



<http://civilmplus.org>

issue № 19, September 2019

## PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBASS

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

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 October 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+.*

### CONTENTS

1. News of the CivilM+
2. Political processes and the situation in the conflict zone
3. Public initiatives dedicated to overcoming the consequences of war and searching for opportunities for dialogue
4. Legal initiatives and analysis of the conflict
5. Assistance to internally displaced persons, refugees and affected civilians
6. Interviews and opinions

## 1. News of the CivilM+

### Second International Donbas Forum

[Registration](#) is open for the Second International Donbas [Forum](#) "Reintegration in Eastern Ukraine - improving the humanitarian situation and expanding contacts between people who live on opposite sides of the contact line," organized by the CivilM+ platform, which will be held on November 13 in Kyiv.



REINTEGRATION IN EASTERN  
UKRAINE – IMPROVING THE  
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION  
AND ENHANCING PEOPLE-TO-  
PEOPLE CONTACTS IN THE  
CONFLICT REGION

**November 13  
Kyiv**

Follow the event updates on [Facebook](#) and [CivilM+ website](#).

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### 35 people who had been in custody in Russia returned to Ukraine — 86 is still in jail

“The release of 35 people does not resolve the problem of persons illegally detained in Russia, Crimea and the uncontrolled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions” — statement of the CivilM+ platform regarding with the release of part of persons illegally detained in Russia, Crimea and the uncontrolled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (text in [Russian](#) and [English](#)).

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

- August 26, 2019 - French President Emmanuel Macron at the final press conference of the G7 Summit in Biarritz [announced that the next meeting in the “Norman format”](#) will be held in September (*text in English*)
- September 2, 2019 - negotiations of advisers to the leaders of Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia took place in Berlin, [perceived by many as preparations for the meeting of the “Norman Four”](#) (*text in Russian*)
- September 4, 2019 - A meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group was held in Minsk, after which Ambassador Martin Sajdik made a [statement of commitment of all its participants to the Minsk Agreements](#). He also noted that the number of civilian casualties in 2019 remains the lowest since the conflict began (*text in [Russian](#) and [English](#)*)
- September 5, 2019 - Konstantin Kotov, a Russian civil and anti war activist, was [sentenced in Moscow to 4 years in prison](#) for repeatedly violating the legislation on freedom of assembly. Konstantin is one of the organizers of an indefinite protest action demanding the release of Oleg Sentsov and all other Kremlin prisoners (*text in Russian*)
- September 5, 2019 - [Vladimir Tsemakh was released from custody under a personal obligation by the Court of Appeal of Kyiv](#), a key witness arrested by Ukraine in the Boeing case MH17. Subsequently, Vladimir Tsemakh was sent to Russia as part of the prisoner exchange on September 7 (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 5, 2019 - Head of the SMM Yashar Halit Chevik, in his address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, noted that [confirmation of adherence to the unlimited ceasefire, which entered into force on July 21, is the main factor contributing to the improvement of the security situation in eastern Ukraine](#) (*text in [Ukrainian](#), [Russian](#) and [English](#)*)
- September 7, 2019 - A [Russian-Ukrainian swap of prisoners](#) and detainees took place. One of the conditions for the exchange was the [transfer of Vladimir Zemakh to Russia](#), who [returned](#) to the territory not controlled by Ukraine five days after it. “[Hromadske](#)”, “[Novaya Gazeta](#)” and “[Radio Liberty](#)” tell how the exchange was prepared and held. The Atlantic Council has published material on its significance for the Ukrainian-Russian processes, and Donbas Realities on who else of the potential interests of Russia can be [exchanged](#) by Ukraine (*text in [Ukrainian](#), [Russian](#) and [English](#)*)
- September 8, 2019 - Tatyana Moskalkova, Ombudsperson of Russian Federation, [stated the advisability of concluding an interstate agreement that could, on a parity basis, resolve the issue of ending the criminal prosecution](#) against participants in the Ukrainian-Russian exchange of prisoners (*text in Russian*)
- September 11, 2019 - [hearings](#) on the [annexation of Crimea](#) began in the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (*text in [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#)*)
- September 11, 2019 - the investigators of the case of the MH17 in the Netherlands [re-qualified](#) the status of Vladimir Zemakh from a witness to a suspect. Dutch prosecutor [turned](#) to Russia with a request for his extradition (*text in [Russian](#) and [Ukrainian](#)*)

