



# CIVILM+

<http://civilmplus.org>

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## PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBASS

Results of monitoring actual occurrences, related to the hybrid war in Eastern Ukraine

On 4th December 2017 in Vienna, civil society organizations and activists from Ukraine, Russia and other European countries founded a joint international [platform CivilM+](#) to push for peace and the rule of law in eastern Ukraine.

The platform's aim is to streamline civic actors' efforts in spheres like human rights protection, peacebuilding, education and information, humanitarian work, and to work on rebuilding the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk as peaceful, integrated and developed regions of a democratic Ukraine and united Europe. CivilM+ seeks to promote the involvement of the regions' population as well as refugees and displaced persons in these activities. CivilM+ offers its participants opportunities for cooperation, elaboration of joint positions, mutual support and solidarity, improvement of qualification and close coordination of work.

The newsletter is devoted to the work carried out by civil society organizations and initiative groups from Ukraine, Russia, as well as international organizations, to overcome the consequences of the hybrid military conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine.

This newsletter will be published regularly; the next issue will be published in March 2019.

You can send your information for the newsletter or ask any questions at: [newsletter@civilmplus.org](mailto:newsletter@civilmplus.org)

The selection of news presented in the Newsletter is subjective. The opinions expressed in the published materials may not coincide with the opinion of the authors and participants of CivilM+.

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## 1. Political processes and the situation in the conflict zone

- January 24, 2019 - the resolution [“The escalations of tensions around the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait and threats to European security”](#) was adopted by PACE. It was recognized that the Ukrainian seamen fall within the Geneva Conventions (*text in English*)
- February 5, 2019 - The Prosecutor General’s Office of Ukraine [opened criminal proceedings on suspicion of “state treason” and “encroachment upon the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine”](#) against pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk, who had previously [claimed](#) that a “Donbass autonomous region” should be created (*text in Ukrainian*)
- February 8, 2019 - Dmitry Peskov, the Press Secretary for the President of Russia, [said that Viktor Yanukovych, the former President of Ukraine, will be granted protection](#) with the official state security service (*text in Russian*)
- February 8, 2019 - Alexander Grushko, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia [claimed that Russia is ready to continue negotiations](#) to investigate the crash of a Boeing MH-17 plane (*text in Russian*)
- February 9, 2019 - The State Border Guard Service of Ukraine has [announced that the entry ban to Russia is widespread for the citizens of Ukraine](#). Of those who cross the Russian border, Ukrainian citizens are still [the largest group](#) (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- February 12, 2019 - On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the Minsk agreements, Martin Sajdik, OSCE Special Representative in Ukraine, [claimed that despite statements of commitment by all the aggrieved parties, a solution to the conflict is no closer](#) (*text in Russian and English*)
- February 12, 2019 - a [meeting of the UN Security Council was held upon an initiative of Russian Federation](#). It was claimed by a Russian diplomat that Ukraine was evading the implementation of the Minsk agreements. He also accused Western countries of assisting the Ukrainian leadership (*text in Russian*)
- February 13, 2019 - Martin Sajdik, OSCE Special Representative in Ukraine, said [after Meeting of Trilateral Contact Group](#) that the following topics were discussed: further transfer of the so-called “LDNR” prisoners from the territories uncontrolled by the Ukrainian government; water supply issues; the sustainability of the ceasefire and “humanitarian demining”; the implementation of the “Steinmeier formula”; amnesty issues, and the local elections in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions according to the Minsk agreements (*text in Russian and English*)
- February 17, 2019 - [Miroslav Lajčák, OSCE Chairman-in-Office, had a meeting with Pavlo Klimkin, Foreign Minister of Ukraine](#) on the eve of the discussion of the Ukrainian situation at the EU Foreign Affairs Council. He regretted Ukraine’s refusal to give accreditation to OSCE observers with Russian citizenship (*text in English*)
- February 19, 2019 - Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, during his visit to Kyiv [stated that Ukraine will be supported](#) fully in the face of Russian aggression (*text in Ukrainian*)
- February 20, 2019 - [Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, made a statement at the UN General Assembly meeting](#) and took part in the discussion about the temporarily occupied territories of the country (*text in Russian*)

