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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 April 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

- February 25, 2019 - Vladimir Zamana, [former Chief of the General Staff of Ukraine, was arrested](#) in Kyiv accused of treason (*text in Ukrainian*)
- March 2, 2019 – the concept of “[foreign policy](#)” has been adopted in the so-called “DPR” saying that “the republic aims to achieve peace with Ukraine on the basis of strict and rigorous observance of the Minsk agreements” (*text in Russian*)
- March 4, 2019 - Oleg Gladkovskiy had been fired from the position of First Deputy Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine. Earlier an [investigation was published with evidence that he was part of a fraud scheme involving the trade of military equipment from Russia to Ukraine](#) (*video in Russian*)
- March 8, 2019 - Ertuğrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of OSCE SMM in Ukraine gave a [statement on the occasion of International Women’s Day appreciating the efforts of Ukrainian women](#) to overcome the consequences of conflict in Donbass (*text in Russian, English*)
- March 8, 2019 - Ertuğrul Apakan, Chief Monitor of OSCE SMM in Ukraine, and Martin Sajdik, OSCE Special Representative in Ukraine, [welcomed the reaffirmation of the commitment to a ceasefire](#), the day before it was made by the Trilateral contact group (*text in English, Russian*)
- March 12, 2019 – the US House of Representatives, the lower chamber of the US Congress [adopted](#) four bills on [sanctions against Russia](#) (*text in Russian*)
- March 13, 2019 - US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the purpose of Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its participation in the conflict in the Donbass [is the ability to control Ukraine’s oil and gas](#) reserves (*text in English*)
- March 15, 2019 - eight Russians involved in the detention of military personnel of the Ukrainian Navy have been [included in the list of EU sanctions](#) (*text in English*)
- March 19, 2019 - The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission published [data on civilian casualties in November 2018-February 2019](#). The death toll during this period was the lowest for the entire period of the conflict (*text in Ukrainian, Russian, English*)
- March 20, 2019 - Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, signed a decree on the expansion of [Ukrainian sanctions against Russia](#). They were also [synchronized](#) with US and EU sanctions (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- March 20, 2019 – a research drone of the OSCE SMM was [shot](#) at (*text in Ukrainian, English, Russian*)
- March 20, 2019 - more than 60 prisoners have been [transferred to Kyiv from the “LPR”](#). The UN mission issued a [statement](#) in support of the transfer (*text in Russian*)
- March 22, 2019 - The North Caucasian District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don [sentenced Pavel Hrib to six years](#) in a general regime colony on charges of providing assistance to terrorism . Pavel Hrib has been recognized as a political prisoner by human rights organizations (*text in Russian*)
- March 22, 2019 – the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) announced the [arrest of a resident of Kharkiv, who, according to SBU reports, was recruited by Russian](#)

[special services](#) to carry out an act of terrorism in the city metro (*text in Ukrainian*)

- March 22, 2019 - Dmitry Medvedev, [Prime Minister of Russia, met the presidential candidate Yuriy Boyko](#) and head of the political council of the Ukrainian party Opposition Platform for Life Viktor Medvedchuk (*text in Russian*)
- March 25, 2019 - former SBU [officer](#) Vasiliy Prozorov gave a [press-conference](#) in Moscow saying that since 2014 he has been giving information on the situation in Ukraine to the Russian security services. SBU have [claimed](#) that this statement is a piece of “Russian propaganda” (*text in Ukrainian*)
- March 27, 2019 - Martin Sajdik, OSCE Special Representative in Ukraine, [claimed](#) that [pre-election discussion on the perspectives of peace in Donbass prove the efficiency of the Minsk peace process campaign in Ukraine](#) (*text in Russian*)

