

**PREVENTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ANIMAL ABUSE IN UKRAINE  
DURING A FULL-SCALE INVASION: THE CASE STUDY OF KHARKIV  
(UKRAINE)**

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***ABSTRACT***

This article is devoted to the problem of preventing domestic violence and related crimes in Ukraine during a full-scale invasion: the case study of Kharkiv.

Combining the legal and practical analysis of domestic violence and related crimes has theoretical advantages: it can show trends in criminal activities and changes in policing such as response times before and after full scale invasion. In the research undertaken it was suggested that the legal framework itself had gaps, which is directly connected with a full-scale invasion and police powers, for example, during a curfew. This significantly influenced the effectiveness of police powers in cases of domestic violence.

In this research the author analyses modern approaches in legislation, police work and links between domestic abuse and other related crimes, such as animal abuse. Special attention is paid to police innovative approaches in response to the above types of crimes and education processes as an important part of updating the knowledge and skills of the front-line police officers. In the article typical criminal actions were analysed, which took place in Kharkiv.

**Key words:** domestic violence, animal abuse, policing, full-scale invasion in Ukraine.

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## 1. Introduction

Over 3 million children in Ukraine observe or experience acts of domestic violence every year, whereby almost 70% of women are subjected to various forms of abuse and humiliation, and approximately 1500 women die at the hands of their own husbands in the year ending December 2017 (Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2018). Children of victimised mothers are 6 times more likely to commit suicide, and 50% more likely to turn to drug abuse. Almost 100% of mothers who were subjected to violence gave birth to ill children - mainly with neuroses, stuttering, enuresis, cerebral palsy, mental disorders (Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2018). Domestic violence in Ukraine is the cause of 100,000 days of hospitalization, 30,000 visits to traumatology departments, and 40,000 calls to doctors in the year ending December 2017 (Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2018). At the same time, only 10% of victims seek help, because to this day many people consider such abusive relationships "normal" (Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2018).

Domestic violence as a social phenomenon and a crime is defined in The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011). It is “referring to all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim”. New Ukrainian legislation from 2017 in the field of prevention and detecting domestic violence reflects this definition and other norms of the Istanbul Convention (On Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence, 2017).

Considering that domestic violence is one of the manifestations of gender-based violence, it should be noted that in Ukraine, this has increased in connection with Russian aggression, since the conflict has brought a series of physical, psychological, and economic challenges and tensions that influence the cycle of domestic violence and such related crimes as animal abuse. Unfortunately, today in Ukraine, violence is one of the most widespread forms of human rights violations, especially in conditions of war or other military operations. Civilians are usually the most vulnerable, with women, children and the elderly suffering the most from violence, and there are also ‘silent’ victims such as animals. In this article, we will analyse animal abuse of domestic animals. Based on the complexities of the ongoing war, we analyse some examples of animal abuse which were occurring in Kharkiv as a large urban area, including new crimes

of animal abuse that were introduced due to the war. We will also consider the connection between domestic violence and animal abuse. Along with widespread war crimes, gender-based crimes committed by the Russian military on the territory of Ukraine occupy a prominent place. For the purposes of this paper, we do not want to ignore the negative influence of broader gender-based violence committed by the Russian military (for example in the Kharkiv region and city), however the primary emphasis is on domestic violence. According to information released by the Office of the General Prosecutor of Ukraine in the period starting from 24 February 2022 till 25 September 2023, 235 cases of gender-based violence committed by the Russian military were recorded. 150 women and 85 men were injured by the actions of Russian servicemen. 13 victims are minors, including 12 girls and 1 boy (a type of sexual violence not related to rape). The specified crimes were recorded in all 9 regions of Ukraine where the occupying forces were stationed. Most of them were registered in the Kherson region (72), Donetsk region (55), Kyiv region (52) and Kharkiv region (21) (Office of the General Prosecutor of Ukraine, 2023).

Undoubtedly, one can point out that domestic violence is among the most widespread and most difficult crimes to prevent and address in Ukraine today, due to the 'dark figure' of domestic violence in Ukraine and due to the full-scale invasion of Russian troops into Ukraine. The first factor (dark figure) affecting the recording of domestic violence is inherent in many states of the world, despite their positive achievements in the legislative, political and practical spheres. The second factor is unfortunately more unique and creates many challenges. In this article, we will consider prevention and countermeasures against domestic violence in Ukraine through the lens of factors affecting its latency and the influence of a number of factors that arose in connection with the war.

