

THE MOST
VALUABLE
FREEDOM



I did not believe that there would be a full-scale war in the country until the first missiles flew on February 24. I rejected the idea because it seemed like nonsense in the 21st century. Because we can «fight» inside having different opinions, but we don't need anyone's territory. The maximum that could happen would be aggravation in the eastern direction and the media were preparing us for this.

And February 24 stopped my internal clock. I didn't panic, I knew exactly what I had to do, because I'm responsible for many people. First of all, I made payments to all partner editorial offices, with which I started cooperating in January, because this day could be the last when the banking system would work. Fortunately, this did not happen, but colleagues managed to buy products or pay for services with this money.

AND THEN THERE WAS ONE LONG DAY **THAT LASTED FOR WEEKS.**

«How are you? Where are you?» These were the main questions I wrote to each person from different cities, towns and villages, whom I knew, with whom I cooperated, made friends or held an event. I asked many to go to a safe place. And many went abroad or to the west of Ukraine. After all, it was obvious that those who were in journalism, politics, socially active and patriotic people are those who would be hunted in the first place and who would find it extremely dangerous to be on occupied territories.

I haven't been able to switch into the acceptance phase for a long time. People

who were able to leave by their cars or evacuate by trains from Kharkiv, Sumy, Kyiv and whom my husband and I hosted at our home in Lviv for a few days of rest before the next part of their trip to other countries and cities or apartments helped me to get into that phase.

The needs of museum managers to protect their exhibitions and storages also were contributing into bringing me back to reality. I started helping my husband and his colleagues from the newly created civic initiative «Center for Saving Cultural Heritage» to unload cars with professional equipment to preserve and protect cultural objects and art collections in various settlements of Ukraine from the threat of war.

Caring for people here and now, and for those far away, gave the opportunity to structure my thoughts and actions. I returned to the project activities of the press club, contacted our partner editorial offices from different parts of Ukraine, we resumed cooperation on content creation regarding the role of women and men in society, although the main topic was their participation in the approach of Victory on the frontline. In addition to financial support our cooperation is also mentoring and expert support, because it is extremely important that journalistic materials do not provide information about men and women stereotypically, do not discriminate or devalue someone and do not glorify others, and they rather show the important role of everyone in their field and workplace.

As a researcher at the Ukrainian Center for Cultural Studies, I collected information and

recorded data on damage and destruction of monuments and cultural institutions. In addition to anger and hatred, there was a feeling that we would never forgive this and that we would all rebuild it together, same way we rebelled against the slaves of «Russian world».

At the same time, I received an offer from my colleague at the Volyn Press Club to become the coordinator of the Center for Journalistic Solidarity in Lviv, an initiative launched by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine in three Ukrainian cities in April. I accepted it and my support of journalists has become more widespread, including advising on various media programs, receiving and sending bulletproof vests, helping to resume editorial work, and so on.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE WAR BROUGHT TREMENDOUS LOSSES. AND IT'S NOT JUST DESTROYED HOUSES OR CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES, **IT'S WOUNDED SOULS AND BROKEN LIVES.**

Being neighbors with Russia for centuries has brought us the misery and guilt of today's crimes is not carried by one person, but by their society as a whole. And we will defend ourselves, because the greatest value for us is FREEDOM.

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