



UKRAINIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

Асоціація Українських Правників Америки

Ukrainian Lawyers Petition Concerning Current Situation in the Country

The text below is the English translation of the petition by the Ukrainian lawyers, which was first published on 10 February 2014 at http://www.petitions247.com/lawyers_on_crisis. The signatures can be found at the following link: http://www.petitions247.com/signatures/lawyers_on_crisis/. It was originally signed by a group of prominent Ukrainian lawyers, many of them regularly appearing in the annual list of the Hundred Best Lawyers of Ukraine by Yurydychna Gazeta (a leading legal publication in Ukraine). Since then many lawyers have joined this petition with the number of signatures reaching 381.

We, the undersigned professional lawyers, cannot and will not accept the utter lawlessness that has unraveled in front of our eyes for more than two months in Ukraine. Even more so, the events of the past few weeks evidence that the violations of law and the elementary basics of human morality by the government authorities became not only massive, but also systematic in nature.

Thanks to heroic and sacrificial work of hundreds of journalists and civil activists, the entire nation has seen the undeniable proof of mass crimes perpetrated by all branches of Ukrainian government:

- o **parliament members are voting for the bills that they do not read, pressured by those they must control and keep in check,**
- o **law enforcement is protecting law-offenders and is torturing peaceful demonstrators,**
- o **courts knowingly issue unlawful decisions without due process, and often completely ignoring the evidence in the case.**

These unlawful criminal acts have become so widespread and public that it is no longer possible to cover them up with any declarations or creative interpretation of facts. It is revealing that not a single act of the abuse of power was ever adequately addressed by the government authorities.

Unfortunately, we have to recognize that the main reason for what is happening has been a continuous demolition of key principles for establishment and functioning of all branches of government authority in Ukraine. At present the entire government apparatus has turned itself into a money-making machine, forsaking its main and only function - to serve the people of Ukraine.

This process had its start before the current leadership came to power, but during their rule it reached its peak threatening not only the national economy, but also the very livelihood and health of all citizens of the country. Thousands of lives have been devastated, millions have lost their trust in the rule of law and in those called to defend it.

Considering the catastrophic situation with both the conditions of human rights and with the overall functioning of Ukrainian State, we :

- o are prepared to present all available evidence collected by us and our analysis for the assessment of the acts committed by representatives of the government authorities;
- o ask all concerned lawyers to unite for jointly establishing all facts of law violations, for giving them professional assessment and for defending the victims;
- o demand from all civil and professional organizations that aim to represent the interests of the legal community, including:
 - o Ukrainian Bar Association (UBA),
 - o Ukrainian Lawyers Union,
 - o Union of Advocates of Ukraine,
 - o Ukrainian National Bar Association,

to urgently define their position concerning the situation in the country, and to issue their juridical assessment of the acts of government authorities. We shall consider the absence of such officially stated position as their full and unconditional consent with the lawlessness perpetrated by the governmental authorities;

- o we demand from all branches of the government on all levels to stop this lawlessness, and to begin the dialogue with the society about structural reforms of the government, including the law enforcement and court system;
- o we remind to all our colleagues, uniformed or not, to all civil servants, that there is always a choice of refusing to commit an unlawful act, a choice to quit and preserve human dignity.

From our end, we will provide maximum support in bringing to justice the representatives of government authorities responsible for violations of the law, without any statute of limitations for holding them accountable.

Signed: The signatures can be found at the following link:

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