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MARTIAL LAW IN UKRAINE REFLECTED IN THE ROMANIAN MEDIA. CASE STUDY: THE DAILY ADEVARUL

Carmen Ungur-Brehoi

Lecturer, PhD,

*Department of Political Sciences and Communication Sciences,
University of Oradea, Oradea, Romania*

The present study tries to investigate the press materials that appeared in the national Romanian newspaper *Adevarul*, referring to “martial law” after the war burst in Ukraine, in 2022. The phrase “martial law” is met in the daily *Adevarul* 27 times, in materials that follow three directions: they have a direct connection to Ukraine and the decision to implement it in the country; to Russia and its regulations in the territories occupied and the possible legal sides in case of implementing it in Russia; and to other various subjects connected to the syntagma (possible reactions to apply it in Chechnya, in Kyrgyz Republic, most searched Google words in 2022, murder in USA by a maniac that considered he established “martial law” in America). In this research we will only refer to the most read materials that refer to the first category – “martial law” in Ukraine after 24th February 2022, till February 2024, when the last material appears on this topic.

In the article *The President of Ukraine decrees martial law throughout the country*, the first on this topic in *Adevarul*, the Romanian national daily, mentions “martial law in Ukraine”, since the beginning of the Russo-Ukrainian war, and is dated 24th February 2022. The material quotes Volodimir Zelenski and Vladimir Putin exchange replicas through the British news agency, Reuters. The news states the fact that president Zelenski announced “on Thursday the introduction of martial law in all the territories of the country, after the president of the Russian state, Vladimir Putin, declared at dawn the start of a «military operation» in Ukraine”. Zelenski’s message to his people is trying to be brave and uses replicas that should prove this (“We are strong, we are ready for anything, we will win”), although only one day before he used to say “there is no need for a general mobilization among the population and ruled out the risk of a large-scale war with Russia”, which is why he rejected calls to impose martial law in the separatist province of Donbas, in the east of the country, despite Moscow’s recognition of the self-proclaimed separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. At the beginning of the same week, Vladimir Putin had

signed, according to the newspaper's article, the declaration of independence of these Ukrainian regions, at the end of a televised speech in which he spoke about the history of Ukraine and how this state was "created by Russia" [1].

Another media material on the topic of the "martial law" is released in May 2022. Ukraine's parliament voted on 22nd May the extension of the martial law and the general mobilization by three more months, until August 23, after Volodymyr Zelensky signed a decree in this regard, writes *Adevarul* [2]. This time the news is taken from the press agency Agerpress [3] and it states: they (Russians) are still looking for a "miracle weapon" with which to achieve their goals, which shows "the total failure of this operation and (Moscow's) fear of admitting their mistakes", criticizing the way Russians fight: "With inexperienced recruits that they throw into battle as cannon fodder...With thieves, who see household appliances for the first time in a foreign country (...) With prohibited phosphorus bombs, used to set fire to schools and simple residential buildings". Martial law appears as a necessity, being enforced when "a country is in major social unrest, such as a crisis or war". The material presents only one point of view, is not the objective reporting that shows at least two different sources opinion, from neutral point of view.

Martial law imposed by Putin shows that Ukrainians do not want to join Russia, says Washington [4] is another news in *Adevarul*. Published in October 2022, it transmits the spokesman's for American diplomacy belief that "the establishment of martial law in the territories annexed by Russia on Ukrainian territory shows that Ukrainian citizens do not agree to join Russia" and that Putin exposes these lies by instituting the Russian martial law (such as "people in those regions who were so desperate to flee the Ukrainian state that they wanted to join Russia"). Martial law was explained by Putin as a solution to the fact that "those in charge in Kyiv refuse to negotiate with Russia and that they «bomb» civilians in areas under Russian occupation".

At the end of 2022, *Almost 5,000 Ukrainians fled to Romania to escape martial law* is the first complete article in terms of trying to explain how safe the Ukrainian citizens felt [5] and to the audience what "martial law" means: it "prohibits men between the ages of 18 and 60 from leaving the country", except for those who "are exempt from mobilization in case of war", those who "have medical reasons and fathers with at least three children".

Ukraine extends martial law and postpones October parliamentary elections (July 2023) [6] and *Zelenski specifies how he could hold elections despite the war* (August 2023) are two articles that present Zelenski's desire to organize the elections in the spring of 2024 despite the war and the martial law, "if the Western partners help financially, the Supreme Rada approves and all voters have access to the ballot boxes" [7].

At the end of November 2023 is published the material *Ukrainian oligarchs and their relationship with Zelensky. The Rise and Fall of the Kievan Moguls*, media analysis that uses twice the terms "martial law". The material is based

on a wide-ranging *Financial Times* study that shows that Kiev's oligarchs that once dominated the economy, with monopolies on energy and raw materials, with the help of allies in politics and justice, under the state's extraordinary powers of a martial law with the combined effects of war and economic recession have reduced drastically the power [8].

The latest article on the same topic is written in February 2024, almost at two years distance from the beginning of the war – “Ukraine suspends presidential elections. The Kyiv parliament has extended mobilization and martial law until mid-May”. For 90 more days, until May 13, the Ukrainian Parliament has decided to prolong mobilization and martial law, both imposed after the Russian invasion two years ago. The two laws introduced by President Volodymyr Zelenski were voted by a majority of two-thirds of the legislators. In the same actions were suspended the legislative and presidential elections. The information is taken again from the same Agerpres. This in an important report because we receive the explanation of Zelenski and Putin's actions. Martial law gives the “army more rights”. Also, men between the ages of 18 and 60 eligible for military service “can only leave the country in exceptional cases” [9].

Martial law introduced for the second time in the history of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is ongoing since that moment. The Romanian media is observing thoroughly the process and the changes that take place in it, through press agencies or through reportages written by *Adevarul* journalists on the field (writing about secondary effects of martial law, at the Romanian borders with Ukraine). The present communication analyzes briefly a part of the most important news in the last two years in *Adevarul*.

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