Kharkiv is the biggest city in Ukraine after the capital Kyiv. Its estimated population before the full-scale invasion in 2022 was 1,446,107 people according to the Main Department of Statistics in Kharkiv region at the beginning of 2019 (Main Headquarters of the Statistic Office in Kharkiv region, 2019).

Kharkiv is not only a powerful industrial and transport centre of Ukraine, where large machine-building and metallurgical enterprises operate, but also a cultural and scientific centre of Ukraine. Traditional scientific branches and research centres were founded in Kharkiv in various spheres of public life, which continue to solve challenges, including those in the law

enforcement sphere. That is why, in our article, we analyse the activities of the police and police scientific schools of the Kharkiv region, which used and are using the most modern approaches and methods to solve issues of prevention and combating crime in general, and domestic violence in particular in relation to other crimes, such as animal abuse.

This article is structured as follows: first, we provide a general overview of links between domestic violence and animal abuse; followed by a discussion of policing domestic violence with the connection to animal abuse in Kharkiv; the challenges of community police officers against domestic violence are then discussed, before considering the challenges of response policing to cases of domestic violence Kharkiv.

## **2.Links between domestic violence and animal abuse**

It is necessary to remember that domestic violence is closely related to other criminal manifestations. Researchers point out that animal cruelty and domestic violence (or some scholars use the term intimate partner violence) are interconnected phenomena, because they occur more often in the same homes (McPhedran, 2009, p.41). There are significantly more cases of animal abuse in families where domestic violence is committed than in families where it is not committed (McPhedran, 2009, p.41). For the sake of clarity, in this paper we understand animal abuse as behaviour that causes animals physical pain, suffering, including bodily harm, mutilation or death, the encouragement of animals to fight each other, leaving animals to fend for themselves, as well as other violations of the rules of keeping, handling, and transporting animals (On the Protection of Animals from Cruel Treatment. (2006). The links between animal cruelty, child abuse and domestic violence are complex (Beck, 2004, p.399). It should also be remembered that different forms of domestic violence tend to co-exist or cluster. Thus, in the case of violence between parents (relatives, adoptive parents), they do not fulfil their duties regarding the education of children, and also treat the latter cruelly (McPhedran, 2009, p.41). For instance, there is research to suggest a correlation between households where domestic violence occurs, and households where there is animal abuse – if the former occurs, the latter is also more likely to occur than not (Beck, 2004; McPhedran, 2009).

An animal is the easiest creature to be victimized, and this practice of intimidation affects all members of the family. In families where numerous forms of violent behaviour are inherent, attacks, abuse of those who are smaller, weaker become norms and are part of the cult of power and dominance. Under a psychological perspective, whether the victim has 2 legs, or 4 paws is irrelevant compared to the very purpose of such actions - demonstrating superiority, establishing control, power, and subjugation of all others. Individual aggressors also indicate that they deliberately choose to injure an animal, mutilate it, rather than physical violence against a person (Akrow, 2014, p.50). Because animal abuse, mutilation, or death will attract less police attention than the same actions involving a victim (Akrow, 2014, p.50).

It should be noted that when assessing the risk of committing domestic violence at any time in Ukraine, the National Police of Ukraine calculates the probability of the continuation or re-commitment of the specified offense, the occurrence of serious consequences of its commission, including the death of the victim. The specified process is carried out by establishing and analysing information related to a specific case of an offense. Police officers use special questioners who provide a set of questions which police officers should establish in order to be able to identify the level of risk (low, medium, high). All mentioned questions are linked to different warning factors, among them are animal abuse. So, for example, a person is more likely to have committed domestic violence if they already admit to harming (or threatening to harm) an animal. It is stated in Order No. 369/180 dated March 13, 2019 of the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine "On Approval of the Procedure for Assessing the Risks of Domestic Violence" (On Approval of the Procedure for Assessing the Risks of Domestic Violence (2019). Therefore, we can point out that since 2019, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine began to recognize the relationship between cruelty to animals and domestic violence. However, the problem has not been sufficiently researched in Ukraine and has not been reflected in the State Social Program for the Prevention and Counteraction of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence for the period until 2025 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2021). Incidentally, as of August 2023, the Unified State Register of Cases of Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence has not yet been implemented in Ukraine, which according to the current legislation should already have

been in operation for over a year. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the importance of implementing the Unified State Register of Animal Cruelty Cases.

