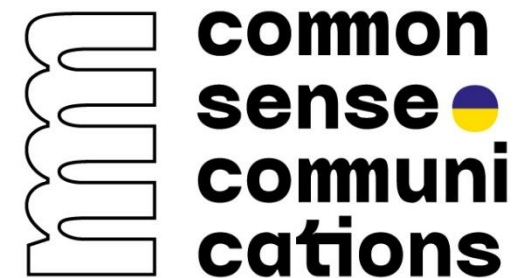Project **ART FOR FREEDOM**

UNSEEN

CIVILIANS

Project Overview

In the face of ongoing aggression, thousands of Ukrainians have been abducted and unjustly imprisoned in Russian detention centers on fabricated charges. The exact number of civilians detained and convicted is unknown, but human rights advocates estimate it to be in the tens of thousands. With no legal mechanisms for their release, these Ukrainians endure grave violations of international law, including arbitrary detention, torture, sham trials, and, tragically, even extrajudicial killings. Their families live in anguish, often receiving little or no information about their loved ones, as Russian authorities severely restrict communication.

To bring global awareness to the plight of these unlawfully detained civilians, **Common Sense Communications** and **PR Army**, two Ukrainian NGOs, launched the project *"Art for Freedom: Unseen Civilians."* This initiative aims to shed light on the stories of these individuals, whose lives have been irrevocably shattered by the Russian occupation, through impactful graphic art. These works will be featured in exhibitions across Ukraine, Germany, Portugal, and France, capturing the personal tragedies behind the statistics and highlighting the human cost of this war.

By telling these powerful stories, *Art for Freedom: Unseen Civilians* seeks to mobilize international pressure on Russian authorities to release these prisoners and honor their human rights.

The project is generously supported by the **Heinrich Böll Stiftung** and is part of a broader effort to foster global solidarity with Ukrainian civilians facing unimaginable hardship.

Project Artists

Yulia Tveritina
Ukraine

Yulia Tveritina is a Ukrainian artist and illustrator. She earned her master's degree from the National Academy of Arts in 2011. In 2013, she was awarded a Presidential Grant of Ukraine, dedicated to supporting young artists in the field of fine arts. Yulia won a silver medal from the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and the Ministry of Culture for her master's diploma, which was recognized as the best in graphic techniques over a five-year period (2015). In 2018, her work *Girls Power* received the Best Book Design award at Mystetskyi Arsenal. Together with Anna Sarvira, she was featured in the catalogue of Ukrainian illustrators published by the Ukrainian Book Institute in 2018. In 2023, Yulia was named one of the winners of the Bologna Children's Book Fair Illustration exhibition.

Also in 2023, she published her graphic diary, *Another Day of War*, dedicated to sharing the stories of Ukrainians as victims of Russian aggression.

Anna Ivanenko
Ukraine

An illustrator based in Kyiv, Ukraine, Anna primarily collaborates with media but also creates illustrations for books and advertising projects. Between 2015 and 2021, she served as a curator for an illustration course at Projector Design School in Kyiv. In 2015, Anna co-founded the Seri\graph studio, which produces screen prints, zines, and various visual projects exhibited in Ukraine and internationally, including LUSTR in 2021. In 2022, Anna was selected as one of the winners of the Bologna Children's Book Fair Illustration exhibition.

Since the onset of Russian aggression in Ukraine, Anna has dedicated much of her artwork and comics to documenting events in Ukraine, showcasing her work in international exhibitions and publications.

Project Artists

Mariana Rio

Portugal

An illustrator and author based in Porto, Mariana has been working in illustration for over a decade, publishing with Pato Lógico, Ediciones Mónimo, Sexto Piso Editorial, and Eterogémeas, among others, in countries including Portugal, Spain, Italy, Poland, Peru, Mexico, the USA, and Taiwan.

She holds a degree in Communication Design from the Faculty of Fine Arts of Oporto and has taught courses in Illustration and picture books for several years, with additional teaching in Drawing, Creative Writing, and Storytelling at ESAD Matosinhos.

Mariana's work as an illustrator-author has been widely recognized. She has twice won at the Illustrators Exhibition of the Bologna Children's Book Fair and received awards from the AOI World Illustration Awards, Nami Island International Picture Book Illustration Competition, *3x3 The Magazine of Contemporary Illustration*, White Ravens - Internationale Jugendbibliothek, CJ Picture Book Awards, and the National Illustration Prize from DGLAB. In 2021, Mariana won the Baba Kamo Illustration Award in Valencia.

Natalia Shulga

Ukraine

Natalia Shulga is an illustrator from Kyiv, currently residing in Lviv since April 2022. She studied architecture at the Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture and works primarily in book illustration, as well as creating illustrations for media and posters.