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

- March 11, 2019 - Mikhail Fedotov, Head of the Presidential Council on Human Rights and Civil Society Development, [informed Ukraine Ombudsperson Liudmila Denisova on the health of four Ukrainian sailors](#) kept in detention in pre-trial custody in Russia (*text in Russian*)
- March 13, 2019 - Geneva Call organized a [training on international humanitarian law for combatants](#) (*text in Russian*)
- March 14, 2019 – A [press briefing given by participants of the CivilM+](#) platform took place in Kyiv to present the results of their work and future plans (*video in Russian*)
- March 22, 2019 - in Moscow, activists hung a [banner in support of Oleg Sentsov](#), a Ukrainian political prisoner who is being held in Russia (*text in Russian*)
- March 27, 2019 - the [film “Balukh” was shown in Kyiv at the international festival of documentary films on human rights](#) DocudaysUA followed by a discussion about the situation regarding Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia (*text in Ukrainian*)
- March 24, 2019 - Moscow hosted a [street action in honor of the 200th day of pickets for the exchange of political prisoners between Ukraine and Russia](#) (*text in Russian*)
- An [international coalition for the release of political prisoners of the Kremlin](#) was created. It includes 12 organizations from Ukraine, Russia, the EU, the United States and other countries (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The International Federation on Human Rights (FIDH) [called on the International Criminal Court to investigate international crimes committed in Ukraine](#) since November 2013 (*text in Ukrainian*)
- BBC hosted [debates between young people from Ukraine and Russia](#) to discuss common ground for dialogue and contact (*text and video in Russian*)
- Vladimir Yegorov, a resident of the Tver region in Russia, [claimed the land in his property as the “territory of Ukraine”](#). He had previously received a suspended

sentence for criticizing the Russian Government, and was recognized as political prisoner. What could be the effect of his actions in a [report](#) by Radio Liberty (*text in Russian*)

- Russian musical band Animal Jazz issued a [new anti-war song “Feelings”](#). “We have to stop the wars in which our country is taking part, including those started by Russia”, [says](#) the band leader (*text and video in Russian*)

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

- Residents of Donbass have become [leaders in changing their place of voting](#) in the upcoming presidential elections. Radio Liberty explores how issues of war and de-occupation of Donbass are reflected in the [policies](#) of presidential [candidates](#) (*text in Russian*)
- The Foreign Policy Association of Slovakia published a [report “Frozen ground: Role of OSCE in Protracted conflicts. Recommendations for Slovakian Chairmanship in OSCE”](#). It includes chapters with reviews on the situation in Ukraine, Georgia, Transnistria and Karabakh (*text in English*)
- Iryna Herashchenko, representative of Ukraine in the Trilateral Contact Group and Deputy Chair of the Verkhovna Rada, [said that Russia has to pay for the restoration of destroyed infrastructure in Donbass](#) (*text in Russian*)
- The February [digest “Ensuring accountability for human rights violations in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine”](#) was published by Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (*text in English*)
- What are the [reasons](#) and probable [consequences of Russia’s nuclear weaponry](#) being positioned near Ukrainian borders (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [52% of Russians and 48% of Ukrainians believe that both countries should live with open borders, no visa or customs regime](#). These are the opinions of residents of the two countries according to a [joint survey](#) of the Levada Center and the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. Radio Liberty also conducted its own [survey](#) on the change in attitudes of Ukrainians towards Russians (*text in Russian*)
- [A study of certain areas of eastern Ukraine under the control of the separatists](#) by Nikolaus Twickel was published. The study provides a political, economic, and social assessment of the so-called "People's Republics" of eastern Ukraine, about which so little information is available to the general public, since Western analysts cannot safely visit these territories (*text in English*)
- [Will the so-called “Sajdik plan” work in Donbass](#), and what kind of obstacles may there be? An opinion piece by Maksym Khylyko (“East European Security Research Initiative Foundation”) in Atlantic Council (*text in English*)
- A [report on the results of the hotline on illegal actions of security forces](#) in the east of Ukraine was issued by the Human Rights Center “Postup” together with the Association of Human Rights Observing Monitors in the Activities of Law Enforcement Agencies (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The [report “Crossing the contact line via the check-points”](#) for February was published by the “Rights to Protection” foundation (*text in Ukrainian*)
- A [report](#) by the Kharkiv Human Rights Group “Human Rights in South-Eastern

Ukraine” was published (*text in Ukrainian*)

- A [review on the protection of rights of civilians, who have had health problems caused by the conflict](#) in Donbass, was published by Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (*text in Ukrainian*)