- February 20, 2019 - [a joint statement of the EU countries on the humanitarian needs of the civilian population of Donbas](#) was made at the UN General Assembly. The European Union is the largest donor of humanitarian aid for Ukraine, with 681.1 million euros having been provided for assistance in reconstruction and post-conflict development since 2014 (*text in English*)
- A peacekeeping operation, an appeal to the Budapest Memorandum, an amendment to the Constitution and direct negotiations with representatives of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR" - "Donbass.Realii" about [6 key candidates](#) for the presidential elections in Ukraine and their plan for the return of Donbass (*video in Russian*)
- At the end of 2018, Martin Sajdik, OSCE Special Representative, presented a [new plan for resolving the conflict in Donbas](#). According to it, the UN and the OSCE should act under joint leadership, headed by a special representative. This applies both to the military and police components of the UN, and the OSCE observation mission, which is already operating on the ground. The Donbass Recovery Agency, as conceived by the authors, will be organized under EU leadership, modelled on the Balkans agency. However, the new plan has been widely [criticized](#) by [Ukrainian](#) and Russian officials (*text in Russian*)
- A draft of [new sanctions against Russia](#) has been prepared by the USA, which provides a number of measures against the banking and energy sectors and Russia's external debt (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [More than 60 reports of violations of electoral legislation](#) were registered by police in the Donetsk region. More than a thousand polling stations in the Donetsk region will stay closed during the presidential election (*text in Russian*)
- The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has opened [criminal cases against seven Russian servicemen](#) due to the incident in the Kerch Strait "on suspicion of waging a war of aggression" (*text in Ukrainian*)

## 2. Public initiatives dedicated to overcoming the consequences of war and searching for opportunities for dialogue

- On February 21, human rights activists from Moscow (Russia), Washington (USA), Ottawa (Canada), Kiev (Ukraine), Berlin (Germany) and Tallinn (Estonia) announced the creation of a ["Coalition to free the Kremlin's political prisoners"](#) (*text in Russian*)
- February 23, 2019 - [a feminist anti-military protest](#) was conducted in Saint-Petersburg. "What happens to our children next? They become cannon fodder of Russian militarism and corps of Russia-initiated senseless wars. Women are forced to give birth to the meat that the state then happily eats" says the feminist manifesto of the organizers (*text in Russian*)
- February 23, 2019 - [the antiwar festival "White rose" took place in Moscow](#). It brought together Russian and foreign musicians, poets and artists (*text in Russian*)
- February 24, 2019 - the Boris Nemtsov commemoration march took place in Moscow. Its participants held many anti-military posters and Ukrainian flags [calling for the release of Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia](#) (*text in Russian*)
- [An appeal by members of the CivilM+ platform to the Parliament and Government of Ukraine, and to the diplomatic community](#) on the 5th anniversary

of the military conflict in Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian, English, Russian*)

- An [exhibition of art works of Ukrainian and Russian political prisoners](#), kept in prisons in Russia, is taking place in Saint-Petersburg. According to its organizers, the main aim of the exhibition is to support “an active memory in society about political prisoners” (*text in Russian*)
- At the end of last year members of CivilM+ platform organized a [Peacebuilding school for the youth of Eastern Ukraine and the North Caucasus](#) in the Transcarpathian region. See the [video](#) about school’s results (*video in Russian, text in English*)
- [A mobile application about the legal norms of armed conflicts](#) has been created in Ukraine by the “Geneva Call” organization (*text in Russian*)
- 3500 children from 50 settlements in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions got their presents during the ["St. Nicholas Reindeers" annual campaign](#). Gifts were collected both in Ukraine and all over the world (*text in Russian*)

