

I am the unofficial ambassador of Ukraine in Kosovo.

*The story of a Ukrainian journalist in Kosovo.
Liudmyla Makei.*

Liudmyla Makei. Ukrainian journalist, artist, writer. Since April 2022, I have been living and working in Pristina (Kosovo), a participant in the professional protection program "**Residence in Kosovo**".

Before the full-scale Russian invasion, I headed a popular newspaper. I lived in the regional center in the center of Ukraine. I conducted interesting journalistic projects, traveled a lot and considered myself a happy person.



But the war began. My family and I spent the first days of the full-scale invasion in the basement. It was safer to hide there during rocket attacks.

The occupiers are destroying Ukrainian cities and killing civilians. Journalists who tell the truth about the war became a special target for them. Since the beginning of the war the Russian occupiers killed about 80 journalists.

I decided to leave Ukraine.



In April 2022, I arrived in Pristina under the professional protection program **Residence for journalists in Kosovo**. It was initiated by the media lawyer of the European Center for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF) **Flutura Kusari** and the deputy of the Kosovo Assembly **Doarsa Kica Xhelili**. It is also supported by the Government of Kosovo and the ECPMF. The program gives me the opportunity to stay in the profession.



I write for Ukrainian and foreign media, including the website of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, lithuaniatribune.com (Lithuania), opendemocracy.net (Great Britain), genevasolutions.news (Switzerland), Journalist POST magazine (Germany) and others.

I am writing about the war in Ukraine, about my life in Kosovo. I am talking about its history, culture, people and discovering Kosovo to Ukrainians. That's how I became an informal ambassador of Ukraine in Kosovo.



In Pristina I met famous people. In particular, president **Vjosa Osmani** and ex-president **Atifete Yahyaga**, Prime Minister **Albin Kurti**, deputies, journalists. Last year, I was part of the delegation that accompanied Vyosa Osmani to Strasbourg. I was present during her speech in the European Parliament.

My colleagues and I participate in trainings, local and international events. In particular, recently, at the invitation of **The Geopost**, I took part in the **BALKAN DISINFORMATION SUMMIT**, which discussed Russian propaganda and its methods in the Balkans and Ukraine.



I met the director of the Kosovo Torture Rehabilitation Center (KRTC) **Feride Rushiti**. She spoke about Kosovo's experience in rehabilitating people who survived sexual violence during the war. Mrs. Feride inspired me to write about 20 articles for media in Ukraine and Europe. I visited Bosnia and Herzegovina, where I also studied the experience of rehabilitation of victims of sexual violence during the war. This topic is very relevant for Ukraine now, during the war.

The National Union of Journalists of Ukraine invited me to be a mentor for Ukrainian journalists who write about sexual violence during the war. Thus, the experience of Kosovo is already helping Ukraine.



At the same time, in Kosovo I had the opportunity to realize myself as an artist. Last year, there were two personal exhibitions of my paintings in Pristina. The first of them, *Flowers Against War*, was organized by the Kosovo Torture Rehabilitation Center (**KRTC**) and its director, **Feride Rushiti**. The second exhibition was at the Center for Narrative Practices and was supported by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Kosovo.

These were charity exhibitions, I sold many paintings. President **Vyosa Osmani**, German Ambassador **Jorn Rode** and other famous people bought my paintings. I saved the money from the sale of paintings to Ukraine to help my colleagues who suffered from the war.



In addition to journalism and painting, my love for music helps me a lot.

My friend, the famous singer **Arta Yashari**, invited me to sing in her concert. Together we sang the old Albanian song **Lyule Bor** in the concert hall of the National Library of Kosovo. I dream of singing together in Ukraine after our victory.



I thank the **Residence in Kosovo program** for the opportunity to live and work in Kosovo. In my opinion, this is one of the best professional defense programs available in Europe today. This is a real manifestation of professional and human solidarity.

I believe that our public and professional activity can motivate politicians so that Ukraine and Kosovo have official friendly relations in the future.

Kosovo will forever remain in my heart as my second home and a country of friendly people who survived the war and know the price of peace.

