

Minutes of the General Assembly of the Civic Organization "Ukrainian Pacifist Movement" 21.09.2026

- **Date of event:** 21 September 2026.
- **Format:** Online conference; video record: https://youtu.be/lc_IcTjWXI4
- **Chairman, Secretary:** Yurii Sheliazhenko.
- **Attendees/participants:** Yurii Sheliazhenko, Nataliia Sudnikova, Artem Denysov, Oleksandr Ivanov, Marko Bachurin, Mykhailo Dryzhyruk, Timur Kukharets, Vasyl Tenzhala.
- *This is automatically translated minutes from original in Ukrainian.*

Agenda

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Solemn proclamation of the War Resisters' International Declaration and admission of new members to the movement
3. Obstacles to peace and the pacifist response
4. Seven years of promoting pacifism: moving toward new achievements
5. The contribution of pacifists to protecting peace in Ukraine and worldwide, overcoming Russian aggression, and healing the trauma caused by it
6. Necessary changes to Ukrainian legislation to stop systemic grave human rights violations during mobilization and implement a non-military protection service for Ukraine instead of military duty, which pacifists objectively cannot perform
7. Appeals to government agencies and diplomats
8. Cooperation and solidarity with civil society organizations and media in Ukraine on protecting the rights of conscientious objectors and other issues
9. International solidarity
10. Any other business and open discussion

Opening and approval of the agenda

Introductory song: The meeting began with the song "To All Warfare We say: No!" (in three languages: Ukrainian - the state language, English - the language of international communication, and Russian, because we hope to raise the Russian people to nonviolent resistance to war and Putin's military dictatorship, including through songs).

- **Approval of the agenda:** The agenda, sent to participants in advance by email, was adopted unanimously.

Solemn proclamation of the War Resisters' International Declaration and admission of new members

- **Proclamation of the declaration:** In accordance with the organization's statutory traditions, the new members solemnly proclaim the Declaration of War Resisters' International: *"War is a crime against humanity. I therefore am determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all causes of war."*
- **Accepting new participants:**
 - **Marko Bachurin** reads the declaration and shares his own motivation for joining the movement (observing the destructive consequences of militarism and propaganda since 2014).
 - **Vasyl Tenzhala** tells about his personal life and spiritual path, which led him to a fundamental rejection of violence and taking up arms during mobilization.
 - **Decision:** Marko Bachurin and Vasyl Tenzhala were accepted to membership of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement.

Consideration of agenda items and adoption of documents

"Obstacles to Peace and Pacifist Responses" (Programme Document):

- Identifies the main barriers to peace (normalization of war, lack of pacifist institutions, building identity on hostility) and ways to overcome them.
- *Adopted unanimously.*

"7 Years of Advancing Pacifism: Moving Towards New Achievements" (Historical Review 2019–2026):

- Summary of the organization's 7-year activities, including human rights activities, education, the activities of the Free Civilians school of pacifism, entry into international networks (IPB, EBCO, WRI), and international recognition.
- Included are mentions of the nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize (2023) from the International Peace Bureau (together with the Belarusian NGO Our House and the Russian Movement of Conscientious Objectors, as well as receiving the Sean McBride Peace Prize and the Ludwig Baumann Prize from the DFG-VK.
- *Adopted unanimously.*

Statement "The contribution of pacifists to protecting peace in Ukraine and in the world, overcoming Russian aggression and the trauma caused by it":

- Emphasizes the absence of a purely military solution to the conflict, the need to develop nonviolent resistance to aggression, and the role of mass anti-war movements.
- *Adopted unanimously.*

Proposals "Necessary changes to the legislation of Ukraine to stop systemic grave human rights violations during the mobilization and implementation of the non-military defense service of Ukraine":

- Discussion of legal norms for document verification, limits of powers of the Territorial Conscription Centers (TCC) and the police. According to the proposals of N. Sudnikova and A. Denysov, it was emphasized that *"To stop violations during mobilization, it is proposed to: abolish the right of the TCC to check military registration documents, to conduct brutal forcible mobilization under any pretext with violations of human dignity, rights to freedom and life, prohibit TCCs from holding individuals in captivity by force."*
- An amendment was made at the suggestion of M. Bachurin regarding a clear definition *"civilian non-military protection service"* so that it does not submit to military structures.
- An amendment was made at the suggestion of M. Dryzhyruk to correct the wording about preventing military dictatorship.
- *Adopted unanimously, subject to amendments.*

Appeal to the state authorities of Ukraine and international institutions:

- Instructions to prepare official appeals to the President of Ukraine, MPs, the Cabinet of Ministers, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Police, the Ministry of Defense, the DESS, and European diplomats regarding the cessation of arbitrariness during mobilization and ensuring the constitutional right to alternative (non-military) service.
- *Adopted unanimously.*

Decision on cooperation and solidarity with Ukrainian civil society and media:

- Thanks to partners and media for their support; initiative to create a Memorandum of Cooperation on protecting the rights of conscientious objectors (at the suggestion of M. Dryzhyruk).
- *Adopted unanimously.*

Decision on international solidarity:

- Thanks to international organizations (UN/OHCHR, IPB, EBCO, WRI, Amnesty International, etc.).
- Expressing support for persecuted conscientious objectors abroad (in particular in Turkey).
- Gratitude to the anti-militarists of Iceland for supporting the humanitarian protection of Ukrainians from militaristic discrimination.
- *Adopted unanimously.*

Formation of working groups

During the discussions, the composition of several working groups of the organization was determined and approved:

1. **WG on online events.** Composition: Natalia Sudnikova, Artem Denysov, Oleksandr Ivanov, Yurii Sheliashenko, Vasyl Tenzhala, Marko Bachurin, Timur Kukharets. Functions: conducting webinars, discussing anti-war literature, cinema, and cultural and educational information drives.
2. **WG on international cooperation.** Joined: Artem Denysov, Yurii Sheliashenko, Timur Kukharets, Marko Bachurin, Natalia Sudnikova. Functions: participation in events and statutory bodies of international

pacifist networks, translation of materials, exchange of information and announcements of international events.

3. **Previously created/active groups:** a group for developing a draft law on non-military protection of peace in Ukraine and in the world; a group for studying human rights violations.

Miscellaneous, and Free Communication

- Presentation and listening to the song "Go in peace" (authors: Artem Denysov and Yurii Sheliazhenko), written for the International Day of Peace.
- Demonstration of artwork by French artist Suzanne (pseudonym *Souzouhi*), dedicated to pacifist themes and peace lessons for people from cats.
- Traditional joint photo (screenshot) of the participants of the gathering.

The minutes was compiled by Yurii Sheliazhenko and translated in English using AI tools. Subject to revisions in case of errors if the minutes does not properly reflect video record or in case of mistakes in translation.

APPENDIX: Materials of the General Assembly of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement held on 21.09.2026

1. Approval of the agenda

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2. Solemn proclamation of the Declaration of the Anti-War International and admission of new members to the movement

“War is a crime against humanity. I therefore am determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all causes of war.”

Marko Bachurin and Vasyl Tenzhala were accepted into the NGO "Ukrainian Pacifist Movement".

3. Obstacles to peace and the responses of pacifists

Obstacles to peace and the responses of pacifists

1. The normalization of war and militarism is an obstacle that requires constant exposure of the harmfulness of war and military dictatorship in principle, vivid examples of which are Russian aggression and the Putin regime, as well as an explanation of the need for economic, political and legal safeguards against military dictatorship using the example of developed democracies with free markets and individual freedom. It is necessary to insist on the normality of the prospect of a world without war and with the reduction of armies and armaments up to their elimination.

2. The lack of pacifist institutions is an obstacle that requires education, self-organization and advocacy for reforms, the study and implementation of the best historical experience of all kinds, international, national, public, corporate, individual. While there is a lack of institutions, they must be created, the possibility and usefulness of their creation must be proven in practice, and private, public and state support for individual projects must be attracted, starting with non-military defense against Russian aggression.

3. Violent identities and communications are an obstacle that requires an explanation of the self-destructive nature of building individual and collective “self” on hostility and imposing one’s will on others by force and threats, as well as the creation of an attractive alternative: a pacifist identity, development of trust, cooperation, networks, training of communicators and organizers, improvement of competencies and increase of activity of participants of the pacifist movement. We must show by our example the relevance and success of pacifism and be a visible part of Ukrainian and global civil society.

4. Seven years of promoting pacifism: moving towards new achievements

Seven years of promoting pacifism: moving towards new achievements

The civic organization "Ukrainian Pacifist Movement" was established in 2019 and remains the only internationally known, independent, and consistent peace movement organization in Ukraine.

In 2019-2020, we joined global networks of peace movements, including War Resisters' International and the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection. But even now, we need more competent, motivated organizers with good English speaking skills and advanced understanding of pacifism and human rights issues who could represent our movement in the world.

In 2021-2022, we warned about the dangers of military dictatorship, demanded the adoption of legislation on the right to conscientious objection to military service, condemned Russian aggression, and approved the "Peace Agenda for Ukraine and the World."