### 3. Legal initiatives and analytics on war conflict

- February 7, 2019 - Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has adopted a [law for a strategic course towards NATO and EU membership](#) to be fixed in the Constitution. The law takes effect on 21st of February (*text in Ukrainian*)
- February 20, 2019 - Ukrainian human rights NGOs have [published their consolidated position with demands to the Ukrainian Government to protect people who have suffered due to the conflict](#). The focus of their attention, among others, is the need to establish the position of a military ombudsman, to help to political prisoners and to simplify the procedure to cross the contact line (*text in Ukrainian*)
- 49% of respondents residing in Donbass (in the regions, controlled by Ukraine) consider Russia as a party to the current conflict, and a majority of respondents thinks that the most efficient ways to achieve peace are restoration of normal daily life and international pressure on Russia. This is described in the [research “Searching for ways to restore Ukrainian sovereignty in the occupied Donbass”](#), which was conducted by the “Democratic Initiatives” foundation named after Ilko Kucheriv together with the sociological service of the Razumkov Center (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The charitable Foundation “East-SOS” about the upcoming presidential elections in Ukraine and their vision of the [viewpoints that have to be included in the presidential program](#) (*text in Russian*)
- Center for Information on Human Rights (CIPL) on the five-year anniversary of the conflict and the steps that Parliament and Government should take [to protect the rights of the affected population](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Kharkiv Human Rights Group has published a [newsletter “Human rights in South-Eastern Ukraine”](#) for January 2019 (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The brochure [“Justice and law in post-conflict societies - European experiences and perspectives”](#) has been published as a follow-up of the “Autumn Talks” that took place in Berlin, 2018. The brochure highlights the main problems and challenges, that were discussed during the conference on 14-17 November in

Berlin during the First International Forum on Eastern Ukraine, organized by DRA and the international platform CivilM+ (*text in English*)

- The Ilko Kucheriv “Democratic Initiatives” Foundation has published [results of sociological research conducted in 2015-2018 on issues regarding IDPs](#) and the subjective integration potential of those communities who were accepting them (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The charitable Foundation “East-SOS” has published a [review on human rights violations](#) in particular territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in January 2019 (*text in Ukrainian, English, Russian*)
- Kurt Volker, US State Department Special Representative on Ukraine presented the [website on Countering the Russian Aggression in Ukraine](#). The main aim of the website is to get a detailed description of the effect of Donbass events based on satellite pictures, maps and statistics (*text in English*)
- 55th Munich Security Conference took place. Its [results](#) shortly described by DW (*text in Russian*)
- “Five year anniversary of the hybrid war - relations between Russia and the West around the conflict in Ukraine” in a [reportage](#) from Radio Liberty (*text in Russian*)
- How did the participants of events in Crimea and Donbass lose their backers, money and freedom? An [article by Novaya Gazeta to commemorate the 5th anniversary of events on Maidan](#) (*text in Russian*)
- [Analysis of possible Kremlin influence on the presidential elections in Ukraine](#) by Russian political scientist Vladislav Inozemtsev (*text in Russian*)
- The recommendations [“Frozen ground: Role of the OSCE in protracted conflicts”](#) were published by the Slovak Foreign Policy Association and authored by a group of experts from several countries. The chapter “Russia–Ukraine conflict: What can the OSCE do? Proposals for Slovakia’s 2019 OSCE Chairmanship” was written by Maksym Khyliko and Oleksandr Tytarchuk, leaders of the East European Security Research Initiative Foundation (*text in English*)

