

## FROM THE INSIDE

# Staying optimistic in the face of war

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We have been in the hospital for almost a month now. I used to have the record of the longest stay in the hospital: 3.5 days on duty in intensive care. Now, it feels surreal to think about it.

Almost the entire team is here all the time because there are fights and bombs all over the place around Kyiv, so getting to the hospital or returning home is becoming more and more dangerous.

We have arranged our lives here; we prepare food and sleep in the basements (at least the ones among us who can sleep because it is impossible to leave the patients alone in intensive care or in the operating room).

Patients come constantly, mostly gunshot and explosive wounds. They are army men and civilians in equal part. Most of the patients are sent to another safer hospital after surgery, while the most severe remain with us.

We are already accustomed to living with the constant explosions and machine-gun fire that can be heard outside the windows. Work helps us to abstract ourselves from all of this. However, it is impossible to turn away from human grief, even if you do not watch the news. A few days ago, we had a patient, a man about 45 years old, from a suburb of the capital who was taken by the Russian troops. There were about 50 civilians there, including women, old men, and children. They were surrounded by Chechens. Everyone was kicked out of the basement where they were hiding and almost everyone was shot. His wife and one child died at once, and his 9-year-old son died in his arms asking to be killed because of the

unbearable pain. When all went calm, our patient with an arm and leg injury spent half a day in the woods until he was rescued by some volunteers and brought to us.

We hear such stories of grief almost every day.

Nonetheless, we try not to lose our optimism and sincerely hope that this war will end soon.



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