In 2022-2023, we were actively engaged in peace advocacy and human rights protection. With our help, the world learned about systemic human rights violations caused by militarism, and courts began to make fairer decisions in the cases of conscientious objectors, including those we helped defend their rights. We are pressured, criminal proceedings are fabricated because of our pacifist statement, but we were also nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and awarded the Sean MacBride Peace Prize.

In 2024-2025, we launched a school of pacifism, actively engaged in nonviolent resistance to Russian aggression and peace research, revived the spiritual component of pacifism, which was suppressed for centuries by the Russian imperial and Soviet authorities and post-Soviet militarists who suppress freedom of religion according to Soviet models. We formulated the Ukrainian Vision of Peace. Our demands for the legal protection of the right to conscientious objection were reflected in the Roadmap on the Rule of Law. We received the Ludwig Baumann Prize.

In 2026, we formulated proposals for a strategy for the non-military defense of Ukraine, which were taken into account by representatives of the legislative and executive branches of government. We created working groups of researchers of human rights violations and advocates of changes to the legislation, and strengthened connections with religious organizations, making the point of view of pacifists more visible in the academic dialogue.

There is enormous work ahead:

- a lot of human rights and educational work and advocacy for changes to legislation;
- the challenges of unlawful persecution, which we must prepare for and meet with dignity and steadfastness, knowing that the peaceful people of the world stand in solidarity with us;
- many opportunities for better self-organization, active participation in domestic and international events to better protect human rights to peace and conscientious objection to military service, and non-violent resistance to Russian aggression.

5. The contribution of pacifists to protecting peace in Ukraine and in the world, overcoming Russian aggression and the trauma caused by it

The contribution of pacifists to protecting peace in Ukraine and in the world, overcoming Russian aggression and the trauma caused by it

The insidious military operations of the Russian army against Ukraine since 2014 and the brutal full-scale invasion that has been ongoing since 2022 deserve the resolute resistance of Ukrainian society and all of humanity. The desired prospect of achieving a just peace or the undesirable prolongation of the war depends on the quality of this resistance.

We have heard many promises of quick victory, but it would be foolish to believe them. The economic systems on both sides of the frontline are fatally poisoned by the plans and financing of a long-term war without end, and the false promises of a quick "peace through force" are part of the psychological operations of deception of citizens that are routinely carried out by armies to gain and maintain tyrannical power in states without any meaningful democratic control.

The aggressor state is taking advantage of the moment of geopolitical decentralization and polarization and has the economic and military support of the Eastern bloc, just as Ukraine has the economic and military support of the Western bloc. The policies of both blocs, as well as the domestic policy in Ukraine, are far from realizing the right of peoples to peace and the people's unwillingness to fight. This is the policy of corrupt elites who harm their own nations through personal and corporate interests in increasing their profits and power through the bloody, criminal path of eternal war. Political and information technologies, media manipulations, and the use of advanced artificial intelligence models by the merchants of death have turned entire nations into instruments of crime in the hands of powerful sociopaths.

Our first contribution to overcoming Russian aggression is to tell the truth.

We need to help everyone who still believes in the deceptive rhetoric justifying the war understand the criminality of Putin's war of conquest. We need the Russian people and all other peoples of the world, all governments and non-governmental organizations, to understand the harm that the Kremlin's plans to prolong and

escalate the aggressive war pose to them, and to realize the possibility and necessity of resistance.

It is also necessary to honestly admit that it is impossible to end the war by military methods. These methods are the problem, not the solution. Justice is not achieved on the battlefield; there is only death, destruction, and exhaustion. Nor will it be a just peace to turn Ukraine into a "steel porcupine" and live in eternal fear, armed to the teeth. We do not want our country to turn into barracks under the dictatorship of military commanders.

Our second contribution to overcoming Russian aggression is to work for peace and teach others by our example, so that pacifism spreads and becomes a way of thinking and living for all people.

Every person, peoples and humanity have the right to peace. To implement this, we must learn to defend peace through non-violent action, cleanse society and the economy of the poison of structural violence and militarism, create institutions for a non-violent and non-military way of life: pacifist identities of a religious, philosophical and scientific nature, communities and networks of peaceful dialogues and actions, non-governmental organizations at the international and national levels, norms and rules of peaceful life, from unofficial and corporate to those enshrined in soft law, and then in laws, constitutions and international agreements.

The sooner a mass anti-war movement develops around the world, the sooner the people of the aggressor state rise up against the war, the sooner the allies will turn away from the aggressor state, and efforts to force people to fight against Ukraine or other Western countries will become futile due to mass civil disobedience. These structural changes are the only realistic way to end the war and come to a just peace. We are ready to work on this, as well as to help all those suffering from war to endure this time of trials.

