

Business as a Rearguard: Why the State Fails to Protect Its Own — Alona Lebedieva

KYIV, UKRAINE, May 23, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- In the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, a question that has lingered in bureaucratic offices for years has resurfaced: why is the state still unable to respond promptly to complaints from businesses about dumping practices? Enterprises seek protection, only to be met with silence, bureaucracy, and delays. Meanwhile, they lose markets, cut production, and lay off workers.



Alona Lebedieva

In the past two years alone, the Ministry of Economy has received dozens of complaints about dumping imports that are destroying Ukrainian producers. Only a handful have been reviewed. The rest are either stalled without explanation or returned to applicants with formal remarks.

“Ukrainian business today is not just a ‘taxpayer’. It is the rearguard — the economy that is still breathing despite the war,” says Alona Lebedieva, owner of the Ukrainian multi-industry investment and industrial group Aurum Group. “And every delay on the part of the state is not just about paperwork. It’s about people losing their jobs and entire industries losing their chance to survive.”

By comparison, in EU countries, a standard anti-dumping investigation takes no more than nine months — and that’s in peacetime. In Ukraine, businesses wait not for decisions, but at least for attention. This is unacceptable.

And the problem isn’t limited to dumping. Businesses are increasingly facing systemic pressure. According to official statistics, in 2023, the Bureau of Economic Security (BES) conducted around 600 searches — nearly twice as many as in 2022. More than 350 of these took place in the second half of the year — the highest number in the agency’s history. Investigating judges approved 83.2% of motions for searches — an alarmingly high rate of interference in business operations.

In 2024, according to the BES, 1,800 criminal proceedings were initiated, but only 500 were completed. This means over 70% of cases are either in limbo or risk remaining unresolved for years.

“Up to 80% of criminal cases against businesses do not result in verdicts and don’t even reach court. Companies receive letters from the prosecutor’s office about the closure of cases, but they can’t use these documents to prove their business reputation — because they’re just pieces of paper, the validity of which is hard to confirm. Many regions report attempts at corporate raiding under the guise of investigative actions,” Lebedieva notes.

The situation is further complicated by another dangerous trend: law enforcement agencies are reopening old cases that had not been investigated for years and launching a new wave of ‘activity’ against enterprises.

“This is the reality in which business operates: you pay millions into the budget, you keep production running, you support the army — and at the same time, you brace for inspections or searches. This is not a partnership. This is a war within the country,” she insists.

The institutions intended to protect businesses in Ukraine — such as the Business Ombudsman’s Office — largely exist on paper. Their effectiveness is critically below the real need for support.

“We’re not asking for benefits or preferences. We are asking for fair and clear rules. Prompt responses, feedback, reduction of bureaucracy — not on paper, but in practice. War is not a reason to stall. It is a duty to accelerate,” Lebedieva emphasizes.

She believes the state’s main task today is not to invent excuses, but to demonstrate effectiveness in action. This doesn’t require new laws. What’s needed is political will: to end selective enforcement, abandon formalism — and finally recognize business as an ally, not a suspect.

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