### **3. Policing of domestic violence with the connection to animal abuse in Kharkiv**

In the field of law enforcement in the city of Kharkiv, it was effective to use a multi-disciplinary approach to prevent and combat domestic violence. Thus, in order to increase the level of detection of cases of this violence and to overcome the high level of latency, the Kharkiv University of Internal Affairs introduced a separate topic dedicated to the problem of the connection between domestic violence and animal cruelty in the academic discipline Combating violence in the family (KhNUIA, 2020). In order to increase detection of this crime, law enforcement organisations studied the results of modern research and problems of policing not only in Ukraine, but also the experience of EU countries, the UK, and US.

It is very important that in order to increase the effectiveness of the practical direction of the police response to cases of animal cruelty, regular binary classes were held for practical police units from Kharkiv and the Kharkiv region (patrol police officers, investigators, criminal search officers, district police officers), who took advanced training courses once every 3 years in Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs. These classes were held with the involvement of representatives of one of the largest public organizations of Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian Union of Non-Governmental Organisations "Association of Animal Welfare Organizations of Ukraine" and one of the largest NGOs of Kharkiv and Eastern Ukraine, the Centre for the Rescue of Wild, Exotic and Domestic Animals "Dobry Dim" (KhNUIA, 2019).

It is important to remember that when responding to cases of domestic violence, the police, directing the victim to a shelter for victims of domestic violence, encountered the fact that such shelters do not accept pets. And therefore, the existence of live contacts with the local NGO that helped with domestic animal abuse was extremely important and solved a number of such problems.

It should be remembered that the situation with the existence of these shelters has been radically changed. The "Dobry Dim" shelter was physically destroyed by the russian invaders. We would like to note that the criminal actions of the troops of the aggressor country caused irreparable losses to both people and animals, domestic and wild, flora and fauna in all combat zones.

Invaders destroyed the largest Ecopark and shelter " Dobry Dim", which was territorially located near Kharkiv and, to their chagrin, on the way of the attempted entry of Russian troops into the city of Kharkiv. Animals from the shelter were under occupation for several months from the beginning of the full-scale invasion until the liberation of Kharkiv and Kharkiv region.

During this occupation, some of the shelter workers voluntarily stayed and tried to support the life of the organization, some workers were killed by invaders trying to deliver food for the animals (An employee died while feeding animals in the Kharkiv Ecopark, 2022; Shelling of an Ecopark in Kharkiv, 2022), the animals themselves starved and died from the bombs and stress from the explosions (Ukrinform.ua, 2022). After the release, the animals that were able to survive this occupation were sent to safe places in Ukraine and some to the EU. The "Dobry Dim" shelter and the Ecopark, on the territory of which this shelter was located, officially paused their work in early 2022.

Unfortunately, Russian aggression destroyed the above-mentioned effective cooperation between Kharkiv's animal welfare organizations and police units. Of course, other types of cooperation between the police and members of the public have been preserved and developed. However, the described type of educational and practical cooperation between the Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs and designated local NGOs regarding the timely identification of animal cruelty as an effective means of detecting latent domestic violence was suspended for the above-mentioned reasons.

It should be understood that since a significant amount of domestic violence is hidden, detecting more cases of animal abuse will provide a connection or starting point to allow the detection of more domestic violence cases. According to Ukrainian legislation (On the Protection of Animals from Cruel Treatment. (2006), a person can be punished for animal abuse as an administrative or criminal offence, depending on the severity of the offence.