Current international law provides not only for the right of nations to self-defense against aggression, but also for the obligation to seek peaceful ways to resolve conflicts. Pacifists are ready to work on this in alternative non-military service. Our beliefs objectively do not allow us to become part of the problem of war, we can only work on non-military solutions to protect a peaceful Ukraine and peace in the whole world.

No matter how cruel and illegal the attempts to turn pacifists into soldiers are, they will not succeed. Pacifists are determined to nonviolently resist Russian aggression and to heal the deep wounds that have poisoned our society with militaristic lawlessness and corruption. Every people by nature yearns for peace and must protest against military dictatorship. The injustices of the military towards martyred pacifists will destroy the delusions of “just war” and will encourage peaceful people on all sides of all frontlines to actively resist all wars.

War is a crime against humanity, therefore we are determined not support any kinds of war and strive for the removal of all causes of war.

6. Necessary changes to Ukrainian legislation are needed to stop systemic serious offenses during mobilization and introduce non-military service to protect Ukraine instead of military duty, which pacifists objectively cannot fulfill.

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In order to address the problems of arbitrary detention and torture in Territorial Conscription Centers (TCC) and punishments for pacifist faith or beliefs, as well as the lack of a plan and system of peaceful actions that would bring peace closer and be an alternative to perpetual war and help prevent military dictatorship, it is necessary to:

- take away from the Armed Forces of Ukraine as a whole and the TCCs in particular their current carte blanche for arbitrariness, guarantee the right to conscientious objection and ensure inclusiveness for pacifists, legality and transparency of the mobilization system and resistance to Russian aggression;
- prohibit the TCCs from carrying out brutal forcible mobilization under any pretext with encroachments on human dignity, freedom, and life;
- abolish the authority of the military to check the military registration documents of civilians and the obligation of men to carry military registration documents with them;
- cancel authority of TCCs to consider cases of administrative offenses;
- prohibit the TCCs from using violence against civilians, seizing property, and detaining individuals against their will, and ensure that the military is held accountable for arbitrary detentions and seizing property;
- establish and guarantee a mobilization procedure in which a person is not deprived of freedom and communication and has the opportunity to declare conscientious objection;
- expand public discussion of peaceful ways to end the war, the development of institutions of non-violent and non-military action;
- guarantee the right to alternative non-military service by establishing a civilian non-military protection service of Ukraine.

7. Appeals to government agencies and diplomats

Appeals to government agencies and diplomats

The General Assembly instructs the President and Council of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement to submit appeals on the following topics.

Open letter to the President of Ukraine: confirming the pacifists' support for the Ukrainian Peace Formula and their desire to participate in its implementation peacefully, we draw attention to the shortcomings of the legislation that enable systemic violations of human rights for militaristic motives, and ask the Head of State, as the guarantor of human rights and the subject of legislative initiative, to initiate appropriate changes to the legislation and take control of the cessation of human rights violations. Previous experience: pacifists' appeals were forwarded to the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Defense, some proposals were taken into account.

Open letter to the people's deputies of Ukraine (MPs): draw attention to the need to amend the legislation to ensure non-military defense of Ukraine from Russian aggression, introduce alternative civilian service, and end militaristic arbitrariness. Previous experience: some deputies are taking the proposals into account.

Open letter to diplomatic missions of European countries and international organizations: to draw attention to systemic violations of human rights and ask to take these violations into account when addressing issues of Ukraine's implementation of international legal obligations, including in the context of European integration. Previous experience: letter from the EU mission on non-interference in Ukraine's internal affairs.

Open letter to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: request to develop draft laws on non-military defense of Ukraine, alternative civilian service, and respect for human rights during mobilization. Previous experience: as a rule, they are sent to other departments, not always those with relevant functions.

Open letter to the State Bureau of Investigation: request to investigate cases of torture, deaths, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, attempts to force people to change their pacifist religion or beliefs. Previous experience: the SBI repeatedly refused to investigate criminal attempts to force people to change their pacifist religion or beliefs.

Open letter to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine: a request to change the policy of brutal mobilization and non-recognition of the right to conscientious objection. Previous experience: sometimes they take suggestions into account, but always insist on the need to violate human rights, recently referring to the human rights violating practice of the Supreme Court, which they themselves pushed through, destroying the rule of law.

Open letter to the National Police of Ukraine: request not to participate in systemic militaristic human rights violations, act according to the law, fulfill the legitimate demands of citizens (for example, no undocumented detentions without legal assistance, no groundless checks of documents, etc.). Previous experience: they do not want to recognize human rights violations and even write false assurances about the alleged voluntariness of "escort" to the TCCs.

