

**Testimony of Dora Chomiak
President of Razom**

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The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

**“Crowdsourcing Victory: Inside the Civil Society Campaign to Improve the
Lethality and Survivability of the Ukrainian Military”**

Chairman Cardin, Co-Chairman Cohen, Ranking Member Wicker, Ranking Member Wilson, and all of the distinguished Members of the Commission, it is an honor to testify before you. It is a special privilege to speak before you today since the Helsinki Commission Members and staff have been at the forefront of the effort to see democracy succeed in Ukraine.

It is also particularly special for me since I, many years ago, was an intern for the Commission. So, for me, this is a journey that has come full circle.

My name is Dora Chomiak, and I am the President of Razom. Razom, which in Ukrainian means “together,” is an American-Ukrainian organization that grew out of the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. Razom’s mission is to build and connect the community of Ukrainians and supporters of Ukraine to fulfill the promise and potential of the Maidan.

That mission of community building took on new meaning after February 24th of this year with Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Razom quickly pivoted and expanded our mission to meet the new emergency caused by Vladimir Putin’s aggression.

Looking at the focus on today’s hearing, I would like to underscore the word “victory” in the title. That is an apt word choice. The goal for the United States, the goal for Ukraine, and the goal of Razom is victory. We should not be shy about this.

First, it is my belief that the U.S. - including Congress - must do everything within its power to make support available and accessible to Ukraine. Second, this is not only a sound policy, but it is what the majority of Americans want. Razom has experienced an overwhelming tidal wave of support from Americans all across the country. Americans from all 50 states and nearly every single Congressional district have given to support Razom’s activities. In addition to tens of thousands of individual financial donations, Americans have given of their time and made countless small acts of solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

I could share many stories of Americans giving of their time or treasure because they have some family connection to Ukraine or because they were moved by what they saw on television. We

have many examples of individuals asking their friends or family to forego giving a Christmas or birthday gift this year and instead using that money to send emergency medical supplies or warm winter clothing to Ukraine. One note from a donor read, “Instead of a 15th birthday present, our grand-niece, Sarah wanted us to donate to Ukraine.” Another note explained their donation was a “2022 xmas gift to my daughter Anna.”

Donations come from organizations too, such as construction worker unions and Jewish community groups and temples. In North Little Rock, Arkansas, parishioners at the Lakewood United Methodist Church from the Bob Millet Bible Class took it upon themselves to raise money for Ukraine and donated to Razom. In Lexington, Kentucky, RaceRise — an organization that organizes everything from marathons to fun runs — donated to our Emergency Response Fund. We have received donations from a terminal at JFK International Airport, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, Obec Brewing in Seattle, Washington, and many others.

The generosity of Americans has been a sustaining force for the people of Ukraine. This is crystal clear to the people of Ukraine and they are thankful.

Razom has translated this clear and continuous support into action in several ways.

Razom is providing critical humanitarian war relief and recovery to address the most urgent needs as they evolve. We have an end-to-end procurement and delivery system that places all aid directly into the hands of the people in Ukraine. Razom has delivered over half a billion tons of supplies, including tactical medical kits, hospital supplies, medicines, and communication equipment. We have already supplied the majority of first responder units on the frontlines, at least once, with vital humanitarian supplies. While building a network that allows us to understand what is most needed when and where, so that we can direct aid to where it is needed most.

Razom delivers tactical medical supplies like Individual First Aid Kits (IFAKs), medic backpacks, tourniquets, hospital medical supplies, such as wound vacuum-assisted closure devices, and communication equipment such as two-way radios, satellite phones, and quadcopters for use by first responders. We prioritize delivery to the most affected areas in Ukraine. These areas have changed over time as the situation on the ground has changed. Having operations on the ground allows us to understand where the needs are most acute. We built a network of drivers who have been delivering aid across Ukraine in their trucks since the beginning of the invasion. They deliver even to the areas close to where the fighting happens and often provide evacuations on their return trips. Our drivers have also provided invaluable stories of people living in those areas and the challenges with food, water, electricity, and safety.

There are many dangers and risks associated with delivering this assistance. Our drivers face hazardous road conditions and the threat of Russian shelling to get their vital cargo into the hands of people in need. And while they face the physical threats of the job, they also keep

appropriate documentation to ensure full accountability and efficacy. Our volunteers and workers in Ukraine know they are fighting both an invading army and the undue lingering suspicions of corruption, and we are fighting both tenaciously.