It is important to note that Kharkiv, as a metropolis, has rather unique types of illegal acts that are covered by the crime of cruelty to animals. Thus, at the beginning of the 2000s, the phenomenon of "boxers" was born in Kharkiv. The essence of this illegal behaviour was that the offender, pretending to be a saviour of animals, collected them in boxes and asked for help to feed the animals. The criminals themselves found the animals on the street, or the residents of Kharkiv themselves brought them and voluntarily gave them away, believing that these

people wanted to help the needy animals. The cover legend was as follows, that these criminals were "good people who, at the call of their hearts, sat by the subway at rush hour and handed out homeless cats and dogs to their kind hands, and they asked for money for those who were with them at rest." Many people believed in it, voluntarily brought their animals for adoption, and passers-by gave funds. And a certain small percentage of such animals found their owners (new homes), but most died. Due to the large concentration of animals, infectious diseases were transmitted, they needed proper housing conditions, which the offenders did not provide. Animals were used while they were of "marketable quality", and then they were thrown into waste dumps. Most such criminals sat near entrances to subways throughout the city, but their greatest concentration was near the entrance/exit of the subway near the Central Market (the city's largest grocery market) and the Akademik Barabashchova subway (the largest wholesale and retail complex in all of eastern Ukraine). It is possible to say that the phenomenon of boxers and connections to domestic violence is not obvious in this example. Due to the ongoing conflict, it is not possible to examine such potential connections, but it is well known that the issue of boxing has been a concern and had attracted a police response. For example, in order to stop such crimes, police and public animal protection organizations of Kharkiv conducted joint raids, where the police recorded such crimes, identified the criminals, and the animals themselves were transferred to the care of public animal protection organizations (All-Ukrainian Union of Non-Governmental Organisations "Association of Animal Welfare Organizations of Ukraine", 2018).

It should be noted that with the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the troops of the aggressor country into Ukraine, animals encountered new forms of animal abuse. Many owners of pets abandoned their animals at railway stations or other public places while running away from the war. Such a situation was very common, animals were locked in the properties of their owners, where they later died without water and food. Soldiers of Armed Forces of Ukraine during the liberation of the territory, when they found such animals, could not hold back their tears, and pointed out that they felt the lives of animals are as important as people's lives, and these are the values for which Ukraine fight (TSN,2023).

Overall, the above-mentioned animal abuse and its consequences of death is a crime according to article 299 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (Criminal Code of Ukraine,2001). However, the scale of such crimes is not yet known. Today, the National Police of Ukraine does not publish



statistics on any crimes that are not related to military offenses. And this to a certain extent, one can understand, because during the war the country is fighting for the existence of the state; as such, the provision and publication of statistics is not a priority task. However, we can only guess the scale of such crimes in Kharkiv.

Despite the fact that Kharkiv was not occupied, and its borders were defended by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the flow of civilians running from the bombings was approximately 450,000 people (TSN, 2023, Terekhov). Unfortunately, animals became mass silent victims of this invasion. The fact that individuals fled from hostilities does not justify leaving an animal to die. Further research is needed on these issues to further draw out nuances of this discussion, and eventually obtain more robust data on the nature and extent of the problem.

#### **4. Challenges of community police officers against domestic violence**

The National Police of Ukraine is following a project to reorganize structural units of the police and create "community police officers" with the aim of not only improving police work in general, but also preventing and countering domestic violence in particular (National Police of Ukraine, 2023).

The main goals of this project are building sustainable cooperation with the community to create a common safe environment, integrating the police into society, meeting the security needs of citizens, involving all interested parties in partnership, and effective and consolidated solutions to local community problems (National Police of Ukraine, 2022). In 2023 the "Community Police Officer" project was implemented in 749 territorial communities of 23 regions. In order to provide high-quality services to the population in terms of creating and ensuring a safe space, 1,476 community police officers were selected from active police forces and trained on the basis of higher education institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (National Police of Ukraine, 2024). At the same time, with the aim of providing high-quality police services in territorial communities and creating proper conditions for the work of community police officers by the National Police with the assistance of local self-government bodies police stations are opened, the maintenance of which is funded by local budgets. At the same time, there are 1169 police stations functioning in Ukraine, 24 of which are located in security centres (National Police of Ukraine, 2024).