#### 4. Assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees and affected civilians

- February 7, 2019 - [transfer of 33 prisoners from the territory of the so-called “LPR” to Ukraine](#) took place in Schastye. It only included prisoners who were convicted of acts not related to the conflict (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Charitable Foundation “East-SOS” about the [support program for 5 schools in the Luhansk region](#) who take part in the program “Global education - getting to know human rights” (*text in Russian*)
- Ukrainian artist Alevtina Kakhidze has been drawing pictures about her mother residing in the so-called “LPR”. An [interview with her about life and death of people on the check-points and under occupation](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- How can an IDP get a job, pension and vote? The charitable foundation Stabilization Support Services and program “Advise on IDP issues” have made a [series of cartoons responding to various questions for IDPs](#). Valeria Vershinina, an expert from the program, says that IDPs do not have fewer questions than 5

years ago and state policy is still very negative (*text in Russian*)

- The UN has developed a new [assistance plan for Eastern Ukraine](#). In 2019, 162 million dollars will be [allocated](#) to humanitarian aid (*text in Ukrainian*)

## 5. Interviews and opinions

- On how the MFA of Ukraine considers the plan of Donbass' reintegration, how international administration should be organized, and if there should be a visa regime between Russia and Ukraine in an [interview by Minister of foreign affairs of Ukraine Pavel Klimkin](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Letters written by Russians convicted in Ukraine for taking part in the conflict in Donbass](#) were published. In their letter, they asked to be exchanged for Ukrainian prisoners kept in Russia. While Ukraine is ready for this exchange, Russia does not support it fully. Russian civil society activists [appealed](#) to the presidential administration to support this exchange (*text in Russian*)
- "Infrastructure collapse as one of the long-term consequences of the conflict, which not only complicates economic rebuilding, but also engenders further state weakness in a geopolitically fragile region": Sophie Lamborschini, associate researcher from Marc Bloch Center in Berlin, [analyzes the consequences of infrastructure collapse in Donbass](#) both for citizens in particular, as for Ukraine as a whole (*text in English*)
- [An exhibition of drawings by the Ukrainian journalist Roman Suschenko](#), convicted for espionage in Russia, has opened in Paris to celebrate his 50th birthday (*text in Russian*)
- [Interview with attorney Ilya Novikov, who is defending Ukrainian sailors](#) kept in pre-trial custody in Lefortovo Prison. Ilya talks about the chances of their exchange (*text in Russian*)
- How many Ukrainians remained on the uncontrolled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions? Official Ukrainian statistics say there are 1,5 million IDPs. Radio Liberty's [article asks will there be a population census in so-called "L/DPR"](#) and why did people decide to stay there? (*text in Ukrainian*)
- OSCE SMM has published a [video about the destroyed bridge near Stanitsa Luhanskaya](#) (*video in English*)
- [Interview with Sandra Kalniete, MEP, about the project of EP's new resolution](#), that states that full implementation of the Minsk agreements and approval of Russia's commitment to international law are the basic conditions to restore normal relations between Russia and the EU (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Associate professor at Global Leadership Institute of University of California Jesse Driscoll published an [article outlining the idea that terminology used to describe the conflict in Donbas should be changed](#). Driscoll says in order for this conflict to be resolved as soon as possible, it should be named a "civil war". That statement has been opposed by Timofey Brik, professor of Kyiv School of Economics, who in his [response article states calls to have a clear analysis of terminology before changing it](#). While analyzing the arguments of his opponent, Brik concludes that terminology is not the main problem, and most of the large international stakeholders acknowledge that Ukraine has both an internal and

external conflict (*text in English*)

- President of Russia Vladimir Putin had his [annual address to Parliament at the end of February](#). What can it mean that Ukraine was not mentioned in his speech in an analysis by Ivan Davydov (*text in Russian*).
- Residents of Donbass on their wish and possibility to [vote in Ukraine's presidential elections](#) for (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Students from so-called Luhansk and Donetsk national universities (while the initial ones are in exile) [tell Donbass.Realii how they see their future and what the process of their admission was like](#) (*text in Russian*)
- How did a former Ukrainian soldier become a unique puppet-master - an [interview with Sergey Bondar](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- A long analytical [article by Radio Liberty on why residents of Donbass are tired of the war](#) (*text in Russia*)

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