

Bringing justice to the world through the translated word

When the European Court of Human Rights delivered judgments on the first six Chechen cases against Russia in February 2005, the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre (EHRAC), which handled the cases, had a long list of individuals to thank, in particular the many translators who contributed a great deal towards achieving justice for the applicants.

‘Human rights’ is an area of international law that EHRAC and many others consider to be of great importance for the common good of people around the world. Translating legal documents relating to human rights violations not only offers the chance to use your foreign language skills, but is also rewarding on a personal level, for you will be helping to bring justice to the world. The documents you translate will be used for research for specific cases, and could even be sent to the European Court of Human Rights to support our submissions.

Seeking experienced Ukrainian translators

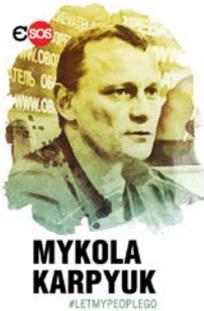
EHRAC made a strategic decision to expand to Ukraine following Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the ensuing conflict in the Donbas region, having identified a pressing need among lawyers and NGOs to litigate cases of gross human rights violations. The majority of our work to date has been carried out in collaboration with the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) and the Regional Centre for Human Rights. As the number of cases increases, we are seeking Ukrainian translators to support our work.

We are looking for **experienced translators** for the translation of case documents. You may be based in Ukraine, the UK, or elsewhere, and should have the **relevant skills to undertake translations of this calibre**, which may include legal, military and medical documents (see below). You will be required to sign a **confidentiality agreement**, and to **respect the inherent sensitivities** of accessing certain case materials. Translations should be to a high standard, as they will be used for litigation before the European Court of Human Rights.

If you are interested in being included on our roster of translators for Ukrainian, please send us your CV and a short covering email detailing your experience and motivations to Oksana Popova at: o.popova@mdx.ac.uk

The type of cases we take

To date, our work in Ukraine has been focused on seeking justice for those whose rights have been violated as a result of the armed conflict in the Donbas region, where the rule of law has been drastically weakened. These include cases of deaths, alleged abduction, unlawful detention and ill-treatment.



With UHHRU, we are representing [Mykola Karpiuk](#) and [Stanislav Klikh](#), Ukrainian citizens who have been detained by the Russian authorities in Russia since March and August 2014 respectively. They were accused of being members of a nationalist group in Ukraine, and taking part in fighting in Chechnya during the 1990s, supporting Chechen separatists. Following lengthy '[show trials](#)', Mr. Karpiuk and Mr. Klikh were sentenced to 22.5 and 20 years in prison respectively by the Supreme Court of Chechnya on 26 May 2016.

What kind of translation?

Legal documents and some evidence documents, for example post-mortem reports, contain highly specialised vocabulary and sometimes require extensive research on the part of the translator as well as linguistic, cultural and historical knowledge of the region. Other documents, for example witness statements, rarely contain technical vocabulary as the content relates mainly to descriptions of people, places and actions. There may be opportunities for translators with little legal experience to work with these types of documents. Sometimes unconventional documents such as Soviet-era passports, insurance receipts or school reference letters are used as evidence to support cases. When tackling old documents, which have been copied repeatedly, an understanding of the social, cultural and historic background of the Soviet Union in the 1980s will assist the translator.

Documents are usually scanned and sent to us by email and arrive in varying states of legibility, whether handwritten or typed. The subject matter of EHRAC's cases is varied – from armed conflict, to protests, to ethnic, sexual and gender-based discrimination.

When translating legal documents, the translator has to strive for precision. The translator may have to research the actual meaning of a particular term and then find the most suitable equivalent for terms and concepts, which may not exist in the second language of translation. While legal dictionaries can be of great help, the translator will ultimately have to rely upon their own experience. The translator is expected to take great care in translating provisions of laws, names of institutions, references to specific incidents, or abbreviations.

EHRAC provides a glossary of terminology, which is distilled from international law-based institutions, to encourage uniform transliteration and translation of the documents – a benefit to translators wishing to enrich their legal vocabulary. Translating with EHRAC provides a solid experience of translating in the area of human rights law which can serve as a good foundation for any further work in this field. Over time the translator will build up a good understanding of the European Court systems, as well as domestic legal systems, even if they previously had no background in law or human rights.