

Abolition of visas for foreign volunteers during martial law in Ukraine

On 15 May 2025, the Ukrainian Parliament passed the first reading of draft law No. 13071, which envisages the abolition of mandatory long-term Type D visas for foreign volunteers and humanitarian workers for the duration of martial law.

The main purpose of the bill is to simplify access to Ukraine for professionals and volunteers who are helping the people, evacuating civilians, and providing medical, psychological, and other support in the context of Russia's full-scale armed aggression.

Under current legislation, even citizens of countries with a visa-free regime are required to leave Ukraine to obtain a 'D' visa in order to subsequently apply for a temporary residence permit. This creates additional difficulties and costs for foreign volunteers who are already in Ukraine, providing assistance.

Draft law No. 13071 proposes to temporarily waive the requirement for foreigners and stateless persons arriving in Ukraine for the purpose of participating in volunteer or humanitarian activities to obtain a long-term 'D' visa. This applies to:

- representatives of international humanitarian organisations;
- volunteers accredited by Ukrainian charitable foundations or public organisations;
- participants in programmes to assist war victims.

This will allow such persons to obtain a temporary residence permit without having to get a visa first.

The draft law also provides for the possibility of legalising the status of foreign volunteers who entered Ukraine after 24 February 2022 and exceeded the permitted visa-free period of stay (note that foreigners and stateless persons may stay in Ukraine without a visa for up to 90 days within a 180-day period). If such persons apply for a temporary residence permit within 60 days after the law comes into force, their stay in Ukraine will be considered legal.

Draft law No. 13071 requires approval in the second reading and the signature of the President of Ukraine. If the document comes into force, foreign volunteers will be able to enter Ukraine without a visa, which will greatly facilitate the coordination of humanitarian efforts.