Open letter to the State Agency for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience (DESS): a request to more actively, publicly, and consistently defend the right to freedom of conscience and religion, not to become instruments of legal nihilism of the army.

8. Cooperation and solidarity with civil society organizations in Ukraine and the media on issues of protecting the rights of conscientious objectors and on other issues

The Ukrainian Pacifist Movement considers it necessary to develop cooperation and solidarity with civil society organizations and the media in Ukraine.

We are grateful for the dialogue and cooperation of all caring, friendly, and partner Ukrainian public and religious organizations and their participants, whom we will not list publicly for safety reasons.

The Ukrainian Pacifist Movement is grateful to the Ukrainian media, in particular, the Human Rights Center "Zmina", "Hromadske", TSN, "Detector Media" and others, to the religious news portals ("Christian News", RISU, "Sobor" and others) for covering the topic of persecution for pacifism, especially repressions against conscientious objectors to military service.

We are grateful to all who identify with the peace movement and create independent peace movement networks, but we insist that true peace movements in Ukraine, together with the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, must actively engage in nonviolent resistance to Russian aggression.

We support the idea of preparing a list of peace principles and a draft memorandum of cooperation with religious and public organizations of Ukraine that agree that no one can be forced to fight war against their conscience, share our beliefs and desire to legislate the right to alternative civilian service, promote legal awareness of citizens regarding the human rights to peace and conscientious objection to military service, and increase society's readiness for non-military protection of peace, including non-violent resistance to Russian aggression.

We will continue to involve people in our peace movement, popularize pacifism, and conduct educational events, including the Free Civilians School of Pacifism.

9. International solidarity

The Ukrainian Pacifist Movement thanks the European Bureau for Conscientious Objection, War Resisters' International, International Peace Bureau, World BEYOND War Network, Connection e.V., International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pressenza news agency, Norwegian human rights organization Forum 18, Quaker organizations FWCC EMES, QUNO and QCEA, and others for their solidarity, support for human rights work, protection of Ukrainian conscientious objectors, and dissemination of messages of Ukrainian pacifists to a global audience.

We are grateful to interfaith religious peace movements, in particular "Church and Peace", for their prayers for peace in Ukraine.

We are grateful to everyone who supports Ukrainian pacifism and nonviolently resists Putin's brutal war against Ukraine.

We support all who defend the human rights to peace and conscientious objection. We express solidarity with conscientious objectors in Turkey, Greece, Israel and other countries, with Russian and Belarusian objectors who are subjected to brutal persecution for refusing to fight war at home being mistrusted and denied asylum abroad.

Together with War Resisters' International, we condemn the persecution of LGBTQI+ people in Turkey and the arrest of conscientious objector and trans activist Deniz Hikmet Hazer.

A number of members of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement support the "World Peace Agreement" proposed by German activists. In supporting this agreement, we read it in accordance with the purpose of our organization, the Declaration of the War Resisters' International, and the Peace Pledge of the World BEYOND War network, in particular, we insist on the need for self-defense through non-violent action.

We are also grateful to the Peace Institute (Ljubljana, Slovenia) for supporting peace studies and the Iceland's Campaign Against Militarism for protesting the denial of humanitarian protection to Ukrainian men who do not wish to participate in the war.

We are grateful to all who, together with peace and human rights movements, protested against the European Union's decision to adopt militaristic discrimination in providing humanitarian protection to refugees fleeing from Russian aggression and coercion to participate in the war.

We are grateful to more than a hundred non-governmental organizations, including dozens of international NGOs and national organizations from over thirty countries,

including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, for their statement in January 2026 of concern about the forced military registration of scholar and conscientious objector Yurii Sheliashenko and, in general, measures to coerce conscientious objectors to change their faith and beliefs, arbitrary detentions, and forcible transportation to the TCCs.

We are grateful to Amnesty International and the UN OHCHR for reporting violations of the right to conscientious objection in Ukraine and the right to freedom of expression in defense of peace, including against participants of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement.

We invite the participants of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement to become more actively involved in the interaction of our organization with world peace movement organizations and welcome the initiative of the Head of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, Yurii Sheliashenko, to hold a meeting with those wishing to join international work and create an appropriate working group with the participation of activists who speak English.

10. Miscellaneous

- We decided to form a working group on organizing online events. The group was joined by: Artem Denysov, Natalia Sudnikova, Oleksandr Ivanov, Yurii Sheliazhenko, Vasyl Tenzhala, Marko Bachurin, and Timur Kukharets.
- The working group on international activities was joined by Artem Denysov, Yurii Sheliazhenko, Timur Kukharets, and Marko Bachurin.