She has collaborated with various publishers and organizations, including CANactions, Yakaboo, Port. Agency, Al Jazeera, Pictoric, and *The Parliament Magazine*, which featured her artwork on the cover of its November issue.

Project Artists

Cristobal Schmal

Germany

A freelance visual artist, Cristóbal transitioned from graphic design to focus entirely on his passion for illustration after moving to Berlin in 2008, following seven years of experience in various studios in Barcelona. Since then, he has worked with a range of clients and media, including *The New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Washington Post*, Greenpeace, Lufthansa, and Taschen, skillfully switching between digital and analog techniques.

In addition to commissioned work, Cristóbal develops personal art projects. His latest collage series draws inspiration from his heritage, exploring the ancient Andean cultures' perspectives on time, life, and death. Through his practice, he reinterprets their signs, rituals of faith, natural forces, and the fragility of human life.

Jenya Polosina

Ukraine

An illustrator from Kyiv, Ukraine, Jenya primarily focuses on social topics, particularly those related to human rights, ranging from investigations into torture in prisons to graphic reports from the Kyiv Pride march. She collaborates with media outlets, book publishers, NGOs, and various other clients. In 2015, together with her partner Anna Ivanenko, Jenya co-founded Seri\graph, a studio dedicated to illustration, print, and self-publishing.

Since the onset of Russian aggression in Ukraine, Jenya has devoted much of her artwork and comics to documenting the events in Ukraine, showcasing her work in international exhibitions and publications.

Project Artists

Hubert Poirot-Bourdain
France

An illustrator specializing in children's publishing and press, Hubert lives and works in Le Mans. He collaborates extensively with leading European newspapers and magazines, including *le 1 hebdo*, *Die Zeit*, and *l'Équipe Magazine*, among others. Hubert enjoys storytelling, often illustrating with Indian ink and bright colors.

In 2016, he created his own book dedicated to Ukraine and the events in Donbas, traveling to Ukraine specifically to conduct interviews and gather information. This project was showcased at the international "Book Arsenal" festival in Kyiv.

Daria Filippova
Ukraine

An artist from Odesa, Ukraine, Daria works as an illustrator and graduated from the Odesa Architectural and Art Institute with a degree in graphic arts. She spent several years at the Odesa Fine Arts Museum and is currently an illustrator at the Odesa Green Theater, where she designs and creates posters. Daria also illustrates books for major Ukrainian publishing houses, decorates shops, and creates illustrations for both local and international media.

Since 2022, she has actively participated in international exhibitions and projects supporting Ukraine. Her work covers various topics of contemporary life in Ukraine, including volunteerism, heritage preservation, and documenting war crimes committed by the Russian Federation.

Project Artists

Olena Staranchuk

Ukraine

Olena is an illustrator, curator, and graphic designer from Ukraine. She works as a lecturer at the National Academy of Fine Arts and Architecture and is a co-founder of Pictoric.

In recent years, Olena has received numerous awards and international recognitions, including the "Gaude Polonia" scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland (2013), *The White Ravens* Award (2015), and multiple awards from the Ukrainian *Best Book Design* contest (2018-2020).

She has collaborated with organizations such as UNICEF, Irex, the Council of Europe, IFES, the Polish Institute, the Goethe Institute, l'Institut français, České centrum, Phoenix Design Aid AS, Portal Publish House, CP Publishing, and Větrné mlýny, as well as various Ukrainian and European publishing houses. Olena has illustrated and designed over 50 books, and her works are widely exhibited in Ukraine, Germany, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Japan, Spain, France, Sweden, Finland, South Korea, Canada, Taiwan, and the USA.

Anna Andreieva

Ukraine

Anna graduated from the Kyiv State Academy of Decorative and Applied Arts and Design, specializing in graphic design. She creates illustrations for a range of gaming, social, and personal projects. Her diverse creative portfolio includes approximately 300 illustrations, showcased in various exhibitions and projects, including those curated by Pictoric. Notably, her work has been featured in *Capsule Book*, an esteemed Australian collection of illustrators worldwide. In addition to her digital art, Anna explores ceramics and carpet weaving.

In 2024, as part of the *Future for Ukraine* project, she created a major work dedicated to Ukrainians forced to leave their homes due to Russian military aggression.
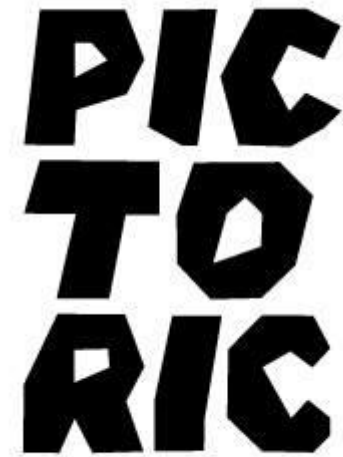
Curated by Oleg Gryshchenko
Pictoric

Founded in 2014 by Olena Staranchuk, Oleg Gryshchenko, and Anna Sarvira in Ukraine, Pictoric aims to foster creativity and collaboration within the artistic community. Their mission is to use art to initiate cultural dialogue, spark conversations about pressing social issues, and make a positive impact. Pictoric believes that illustration can be a powerful tool for change, whether it's highlighting human rights and freedom or raising awareness of events like the war in Ukraine.

