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## Newspaper “Komsomolskaya Pravda”

Institution

All actors • Russia

### ***Official position/function regarding the conflict***

“Assault aircraft of the Armed Forces of Ukraine bombed the self-defense checkpoints of the Crimea on Chongar. After the artillery preparation, the nationalist battalions drove the Crimeans out of Chongar and Perekop. Three days after the start of a large-scale military operation, the volunteer and regular regiments of Ukraine from the mainland, together with units based in Crimea, surrounded Simferopol, Sevastopol, and Feodosia ... The Russian fleet weighed down and headed for Novorossiysk. The red and black flag of Ukrainian nationalists is raised over Nakhimov Square in Sevastopol, Kyiv is rejoicing.” This is how one of the main “military journalists” of Komsomolskaya Pravda (hereinafter – KP) Alexander Kots fantasized about “what would have happened if Crimea had not returned to Russia.” In the future, the legend narrative “if not for Russia, then there would be nationalists/NATO troops in Crimea” became the main slogan of Russian propaganda justifying the capture of the peninsula.

KP is a perfect example of the tabloid and propagandist yellow scandalous and entertaining press with a circulation of 2.7 million copies (2017). The largest circulation of the daily newspaper KP and the weekly KP-Tolstushki was 34 million copies in 2009 and is still the highest among Russian print media.

It is funded from non-governmental sources. 45% of the publication is owned by Sergei Rudnov, the owner of LDV Press LLC. Also, one of the minority owners of KP shares with a stake of 4 to 7% is the editor-in-chief of the outlet Vladimir Sungorkin.

Currently, the publishing house Komsomolskaya Pravda includes (in addition to the KP) five newspapers, a radio station, and a website. In 2011-14, the Komsomolskaya Pravda TV channel also worked.

## ***Interests/goals in the conflict region***

[Despite the fact that the KP is a non-state outlet, Sungorkin constantly emphasizes his closeness to the authorities.](#) The KP has done a lot to justify the aggression against Ukraine. [In April 2014, the journalists of the newspaper were awarded the Order of Merit for the Fatherland of the fourth degree "for objectivity in covering events in Crimea."](#) The awards were presented to Sungorkin and the "military reporters" Alexander Kots and Dmitry Steshin, the authors of numerous reports from Donbas full of one-sidedness and bias and mainly justifying the actions of the separatists.

## ***Actions regarding the conflict***

[Misinformation, aggressive attacks, and falsifications in reporting on events in Ukraine and against the Russian opposition supporting Ukraine.](#) A campaign to discredit Boris Nemtsov after his murder. Examples of headlines of KP articles that contain signs of disinformation and propaganda, calls for unleashing an aggressive war:

- "Zakhar Prilepin gathered his battalion in the "DPR" (Alexander Kots, 13.02.17). Quote:

***" - What are the ultimate goals of this war?***

- *Kyiv is the ultimate goal. We will not hide.*
- ***You want to change the government in Kyiv or annex it to Russia?***
- *Kyiv is a Russian city. Russian Ukrainian city. Our business is small. They will decide at the top. But I think that there should be no such mistakes as were there with Yanukovich... Entire Ukraine is a goal. There can be no other goal."*
- "Ukrainian "volunteers" in Donbas raped children" (Dmitry Steshin, 07.08.2016);
- "Kyiv began a punitive operation against the insurgent Sloviansk" (Alexander Kots, 04.24.14),
- "In Kyiv, they ate a "Russian-speaking" baby" (12.01.15)
- "What is taught in Ukrainian school: The first ancient ... nation" (30.07.2018).
- "The punitive operation of Kyiv in Donbas is coordinated by the United States,"
- "Ukraine is ruled by nine criminals and a client of a mental hospital" ...
- "Lustration is Maidan illustration" (04.24.2014). Quote: "The only ones who are really interested in the general lustration are the Right Sector militants. [Because only in this case they will have no competitors in the struggle for power. <...> Under the \[lustration\] banner](#)

the Maidan rampaged, the junta seized power”.

The KP clearly proved itself as a “wartime” media when it facilitated the persecution of the 17-year-old schoolboy Vlad Kolesnikov, who spoke in support of Ukraine, and after the pan-Russian persecution by the country’s most circulated newspaper, he committed suicide.