The essence of the project is that the designated community police officer can be appointed to this position only from among persons who have been living in the territory of the community for a long time. This enables the police officer to analyse cases of crimes in general, and domestic violence in particular, in more detail, considering the dynamics of the development of these phenomena. In Ukraine, as elsewhere, the phenomenon of domestic violence has a hidden nature, which is exacerbated by the existence of various types of myths and stereotypes about the phenomenon itself. It should be remembered that in small settlements, the community is very close and information about each other spreads very quickly. However, in cases of domestic violence, information about such cases spreads very quickly, yet due to the existence of a large number of stereotypes (we do not take garbage out of the house; beating means love; a breadwinner means he has the right to "educate" a woman; beating children is an effective means for raising children, my father beat me and I grew up normal, etc.) especially in rural areas, the directly affected person and the community very rarely turn to the police. The phenomenon "everyone knows, but no one informs the police" arises (Kachynska, 2016). Therefore, an effective preventive measure is the training of a community police officer. Because these community officers will be able to be in the network of "so-called news-rumours" and will be able to detect and stop domestic violence in time and take all measures to prevent it. The high level of close community ties in rural areas is an element of culture and traditions that are highly respected and preserved in Ukraine.

The picture of the work of a community police officer in large cities or cities in megalopolises (urbanistic cities) is somewhat different. The large number of people and the pace of their movement make it difficult to establish effective live contacts between the community police officer and the population in the service area. Even more, in turn, people living in large, urbanized cities do not maintain such close contacts with each other as in small settlements. People prioritize forming their circle of communication according to common interests (work, study, hobbies, etc.) and not by place of residence. Even more so in large high-rise buildings, people did not maintain any contact with each other.

The work of the community police officers in the field of preventing and combating domestic violence has become even more difficult in large cities due to the large population migration due to the war. So, for example, according to official statistics, the number of registered internally displaced persons in Ukraine is 4.9 million people (Ministry of Social Politics of

Ukraine, 2023). The identified migration processes have a negative impact not only on the proper response of the police to cases of domestic violence, but also on the manifestations of crime in general (Aloshkin, 2023, p.157-160). It is quite clear that the very phenomenon of war, which Ukraine has encountered today, is the greatest tragedy after World War II not only for Ukraine, but also for the entire civilized world in general. And this undoubtedly affected the picture of crime in the state and the world in general. However, the law enforcement system of Ukraine, including the National Police, continues to work and fulfil its tasks while adapting to today's challenges. That is why we consider the effectiveness of the project to reorganize structural units of the police and create "community police officers" in the field of prevention and fight against domestic violence in an inextricable combination with the social and military conditions unfolding in Ukraine. And we can summarize that its effectiveness depends on the type of terrain (not large populated or large urban cities), migration processes and the map of hostilities.

It should be noted that during martial law in Ukraine there are risks of increased tension in families, which in turn leads to the emergence or increase of cases of domestic violence. For example, psychological stress appeared as a result of the loss of a sense of security due to constant shelling and the fear of being injured by a bomb or shrapnel (Aloshkin, 2023, p.158). However, attention should be paid to a non-obvious factor such as economic impoverishment. Families experience financial difficulties, which leads to the provocation of the aggressor and can worsen the situation of the already often dependent victim (Aloshkin, 2023, p.159). That is why one should not underestimate the existing negative influence of the general economic situation in the country on manifestations of domestic violence and worsening of the victim's situation (Kachynska, 2016, p.30). Negative economic situation of the country at the macro level, directly negatively influences the individual family stability at the micro level.

In the above context it should be remembered that the full-scale war caused not only the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe, but also caused the sharp impoverishment of a large part of the population of Ukraine. There is an increase in the level of poverty in Ukraine, which increased almost 5 times during the period of large-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation. The war threw Ukraine back into poverty 16 years ago (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023). The situation is particularly difficult in the territories close to the combat zone, where the level of danger is extremely high. In the latter, the only source of social assistance remained the

policemen, who, along with their main law enforcement functions, bring volunteer food products, household items, clothes, baby food and things for children, and medicines.

### **5. Some challenges of response policing to cases of domestic violence in Kharkiv**

It is very important to remember that Ukraine actively supports all law enforcement trends and standards of police response in the field of prevention and detecting of gender-based violence including domestic violence. In order to bring national Ukrainian legislation into compliance in accordance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention in particular, the Ukrainian legislature adopted a number of laws. Chief among the latter was the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence" (On Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence (2017).