What sets Pictoric apart is their storytelling through visuals. They don't simply create beautiful images—they convey powerful messages. Since the war began, their work has taken on even greater significance, with artists documenting the reality of war and sharing messages of hope and resilience.

Pictoric's projects span exhibitions, public art installations, and international collaborations. They are committed not only to promoting Ukrainian culture but also to addressing global issues in ways that resonate universally. Through their distinctive illustrations, Pictoric artists compel the world to pause and reflect, proving that art is more than decoration—it can be a catalyst for change.

Danylo Manukhin
Waiter
Hlibivka, Kyiv region

Danylo Manukhin and his father were detained by the Russian military on March 10, 2022, during the occupation of Hlibivka in the Kyiv region. The occupiers searched the Manukhin family home and detained Danylo due to a suspicious message found on his phone.

Danylo was initially held in a pretrial detention center in Sevastopol, Crimea. He is currently believed to be held in pretrial detention center number 2 in Bryansk, Russia.

«*In this work, I tried to show the situation of disenfranchisement and instability in which civilians live in the territories occupied by the Russian army. Their daily peaceful existence depends on the changing subjective decisions of the party holding the weapon, and can easily be crossed out and broken at any moment.***»**

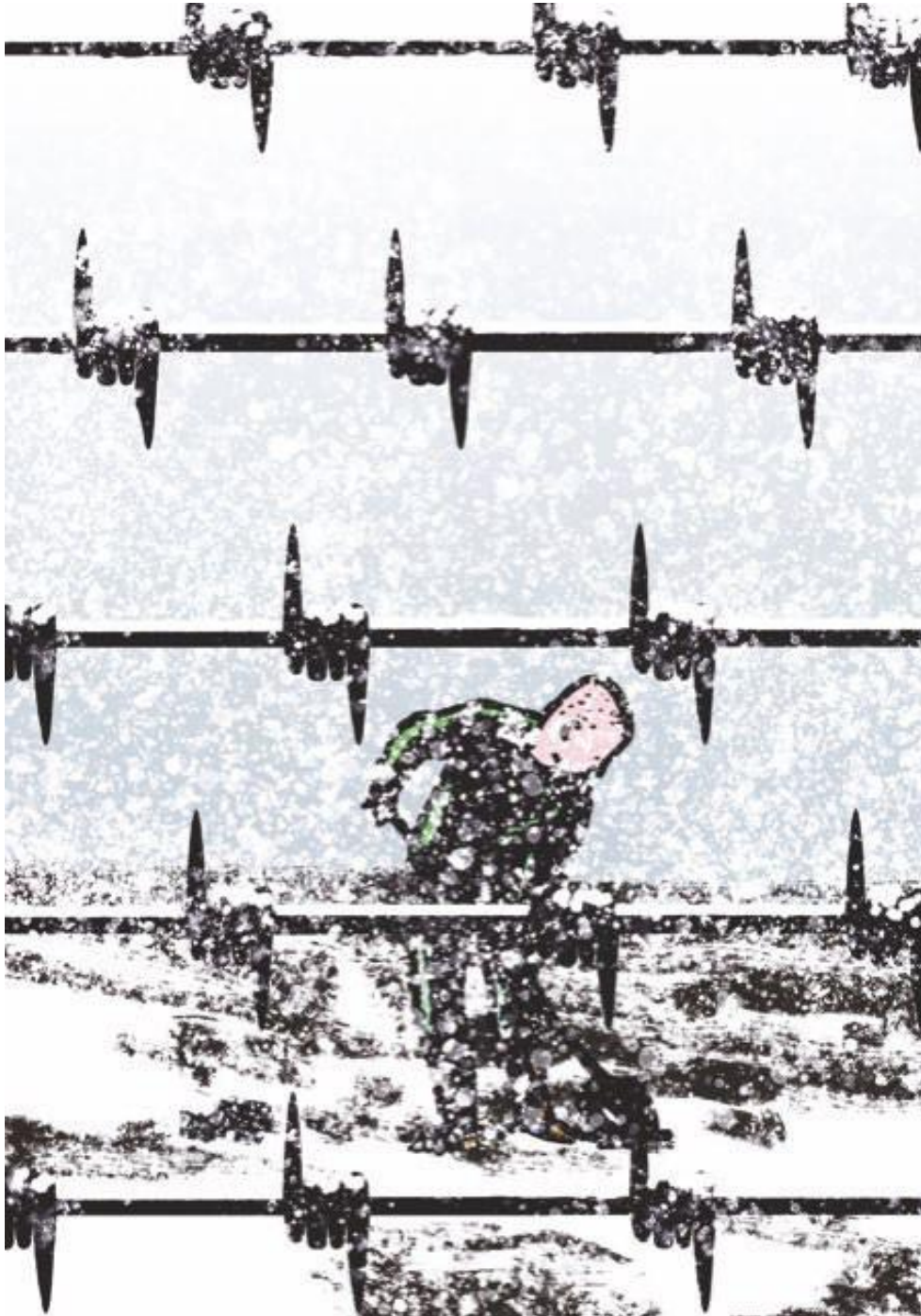Illustration: Yulia Tverirtina

Yevhen Guryanov
Car mechanic
Bucha, Kyiv region

During the occupation of Bucha, Yevhen Guryanov delivered food and water to civilians and helped them relocate to safer places. On March 18, 2022, around 20 Russian soldiers arrived at Yevhen's house and interrogated him.

According to witnesses, he was detained and held captive in the city of Hostomel, near the Antonov airport. On March 23, he was taken to a "filtration camp" in the town of Norovlya, Belarus. Two days later, on March 25, he was transferred to pretrial detention center number 2 in Novozybkiv, Bryansk Oblast, Russia. His current location is unknown.

Illustration: Natalia Shulga

Serhii Shpak
Driver, volunteer
Mykolaivka,Kyiv region

On March 18, 2022, Serhii Shpak was delivering humanitarian aid with three others in Mykolaivka when they encountered a column of Russian forces. The soldiers stripped the men of their shirts, searched for tattoos, lined them up against a fence, taped their eyes and hands, and brought them to "the foundry" — a plant in Dymer where Russian forces were holding civilians.

On March 22, the men were loaded into trucks and transported first to Hostomel, then to Belarus, and finally to Russia. According to Russian authorities and the Red Cross, Serhii is currently being held in a colony in Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, Rostov region.

Illustration: Hubert Poirot-Bourdain

Iryna Horobtsova
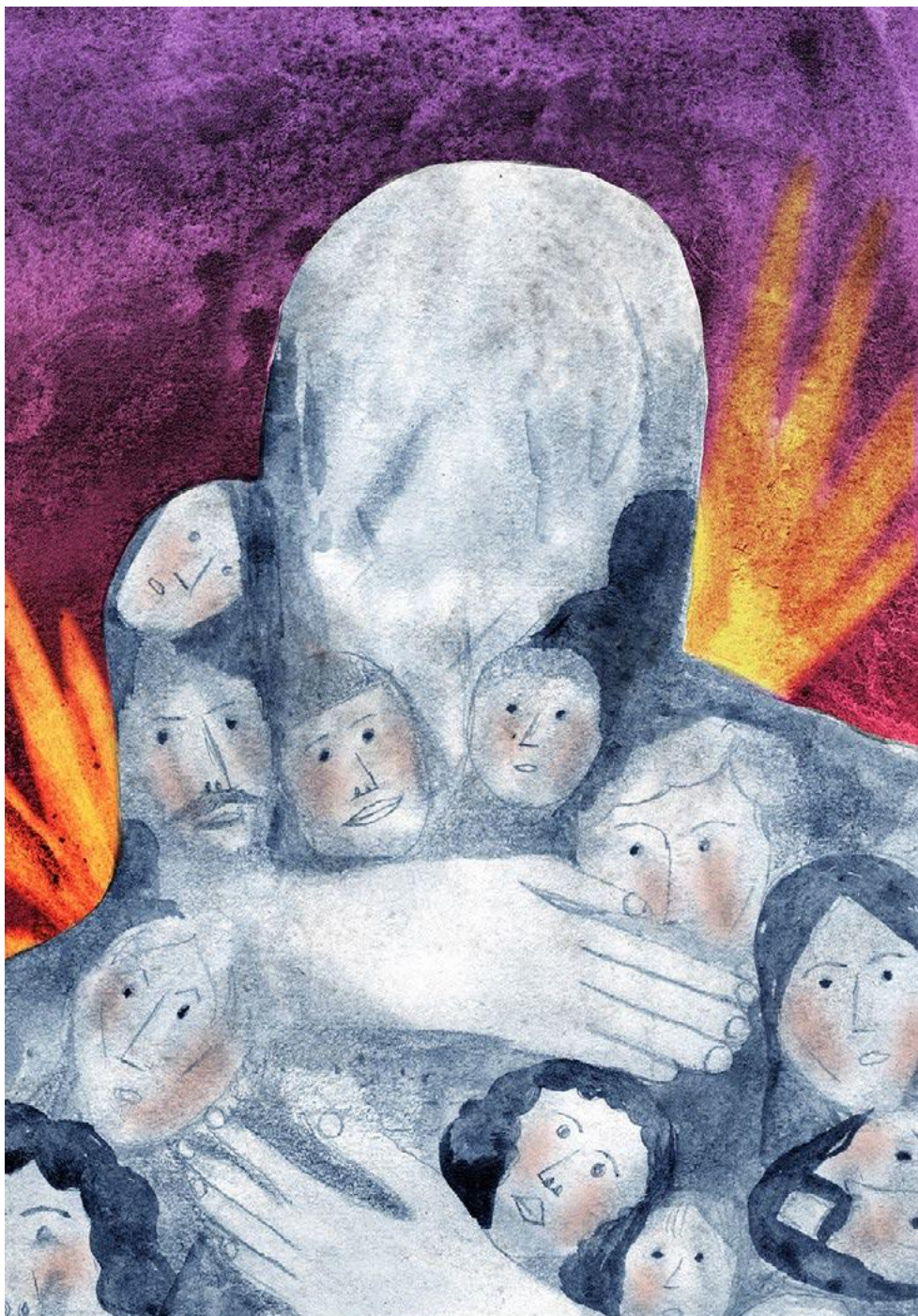**Volunteer and IT specialist**
Kherson