Beyond delivering supplies, Razom is helping local Ukrainian non-profit organizations provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the war. This includes delivering food and medicine, evacuating people, and providing shelter. Razom works with trusted organizations that understand the local needs firsthand and have a proven track record of humanitarian service. So far, we have provided grants to over a hundred organizations in Ukraine, primarily in areas hardest hit by fighting.

Here, I would like to highlight a specific story from one of our recipients. When the war began, Mykola Minaev, the founder of the Yellow Taxi service in Kharkiv took the 54 cars from his taxi fleet and put them to work as evacuation vehicles. He helped move about 5,000 families away from the fighting in the early days of the war and set up a sustainable food delivery system for those still in harm's way. When humanitarian aid stopped flowing to Mykola, Razom stepped in and provided a grant to keep his taxi fleet on the road and fulfilling their mission. The funds from the grant have already purchased over 100 tons of food and 20,000 liters of fuel and sustain the assembly and delivery of about 15,000 food aid kits per month.

Supporting healthcare in Ukraine is another important area of Razom's focus. What started in 2016 as a training program for Ukrainian neurosurgeons has grown into a multifaceted initiative responding to a humanitarian crisis. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, the Razom Health team mobilized quickly to provide overwhelmed and under-resourced healthcare facilities throughout the country with critical medicines, medical supplies, and equipment. This includes: procuring and delivering medical aid, partnering with healthcare organizations, and medical training. Above all, we aim to help the Ukrainian healthcare system effectively respond to the current humanitarian crisis—and to emerge more robust and more resilient than ever.

While the spirit, morale, dedication, and courage of those we work with are inspiring, I would highlight for the Commission some challenges we face.

Some critical items needed are under export restrictions in the U.S. or the E.U., which makes it hard or impossible to get to Ukraine. These items include consumer drones like Autel, DJI with thermal cameras, body protection armor, night vision equipment, and gas masks.

We had to scramble for body armor, specifically vests and helmets, to protect our drivers, who deliver the aid to most affected areas of Ukraine. Ultimately, we received donated vests and helmets from another non-profit organization with the appropriate licenses—Spirit of America. Night vision would significantly help drivers deliver aid and conduct evacuations. Those often happen at all times of the day or night.

Logistical friction adds to the difficulty we face when trying to deliver humanitarian aid. Delays with delivery occur via sea, air, and ground, bottlenecking urgent supplies. There are also delays at the border, specifically outbound from the European Union and inbound to Ukraine. In addition to the high cost of transporting goods, we invest resources to keep track of the shipments from procurement to distribution.

In conclusion, our colleagues in Ukraine are incredibly grateful for the military, humanitarian, and other support from the people of the United States to Ukraine, but much more remains to be done to help Ukraine prevail sooner.

The United States stands with Ukraine. The latest example that comes to mind took place just this past Sunday at Carnegie Hall in New York City, where Razom co-organized a sold-out benefit concert commemorating “Carol of the Bells,” a Ukrainian carol first performed there 100 years ago by the Capella of the Ukrainian National Republic.

When it comes to Ukraine, the U.S. isn’t forced to decide between doing what’s morally right and what’s in the national interest — they are the same thing. And the American people know that. One of our donors wrote the following note with his donation: “I think of your struggle every hour of every day, and I hope your beautiful country grows into a gigantic beacon of freedom and democracy. Honor to Ukraine for defending all of us. I wish I could do more.” With so many Americans sharing this sentiment, I know Ukraine will prevail.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity today and look forward to your questions.

Appendix 1: Razom Projects

Bohdan Radchenko Stipend for Veterans

Razom for Ukraine together with Institute of Gender Studies and the Kyiv-Mohyla American Foundation provide highly motivated and accomplished Ukrainian veterans with a possibility to gain Master's degree in the specialization of their choice. Bohdan Radchenko Stipend for Veterans covers tuition of a Master's program at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (KMA), Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) and Ukrainian Catholic University (UCU).

First Responders and Defenders

Razom is providing critical humanitarian war relief and recovery to address the most urgent needs as they evolve. We have an end-to-end procurement and delivery system that places all aid directly into the hands of the people in Ukraine. Razom has provided hundreds of tons of tactical medical kits, hospital supplies, medicines, and communication equipment. We have already supplied the majority of first responder units on the frontlines.

Razom Advocacy

Razom is advocating for Ukraine by educating about policies that strengthen and support Ukraine. We have built trusted connections with civic leaders, activists, and elected officials in Ukraine and the U.S. to relay critical information to the public, media, businesses, and government officials. Our goal is to advocate for a decisive Ukrainian victory, as this is a fundamental security interest for the U.S. and its allies. We have also mobilized constituents across the U.S., held weekly rallies, and engaged businesses.

