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COVID-19 in numbers:

Ukraine

Cases: 2,350,646

Deaths: 54,919

Recovered:
2,231,417

Worldwide

Cases: 229,492,150

Deaths: 4,708,410

Recovered:
206,150,968

Reform Watch

West concerned about Ukraine's judicial reform stumbling

By Thaisa Semenova. Published Sept. 17. Updated Sept. 17 at 2:41 pm




 G7 foreign ministers meet in London for their first face-to-face talks in more than two years, with calls for urgent joined-up action to tackle the most pressing global threats. (Photo by Ben STANSALL / POOL / AFP)

Photo by AFP

Western diplomats said they are concerned about Ukraine's failure to implement recently passed judicial legislation.

The United States and European Union believe this reform is crucial to uproot rampant corruption and create a more transparent and predictable environment for investors.

The Ukrainian Council of Judges on Sept. 13 failed to nominate members to the Ethics Council, a pivotal body for Ukraine's entire judicial reform drive. Out of the 26 members of the Council of Judges, 16 did not vote for any candidates.

The U.S. Department of State said in a [statement](#) that this decision "threatens to derail the promise of real judicial reform," but "there is still time to save this effort."

Following an extraordinary meeting on Sept. 16 at President Volodymyr Zelensky's office with senior members of Ukraine's parliament and judicial bodies, diplomats from the Group of Seven (G7) and the EU demanded for judicial reforms to move forward.

"We strongly reject any attempt to jeopardize the implementation of Ukraine's vital reform aimed at strengthening the rule of law, increasing public confidence in the judiciary, attracting foreign investment and bringing Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic future closer," according to a copy of a joint statement [published](#) by Zelensky's office.

The bill creating the Ethics Council was passed in July. The Ethics Council, made up of three Ukrainian judges and three international experts, is expected to fire and hire members of the High Council of Justice, the judiciary's main governing body, based on ethics and integrity standards. If

the vote is split three to three, international experts' opinions will prevail.

International organizations have already nominated their experts for the Ethics Council.

Read more: [Parliament passes second judicial reform bill required by IMF](#)

Critics say the Council of Judges's failure to nominate judicial members to the Ethics Council is a clear case of reform sabotage.

Explaining the Council of Judges' rationale, its head Bohdan Monych said on Sept. 13 that he believed the reform legislation should be revised because Ukrainian judges would not have sufficient voting powers.

Monych **[told the Kyiv Post](#)** that the Council of Judges would delegate its representatives if the reform was revised. Specifically, he wants the quorum at Ethics Council meetings to be increased from two members to four.

Almost 79% of Ukrainians do not trust courts and judges, according to a survey conducted by think tank Razumkov Center in March. Only 12.4% said they trusted the courts and judges.

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