When Kherson was first occupied, Iryna Horobtsova began helping residents by purchasing food and medicine and delivering them to hospitals. On May 13, 2022, her birthday, Iryna was detained in her parents' apartment, with her parents witnessing the arrest. Six masked Russian soldiers arrived with sledgehammers, called Iryna's parents—both teachers—"Nazis," searched the apartment, and seized a laptop and two phones.

Friends of Iryna report that Russian interrogators have forced her to confess to guiding artillery fire on Russian forces at the Chornobaiv airfield. According to the latest information, Iryna Horobtsova is currently being held in the Simferopol pretrial detention center.

« *A carefully organized life, daily rituals, household habits, normal days - in a moment, it disappears with the person. Then the reality is dim, hidden, scary.* »

Illustration: Anna Ivanenko

Mariano García Calatayud
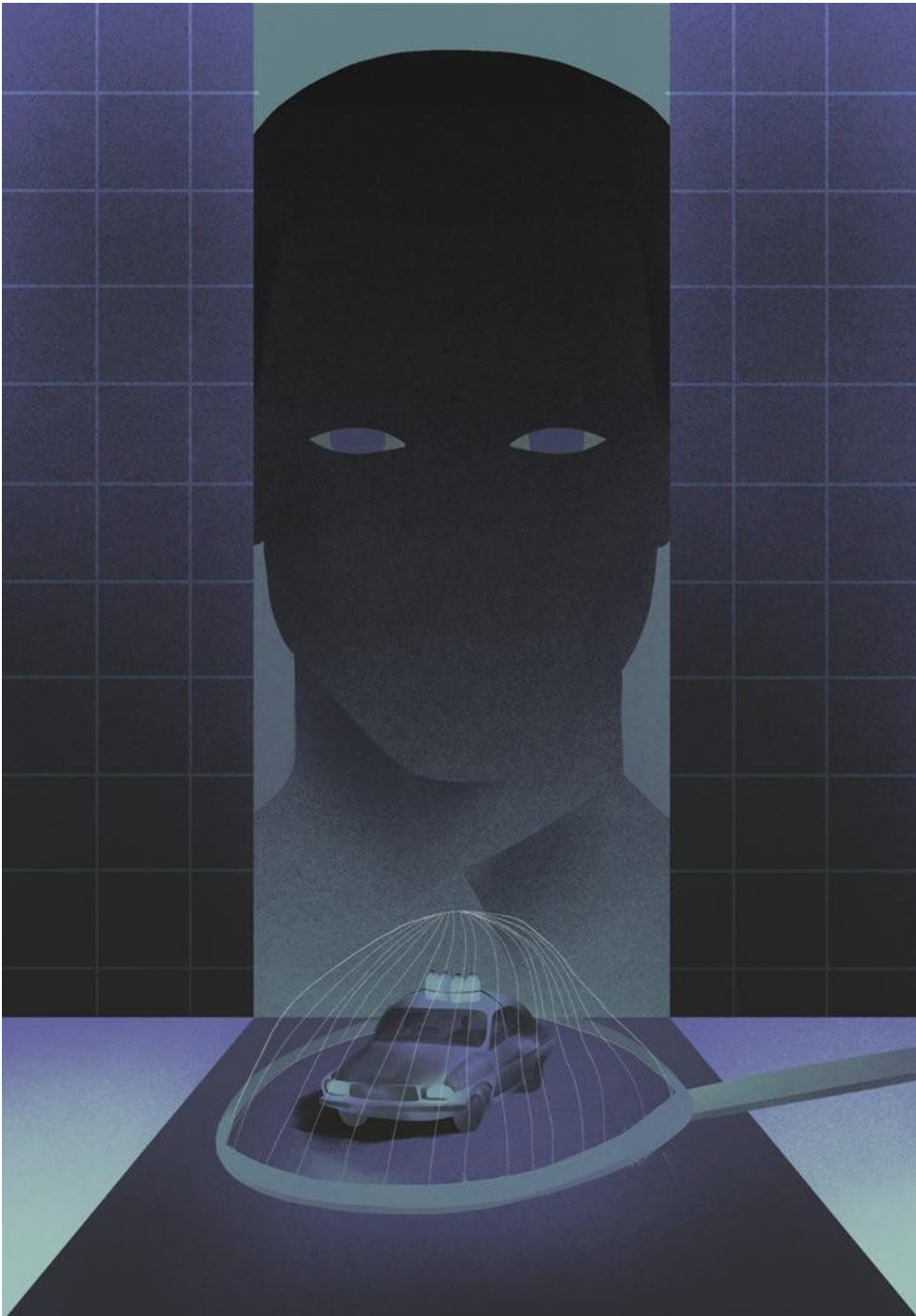**Volunteer, Spanish citizen**
Kherson

