkin, and Mykola Trofymenko (Pid chas boiovykh dii, 2022).

At the end of July of 2022, the soldiers of the 125th TrO of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Volodymyr Hirniak, Mykola Zabchuk and Serhii Kovaliev, died heroically defending their country (U Lvovi poproshchalysia, 2022). On December 9, 2022, there was a final journey of Bohdan Pikha, a soldier of the 103rd Brigade of the TrO of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Lviv, who worked in the field of road transport abroad before the Russian-Ukrainian War. After he found out about the Russian troops invasion on the territory of Ukraine, he returned home without hesitation and stood up for the protection of his community, and later got into the combat zone, where he died heroically (Zavra Lviv poproshchaietsia z biitsem, 2022).

On May 12, a deputy of Zaporizhzhia Regional Council, V. Yakubets, reported that 4 soldiers of Khust Territorial Defense died and 2 soldiers were injured. According to him, the community lost its heroes as a result of tank shelling of our defenders' positions (Iakubets, 2022a).

Sad news reached Poltava community on January 20, 2023. Two brothers, who were members of the Territorial Defense Battalion of Myrhorod District died, while performing the combat mission in Soledar (U Soledari, 2023). Volodymyr Polistrat and Yevheniy Boyko are heroes not only of their community, but of the entire Ukrainian people.

At the beginning of January of 2023, in Donetsk region 49-year-old Bohdan Petrovych Nadutik and 38-year-old Anatolii Mykolayovych Sukhomlyn were killed. The heroes began their military career as members of the territorial defense of Poltava region, protecting their communities from the onslaught of invaders (Zhuchenia, 2023).

We cannot ignore the tragedy of Poltava community members, who in January of 2023 witnessed brave soldiers of the 116th Territorial Defense Brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on their last journey. The following soldiers gave their lives during a combat near the town of Soledar, Donetsk region: Andriy Lymar, Stanislav Molnar, Ivan Zhuk, Arkadiy Pishchanskyi, Oleksandr Dryha (Parshevliuk, 2023). Maksym Burda, a young man, who was concerned with volunteer issue and local security forces died near Bakhmut on January 26, 2023. Having a spinal disease, Maksym was commissioned, but no prohibitions prevented the soldier from defending his land and dying heroically (Sohodni volyniany, 2023).

On February 5, 2023, Odesa community saw on their final journey a senior lieutenant Vitaliy Osypchuk and a soldier Oleksandr Kostenko from the 126th brigade of the city of Odesa. Heroes gave their lives, while performing a combat mission at the front line (Kostenko, 2023). Many examples of a heroic devotion to the country, community, compatriots can be cited and it should be done, because heroes do not die as long as they are remembered.



Patriotic education of youth should be based on actual material that is collected, multiplied, analyzed, systematized and preserved for future generations.

It is worth dwelling on the heroic act of the soldiers of Vinnytsia territorial defense, who, after months of coordinated training, went to the combat zone in the east of the country. While carrying out the task of restraining the enemy, they were surrounded by the orks (russian soldiers). For five and a half days, the fighters of the 120th Territorial Defense Brigade fought off the enemy's attack, feeling a full force of the artillery fire. An eyewitness of the above-mentioned events with the call sign "Foma" recalls how, after consulting with the company commander, he decided on an incredible act for the sake of saving his brothers. Taking responsibility for the lives of about 50 defenders, he divided them into several groups. "Foma" together with the Commander directed their departure across a minefield with a length of 1,800 meters. They reached their positions after 5 hours without loss of the personnel. Getting out of the encirclement became a salvation for the TrO soldiers (Bobrus, 2023). The heroic deed of "Foma" soldier was awarded the "Silver Cross" by the Commander of the Territorial Defense Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The made-up jokes of our foreign partners speak of significant success of the TrO Forces during the Russian-Ukrainian War. Hence, in the course of an interview with the commander of the Territorial Defense Forces, Brigadier General Yuriy Halushkin made a statement, which can be regarded as a kind of humour, in particular: "NATO wants to become a part of the TrO of Ukraine". Yu. Halushkin noted that it was professionalism, moral spirit and patriotism of our heroes that gave rise to these statements (Stasiuk, 2022).

An important component of the military resistance is motivation of not only ordinary citizens, but also members of the TrO. Thus, Boryspil District State Administration presented a motivational banner to the soldiers of the 137th Territorial Defense Battalion in Pereyaslav region (Madison, 2022). The medal of honour should raise a patriotic spirit of soldiers and become an invariable attribute of the battalion. Irpin community installed the first memorial sign in Ukraine to the Territorial Defense Forces. This sign was a tribute to volunteer heroes, who expelled the invaders from the north of Kyiv at the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian troops, and at the cost of their lives defended the town of Irpin from the invaders (V Irpeni, 2022).

**The Conclusion.** It has been determined that under the conditions of armed aggression against our state the very system of TrO formation is an underdeveloped process. Further development and improvement are required for a legal framework of the TrO organization and management, which in our opinion, was adopted rather hastily, without taking into account the basic requirements of the TrO Forces operation. In order to make effective draft laws in the field of the TrO system, one should not only take into account, but also use the experience of TrO organization in foreign countries. It is necessary to improve the system of territorial defense of the state, based on the experience of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation, starting with the reform of the TrO Forces system.

An important draft law was analyzed, which was adopted on December 16, 2020. The Verkhovna Rada approved the Draft Law of Ukraine "On Territorial Defense" under No. 4504. The authors explained new concepts of a territorial defense sphere, defined the main tasks of the Territorial Defense Forces and the requirements for joining the TrO.

It was noted that the status of a military formation of the TrO Forces was obtained thanks to the adoption of the Law of July 16, 2021. The Law of Ukraine "On Foundations of National Resistance" provides for the granting of paramilitary units status formed on a voluntary basis

to volunteer formations of territorial defense. Military and patriotic education of Ukrainian citizens should be considered one of the main objectives laid down in the Law.

It has been determined that the phase of active formation and functioning of the Territorial Defense Forces should be considered the date of January 1, 2022, on the eve of the full-scale invasion of the troops of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine. It has been proven that at first the TrO Forces were understaffed not only in terms of human resources, but also in terms of military equipment, but the situation changed for the better: fighters actively engaged in territorial defense, weapons arrived in sufficient quantity, volunteer organizations helped with everything necessary.

It has been noted that the Territorial Defense Forces were staffed according to the principle of voluntariness and territoriality. In the course of the research, the degree of military preparedness and education of the members of the TrO Security has been analyzed. The analysis of the partner countries experience in providing measures for the Territorial Defense Forces formation has been carried out. Chief focus was on military training of volunteers, proper provision of military ranges, shooting ranges, military equipment, etc.

In the process of research, sufficient evidence of an active participation of territorial defense fighters in the combat zone was provided. There have been clarified the facts of the self-sacrifice of TrO fighters during combat missions. The methods of stimulating territorial defense fighters, which consist in awarding members of the TrO with combat awards, including the Motivational Banner, have been revealed.

**Acknowledgement.** We express our sincere gratitude to all members of the editorial board for the advice provided during the preparation of the article for publishing.

**Funding.** The authors did not receive any financial support for the publication of the article.

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*The article was received December 19, 2022.  
Article recommended for publishing 14/06/2023.*