This law, along with innovative powers of police officers, provided for the creation and implementation of the Unified Register of Domestic Violence Cases. One of the tasks of this register is to ensure effective information exchange between the police and other state social structures and units that provide social support for families, organize correctional programs for offenders, etc. However, before the start of the full-scale invasion, this registry was not implemented due to a lack of funding. Unfortunately, it is not working at present, and it is clear that today the introduction of this register is not a priority task compared to challenges in the military and defence directions.

Therefore, in a manual version, police officers exchange information on placing families where domestic violence has been committed on social records, control over the offender's completion of correctional programs, and social assistance to children who have witnessed or suffered from domestic violence. This extremely overloads the work of police officers and leads to a decrease in the quality of work, some part of information is lost during the exchange, factors of human errors arise and as a result, offenders are not brought to proper legal responsibility.

The issue of issuing an urgent restraining order by the police has become significantly problematic. According to this order, the police officer has the authority to oblige the offender to leave the place of stay (residence) of the victim, not to be in the place of stay (residence) of the victim, not to contact the victim for a period of up to 10 days (On Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence (2017). The specified norm protects the rights of the victim and gives him

the opportunity to stay in a safe place. However, in connection with the war, a curfew has been implemented in Kharkiv at various times. That is, all citizens are prohibited from being in any public places except their homes. Currently, Kharkiv has a curfew from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. This was done in order to combat enemy sabotage and intelligence groups and ensure law and order during martial law. It should be remembered that Kharkiv is located near the border with the country of the aggressor, which determines such measures.

Therefore, police officers who arrive on a domestic violence call during the curfew are legally authorized to issue an urgent restraining order, but in practice they do not. This affects the feeling of impunity for the abusers themselves, because in fact, after the arrival of the police, there are no tangible changes for him. And after the police officers leave the house, the criminals stay with the victim and the violence continues.

It is possible to refer the victim to a shelter for victims of domestic violence. However, Kharkiv, which had almost 1,5 million people before the full-scale invasion, contained only 2 shelters where there were 30 people. Therefore, in order to get there, victims first stood in line for a certain time and when their turn came and there was a need, victims were directed to the centre. Of course, the hostilities forced many people from Kharkiv and the region to migrate to other, safer cities. However, this still does not help to reduce the workload of shelters for victims of domestic violence.

## **6. Some concluding thoughts:**

The purpose of this article has been to draw critical attention to the issues of domestic violence and their potential connections with animal abuse, especially in the context of Kharkiv in Ukraine with the ongoing full-scale invasion as a backdrop. These connections are becoming increasingly apparent, as evidenced by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine recognising a link between domestic violence and animal abuse – for example, during risk assessments of all potential domestic violence cases (On Approval of the Procedure for Assessing the Risks of Domestic Violence (2019)). As a megapolis, Kharkiv has a unique opportunity to use the latest trends and methods of law enforcement activity, for example cooperation between NGOs and police, in addressing animal abuse, as well as a specialised police university (Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs) that address connections between domestic violence and animal

abuse during a wider module on preventing and detecting domestic violence. The full-scale invasion has brought new challenges for the police when responding to cases of domestic violence, for example curfew hours influencing the effectiveness of police powers, and the work of victim shelters. It has also negatively affected cooperation between the police and NGOs, whereby the war has led to the closure of some animal shelters. Related to this, community police officers are effective when responding to domestic violence – nevertheless, the war has brought negative consequences to this type of policing approach. The full-scale invasion has influenced the physical, psychological, and economic levels of all Ukrainians, especially in Kharkiv (due to its proximity to the Russian border and severity of bombing), which has undoubtedly influenced the dynamics of domestic violence and animal abuse.

A potential limitation of this article is that due to the ongoing conflict, it is not always possible to draw firm empirical connections between animal abuse and domestic violence. For instance, the issue of boxers and abandoned animals during the war, has been a problem for some years, but any potential connections with domestic violence are an area for future research as and when there is an opportunity (after the war ends) to examine and compare cases of animal abuse and domestic violence. However, the priority of protecting human rights, animal rights, and wider freedoms is the main task for all state bodies in all free and de-occupied territories of Ukraine. Despite all the challenges for the police, preventing and responding to incidents of domestic violence will continue to be one of the most important tasks in the foreseeable future.

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