Mariano García Calatayud was abducted by Russian occupiers on March 19, 2022, in Kherson. Mariano had been living in Ukraine since 2014 and was a dedicated volunteer, delivering food and supplies to the "gray zone." He openly attended pro-Ukrainian rallies, often standing in the front rows, and was a strong supporter of the people of Kherson. He was taken at the gates of his home by two unidentified men in civilian clothes and balaclavas, who struck him in the stomach and forced him into a dark blue car with no license plates—a vehicle locals recognized as frequently used to transport abducted civilians.

Madrid has raised Mariano's case with Moscow, but Russia continues to deny his detention. According to human rights activists, Mariano was initially held in a pretrial detention center in Simferopol. Unofficial reports now indicate he may currently be in pretrial detention center number 1 in the Rostov region.

« *I think it is interesting to depict in general of the volunteers or civilians who protect the population and the danger it can mean. A kind of homage to the people who are on the ground helping.*
I thought of an image of a civilian as a fortress that protects and at the same time gives hope. I like the idea of presenting a hopeful and positive idea. **»**

Illustration: Cristobal Schmal
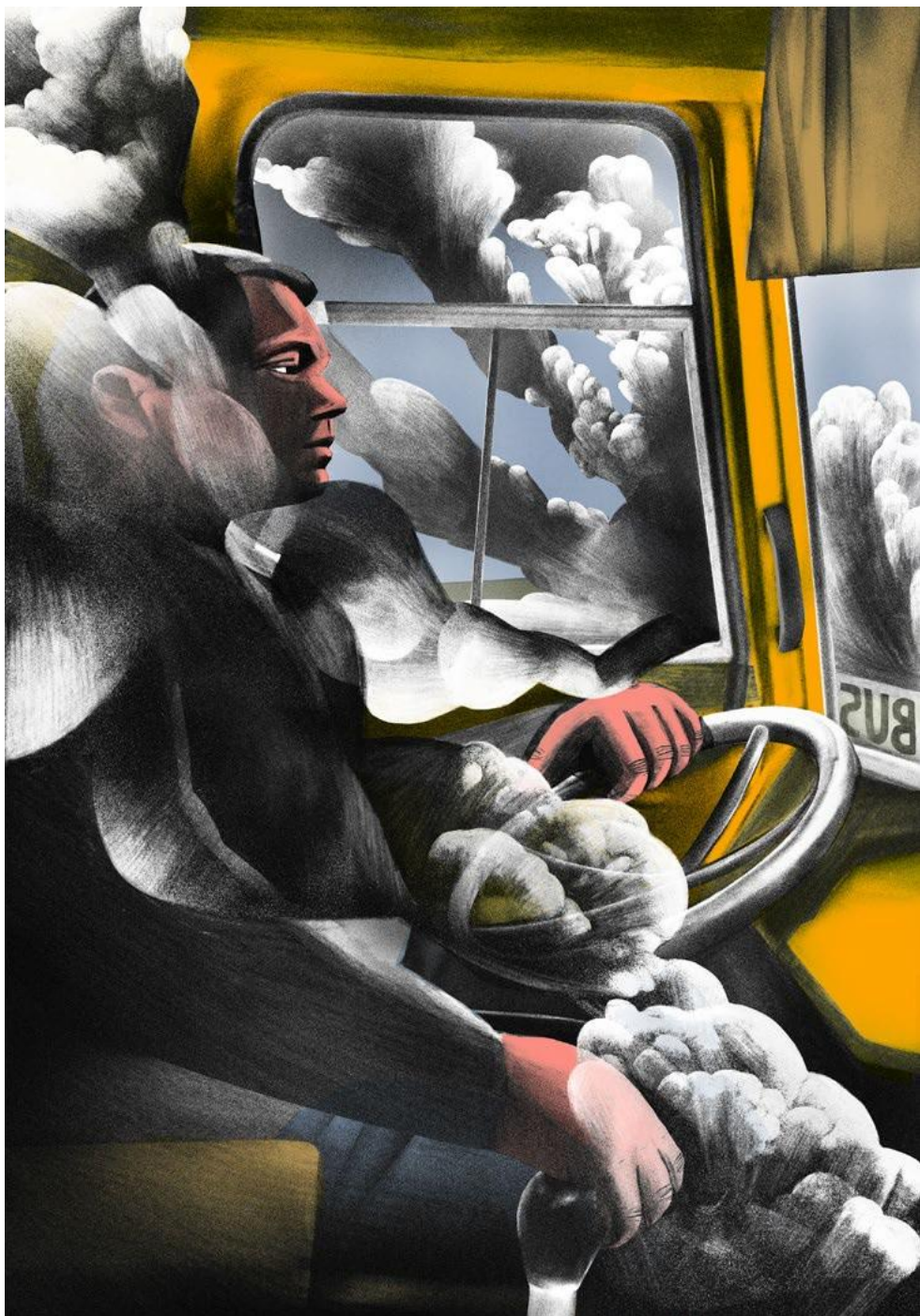
Serhiy Lyubych
Self-employed
Hostomel, Kyiv region