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

- March 13, 2019 - an [action “President, sign this”](#) was held in front of the Presidential Administration in Kyiv, organized by relatives of Ukrainian political prisoners and prisoners of war, to declare the need to establish a Coordination Council on the release of hostages under the Presidential Administration (*text in Ukrainian*)
- March 20, 2019 – a coalition of civil society organizations held a [press conference on the issues of crossing the contact line](#) and issued an [open letter](#) to the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine on the inadmissibility of violations of freedom of movement (*text in Ukrainian*)
- March 21, 2019 - a [round-table “Forgotten Living”](#), dedicated to the issues of legal settlement of the protection of hostages, captives and political prisoners. It discussed the [need](#) for a new law, as the existing one describes only the procedure for helping hostages (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- The public [initiative “Почуй нарешті виконай”](#) (“Hear at last fulfill”), which unites non-governmental organizations providing assistance to those who have suffered due to the conflict in Donbass, [addressed](#) the presidential candidates of Ukraine with questions about the most acute problems faced by residents of the occupied territories and displaced people (*text in Ukrainian*)
- One of the reasons why residents of Chechnya are seeking asylum in Germany is their [unwillingness to participate in the conflict in the Donbass](#). This is discussed in the Deutsche Welle [article](#) on the work of the Berlin Center for Psychological Assistance to Refugees (*text in Russian*)
- What are the [requirements put forward by the “leadership of the LPR” to open the checkpoint in Zolote](#). Iryna Herashchenko [said](#) the agreement on the opening of the checkpoint was reached during the negotiations in the Norman format, and whilst Ukraine fully complies with its obligations, other sides refuse to do the same (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The ongoing work to [demine certain areas of Donbass](#) is under threat of stopping. Ukraine continues to be one of the [most mined](#) countries in the world (*text in Ukrainian, Russian*)
- [Access to drinking water remains one of the most acute problems](#) in the conflict zone. UNICEF held a [photo exhibition](#) about this issue (*text in Russian*)
- After the conflict began, [foreign students stayed in the territories of the “DPR” and “LPR”](#). A Radio Liberty report asks what is their status now and what problems do they face? (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [At least 13 people \(mostly elderly\) have died while crossing the contact line](#) since the beginning of the year - UN Monitoring Mission (*text in Ukrainian, Russian, English*)

- A coalition of Ukrainian NGOs issued the [Shadow Report on Ukraine's implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#). The report details numerous systemic violations of the rights of residents of the occupied territories and forced migrants, including their electoral rights (*text in Ukrainian*)

## 5. Interviews and opinions

- Interview with [Svetlana Gannushkina, head of Civic Assistance Committee \(Russian NGO\)](#) on how Russians see Ukrainian refugees after 5 years of the conflict in Donbass (*text in Russian*)
- [Interview with Igor Kotelyants, head of NGO "Association of relatives of Kremlin hostages"](#): "The issue of political prisoners is unfortunately not the top priority" (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Journalist Roman Tsymbalyuk on [how news on Donbass quickly leave the Russian media agenda](#) (*text in Russian*)
- "Military art" - how Ukrainian [artists use spent ammunition from Donbass](#) in their work (*text in Russian*)
- Why do Ukrainian presidential [candidates refuse to talk to Russian media](#) - by Novaya Gazeta (*text in Russian*)
- [Stories of Ukrainian hostages, captives and political prisoners](#) kept in detention in the so-called "LPR" (*text in Russian*)
- Historian Georgy Kasyanov on [historical research in political context and on the paradox of the recent years](#): Russia's policy towards Ukraine strengthens in the minds of Ukrainians those very ideas about the past of their country and neighbors that Russians themselves usually do not like (*text in Russian*)
- "People are asking for something patriotic" - what do [musicians play near the frontline in Bakhmut](#) (*text in Russian*)
- Interview [with Dmitri Tkachenko, adviser to the Minister of Informational Policy of Ukraine, and Tatiana Durneva \("Influence group" NGO\)](#) on the events leading to the creation of the so-called "L/DPR" (*video in Ukrainian*)
- [Three stories](#) from Severodonetsk, Starobelsk, Lisichansk on how young people establish initiatives that change the cities by media project Zaborona (*text in Ukrainian, Russian*)
- How do post-doc movies tell the story of Donbass conflict, looking at the example of "[Mira](#)", a movie by Russian filmmaker Denis Schabaev (*text in Russian*)
- "Look around to see the hell" Ukrainian human rights documentary film festival DocudaysUA hosted a [VR-movie about events in Donbass](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Social media users discovered "[War tourism](#)" that invite foreign visitors to go on tour to the conflict zones in Ukraine (*text in English*)

Supported by the government of Germany as a part of the DRA project "Dialogue for mutual understanding and rule of law: European NGOs together to overcome the Donbass conflict"



Federal Foreign Office

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