Razom Culture

Razom Culture celebrates and promotes awareness of Ukraine's vibrant art and culture through a variety of collaborations and events. We focus on three areas:

1. Artist Network: mobilizing artists around the world to collaborate on projects related to Ukrainian culture.
2. Promotion: acting as a media sponsor for other cultural projects that align with the goals of the initiative.
3. Cultural Events: organization of film screenings, fashion shows, photo exhibits, poetry readings, theater performances, music concerts that represent contemporary Ukrainian art culture.

Most recently, Razom co-organized *Notes from Ukraine: A 100-Year Celebration of Carol of the Bells*, which was performed at Carnegie Hall's Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage on Sunday, December 4, 2022. Alongside the beloved "Carol of the Bells", the Ukrainian Children's Choir Shchedryk, Ukrainian Chorus Dumka of New York, and Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America performed the famous carol alongside traditional Ukrainian Christmas songs and contemporary Ukrainian choral works. New York City's Choir of Trinity Wall Street presented Ukrainian works influenced by English traditions and American composers with ties to Ukraine.

Razom Face to Face Medical Mission

During September 16-24th, Razom facilitated a medical mission for a group of 11 American doctors and

nurses from AAFPRS (American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery) who delivered advanced reconstructive surgeries and corrective plastic procedures to 31 Ukrainians. These Ukrainians, military and civilians alike, suffered greatly as a result of Russia's war on Ukraine. In the spirit of collaboration and learning, American and Ukrainian colleagues worked side by side at Ivano Frankivsk Oblast Hospital. "Face to Face" is only the beginning of a fruitful and life-saving cooperation between Ukrainian and American doctors and surgeons.

Razom Grants Program

Razom is helping local Ukrainian on-the-ground non-profit organizations provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the war. This includes delivering food and medicine, evacuating people, and providing shelter. Razom works with trusted organizations that understand the local needs firsthand and have a proven track record of humanitarian service. So far, we have provided grants to 100+ organizations in most regions in Ukraine.

Razom Health

Razom supports hospitals and other healthcare institutions in Ukraine. What started in 2016 as a training program for Ukrainian neurosurgeons has grown into a multifaceted initiative responding to a humanitarian crisis. Following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Razom Health team mobilized quickly to provide overwhelmed and under-resourced healthcare facilities throughout the country with critical medicines, medical supplies, and equipment. This includes: procuring and delivering medical aid, partnering with healthcare organizations, and medical missions and training. Above all, our aim is to help the Ukrainian healthcare system effectively respond to the current humanitarian crisis—and to emerge from this crisis stronger and more resilient than ever.

Razom Toy Drive

Toy Drive provides assistance for displaced people, orphans, and families of Ukrainian military who died or were hurt in action. Our volunteers in Ukraine learn about the needs on the ground and pass the information on to us. Razom, with the cooperation of numerous partners, then organizes Toy Drives around the U.S. and mails package with humanitarian aid to the families.

Razom Translates

Razom Translates aims to increase the visibility of Ukrainian literature in the English speaking world. We develop relationships with publishers, translators, booksellers and readers. We urge publishers to notice the works of Ukrainian literature, help with the translation costs, and promote translated books.

Razom with You

With start-up funding from a major US foundation, Razom started the "Razom with You" program this July to support those in need of psychological help, including children. The project provides free therapy to people in Ukraine whose lives were disrupted by the war, and aims to create an emotionally safe and easily accessible space for individual and group sessions in areas heavily populated by Internally Displaced Persons.

The Co-Pilot Project

The Co-Pilot Project (CPP) addresses the significant deficit in high-quality neurosurgical, spine,

reconstructive, and plastic surgery training in Ukraine. Just as a co-pilot acts as another set of eyes and ears for the pilot, our mission is to send surgeons from North America to mentor and aid Ukrainian surgeons through difficult cases.

Ukrainian Response Initiative (New York)

As part of New York City's response to Ukrainians and others fleeing from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Razom partnered with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs to help currently residing and newly arrived Ukrainian New Yorkers access immigration legal assistance, translation services, social services, and other resources.

Veteranium

The main Veteranium objective is to give Ukrainian veterans their first job in IT. Experienced industry professionals teach veterans to develop and implement IT skills hands-on. Every student has an opportunity to work on real projects in teams. This approach helps the veterans learn a new skill faster and facilitates professional adaptation and socialization.