On March 7, 2022, Serhiy Lyubych drove from Bucha to Hostomel to buy drinking water. According to eyewitnesses, Serhiy got out of his car and was kidnapped by Russian forces, who put a bag over his head and took him away. His empty bag was found at the scene, and his car was left without wheels. Serhiy has not been seen since.

As of April 30, 2022, he is reportedly being held in pretrial detention center number 2 in Novozybkov, in Russia's Bryansk region. At the request of Human Rights Watch and the Red Cross, Russian authorities officially acknowledged Serhiy's detention in Russia.

« *In this work, I wanted to show the surprise of the horror that is happening to Serhiy, and as a result, the desperate loneliness in the complete "darkness" of events. After all, it is unlikely that at the beginning of the invasion, a civilian volunteer thought that he could be taken prisoner by the occupiers so insidiously while he was just helping the locals.* »

Illustration: Daria Filippova

Andrii Okhrimenko
Intercity bus driver
Boromlia, Sumy region

At the beginning of March 2022, the village of Boromlia was under occupation. The Okhrimenko household is located in the center of Boromlia, so the Russian military set up their headquarters in the house's garden and installed a tripwire in the house. On March 16, Andrii Okhrimenko was informed that his house had been blown up. Andrii ran to see what happened; no one saw him again. According to Andrii's wife, the Russians found photos of military equipment on his phone and promised to release him in a couple of days. However, Andrii is still in captivity, and his two children, 19-year-old Andriy and 3-year-old Sasha, are waiting for him to return home. Another hostage reported that the Russian military transported Andriy to the Belgorod region in Russia. Although he was allegedly being prepared for an exchange, according to the Red Cross, Andrii currently remains in the territory of the Russian Federation.

« *A civilian prisoner, a minibus driver who traveled between cities every day, helping people get to different places. On the day he was captured, the last thing we know about him is that he ran to his house when he heard that it had been blown up. The smoke here is both the fire that Andriy could have run to and the "fog of war," the uncertainty that envelops every missing person, every prisoner of war, when we learn only bits of information and see what happened through a thick haze.* »

