

**Omelchuk D.,**  
cadet of the National  
Academy of Internal Affairs  
Language adviser: **Hipska T.**

## **FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OF UKRAINE**

The Law of Ukraine on the National Police of Ukraine states: "The National Police of Ukraine (police) is a central executive body that serves the public by ensuring the protection of human rights and freedoms, combating crime, and maintaining public safety and order" [1]. However, few people think that the very body "National Police" appeared only recently.

Soon, on July 4, Ukraine will celebrate the National Police Day. Although Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, the reform of this law enforcement agency took place relatively recently - in 2015. The path of the militia's transformation into the police was not easy. Most citizens associate the new police with selfies and new uniforms, but a deeper look reveals many other aspects. We will focus on these aspects.

It took the tragic events of the 2013-2014 Maidan protests to make people realise that real change was needed in Ukraine's law enforcement sector. The militia, who should have been defending the country's citizens, instead obeyed orders from the criminalised authorities, using violence and firearms to disperse peaceful demonstrations. In the regions, the militia and courts were used to hound and intimidate civil activists who were supporting Maidan in their own small towns [2].

After Viktor Yanukovich was removed from power in February 2014 and fled to Russia, Arsen Avakov, a Kharkiv politician, was appointed Acting Minister of Internal Affairs. One of Avakov's first moves was to create a Public Council, which was charged with drawing up a plan for national reforms. Up until then, independent Ukraine's law enforcement agencies had spent all 24 years of their existence following rules and regulations laid down in the Soviet period, and Ukraine's "Law on the Militia", a calque of the corresponding Soviet law, was still in force. Real

reform was not in the interests of the country's ruling circles, as the militia was useful for covering up their criminal activities and ubiquitous corruption [2].

In July 2015, Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Arsen Avakov launched the new patrol police force in the country's capital, Kyiv. The process was then repeated with the establishment of new patrol police departments in regional capitals across Ukraine. Departments were also set up in other key towns, focusing on Ukraine's borders with the European Union and the frontline of the war in Donbas [3]. The creation of the new patrol police is often heralded as one of the few successful reforms of Ukrainian law enforcement.

Consequently, starting the police reform in 2015 with the patrol police was the right step – to take a separate area that is most visible through constant street patrols and show that the system can change quickly. But this happened only with the patrol police, other units underwent a slight update. Especially the criminal «block» is changing slowly and there are still a lot of complaints against it [4].

In our opinion, we should not complain that the reform is being implemented slowly, because the transition from militia to police took place during the armed conflict in the country, and shortly afterwards, the full-scale invasion of our lands by the aggressor country began. During martial law, society saw how important the role of the police is in the following areas:

- ensuring public security and order;
- securing of human rights and freedoms, as well as interests of the society and the state;
- combating crime;
- provision, within the framework established by law, of assistance services to persons who, for personal, economic, social reasons or due to other emergency situations, require such assistance [1].

At the same time, law enforcement officers have expanded their powers (consisting in limiting the rights and freedoms of a person and a citizen) and their tasks, which also include:

- tracking down enemy collaborators;

- investigating war crimes;
- investigating disappearances;
- distributing humanitarian aid;
- participating in aerial reconnaissance;
- carrying out medical evacuation and other [5].

Finally, it should be noted that the National Police of Ukraine is a fairly young law enforcement agency. It has only recently replaced the former militia. But despite its young age, it has already faced many challenges. The Law of Ukraine "On the National Police of Ukraine" was signed after the events of the Revolution of Dignity and Maidan. The first years of the reform are associated with selfies with police officers, new uniforms, new cars, and new employees, but things did not last long. After the full-scale invasion began, our police showed why the country needs law enforcement. The scope of police duties has increased significantly, as has the level of danger of their work. So, despite the slow progress of reform in all police units, our law enforcement agencies have proven that they will protect the Ukrainian people to the last.

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