Illustration: Jenya Polosina

Ruslan Hodzha
Glass factory worker
Hostomel, Kyiv region

On March 17, 2022, 30-year-old Ruslan Hozhda was abducted by Russian forces from a bunker at the Gostomel glass factory, where civilians whose homes had been destroyed were sheltering from the shelling. Ruslan was unfit for military service due to severe injuries sustained in an accident in 2011. In August 2022, the Red Cross confirmed that Ruslan had been imprisoned in the Russian Federation. His current location remains unknown.
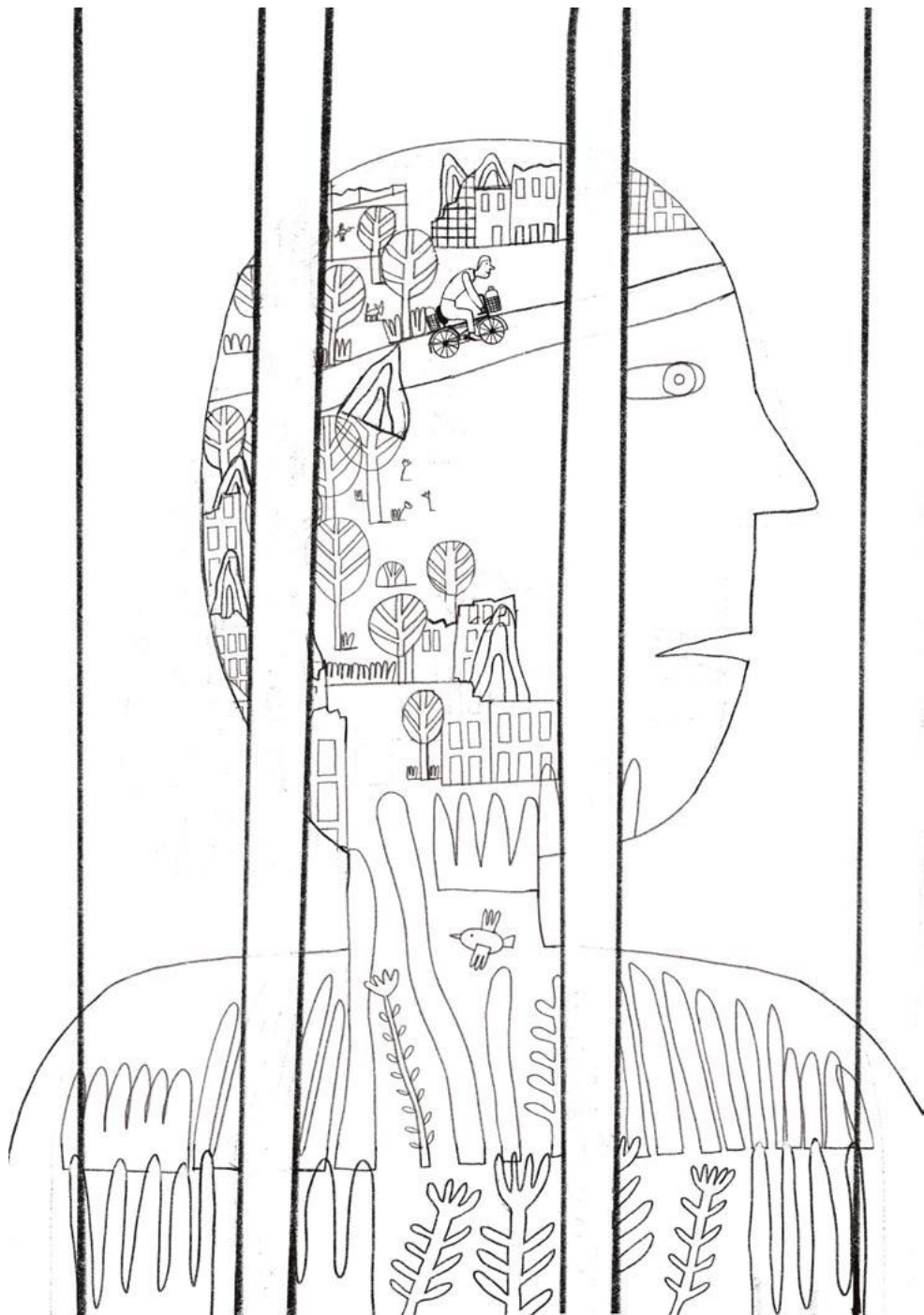
Illustration: Anna Andreieva

Ihor Kolykhaev
Mayor
Kherson

Following the full-scale invasion and occupation of Kherson, Ihor Kolikhayev chose not to resign from his position. On June 28, 2022, he was abducted by Russian forces, and since then, Ihor's family has been unable to establish contact with him. According to civilians who were released from captivity, Ihor was initially held in Kherson, then transferred to Hola Prystan, and later to Kalanchak. The latest reports indicate he is currently being held in Chaplynka.

Fellow prisoners who have seen Ihor describe his physical condition as very poor: he is sick, frail, thin, and exhausted. He is denied food, and others are prohibited from sharing food with him. Ihor's captors also deny him warm clothing and medicine.

«The illustration symbolizes Ukrainian civilians illegally held captive by Russian forces. The red threads binding the figure represent pressure, restrictions on freedom, and pain. Despite torture, horrific conditions of detention, lack of proper medical care and food, these people remain steadfast in their struggle for freedom and justice. **»**

Illustration: Olena Staranchuk

Ivan Remez
Builder
Hostomel, Kyiv region

The Russian military detained 31-year-old Ivan Remez in Hostomel on March 6, 2022, while he was delivering humanitarian aid to the elderly on his bicycle. Ivan's girlfriend later spoke with two released prisoners of war who informed her that they had seen Ivan in pretrial detention center number 1 in Kursk. After several months of searching, Ivan's family received an anonymous audio recording stating that he was in captivity. Currently, Ivan is believed to be held in a prison in the Russian Federation.

Illustration: Mariana Rio