- September 12, 2019 - 54 people [were transferred from the uncontrolled territory of the Luhansk region](#) for further serving their sentences in Ukraine. At the time of the occupation they were in the penitentiary institutions of the region (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 13, 2019 - Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation Dmitry Peskov [did not exclude that Russia and Ukraine could hold a new exchange of held persons](#), but warned that the preparation would require a lot of work and time (*text in Russian*)
- September 18, 2019 - [negotiations were held in Minsk to resolve the situation in the Donbas](#). So far no consensus was reached on the application of the “Steinmeier formula” (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 18, 2019 - at a joint meeting of the parliamentary committees of Ukraine on European integration and foreign affairs, [Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadim Pristayko said he agreed](#) to the “[Steinmeier formula](#)” to resolve the situation in the occupied part of Donbas. Radio Liberty [gathered](#) experts' opinions on what this means and what challenges the Ukrainian society poses (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 25, 2019 - President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky [spoke at a debate at the 74th session of the UN General Assembly](#), talking about the situation in the Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 25, 2019 - President of Ukraine [Vladimir Zelensky met with US President Donald Trump](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)

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

- August 27, 2019 - [press conference](#) was held on the results of the first three years of the work of Ministry on issues of temporarily occupied territories and internally displaced persons (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- August 28, 2019 - a [press conference of NGOs on the electoral rights of IDPs](#) was held in Kyiv before the start of the session of the Verkhovna Rada of the ninth convocation,. Speakers told that in August in 17 cities of Ukraine the [actions “Every vote matters”](#) were held (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 30, 2019 - an [action of the Red Cross Society of Ukraine](#), dedicated to the International Day of the Missing persons took place in Kyiv (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 1, 2019 - an [action “Greet the deputy and remind about IDPs”](#) was held in Kyiv near Verkhovna Rada. It urged to insist on the need to adopt a law on the protection of the electoral rights of IDPs and labor migrants (*text in Ukrainian*)

- September 7, 2019 - the third annual [Festival of Opinions](#) took place in Severodonetsk. More than 1000 people took part in 25 discussions and side events (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 10, 2019 - [an advocacy training for women survivors of gender-based violence during the war in the Donbas](#), was held in Kyiv. It was organized by the East Ukrainian Center for Community Initiatives and the Network of Women Survivors of Sexual Abuse with the support of the Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 14, 2019 - All-Ukrainian [“Games of the Undefeated”](#) took place in Kyiv, combining sports and [rehabilitation](#) measures for veterans wounded in the Donbass (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 19, 2019 - an [action was held in Chernivtsi](#) in support of political prisoners. NGOs that initiated it held 86 traps according to the number of people held by Russia (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 20, 2019 - in Moscow, the Teatr.doc [“War is Near”](#) performance was shown about the war in the Donbas and the Oleg Sentsov case, participants in the pro-Kremlin SERB movement tried to disrupt (*text in Russian*)
- September 21, 2019 - the [“Peace March”](#) took place in St. Petersburg. Its participants demanded an end to the militarization of Russia. Three people were detained. (*text in Russian*)
- September 22, 2019 - [an action in support of Ukrainian political prisoners took place in Lviv at the Book Forum](#). Oleg Sentsov, recently released by Russia, also took part in it (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Liberated Ukrainian sailors raised money in support of Russian activist Konstantin Kotov](#), convicted in Moscow, who participated in protests against Russian intervention in the Crimea and the Donbas, as well as helping political prisoners (*text in Russian*)
- [The center of civic activism “Drukarnya” opened in Slavyansk](#) (Donetsk region) as part of the DRA e.V. project. The purpose of it is to support the development of civil society in the region and its cooperation with European public initiatives (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The documentary [performance “Voices”](#) was shown in Dniepro. Its participants were veterans of military operations in the Donbas. The performance arose as part of rehabilitation training, it allows you to establish contact between veterans and the rest of society (*text in Ukrainian*)
- As part of the CivilM+ platform, the Kharkiv Human Rights Group prepared the second publication in the series ["Victims of the Armed Conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014-2018"](#) (*text in [Russian](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [English](#)*)

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

- September 7, 2019 - [Discussion “Infrastructure Crossing the Front: Cooperation and Conflict in Eastern Ukraine”](#) organized by DRA e.V. took place in Berlin. A [report](#) by Sophie Lambroskini, a researcher of the modern history of Eastern and Central Europe at the Mark Block Center, on the situation with water supply in the Donbas was presented at the discussion (*text in Russian and English*)
- September 11, 2019 - [Presentation](#) and [discussion](#) of the results of a [survey of internally displaced persons on participation in elections and political preferences](#), organized by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems and the public group “Influence Group” (*text in Ukrainian*)
- September 17, 2019 - The Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights, De-Occupation and Temporarily Occupied Territories [recommended](#) that the Verkhovna Rada pass a [bill on the provision of free legal aid to persons who are illegally detained in the occupied territories and in Russia on first reading](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- UN report on the human rights situation in Ukraine: from May to August 2019, the [UN documented 68 victims among the civilian population of Donbas, which is 51.1 percent more than in the previous 3 months](#). The total number of civilian deaths has reached at least 3339 (*text in Ukrainian, Russian, English*)
- The [report “The Surkov Leaks: the internal cuisine of the Russian hybrid war against Ukraine”](#) was published in Ukrainian. The publication is an extension of the English version released by the British Royal Joint Institute for Defense Research (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The Right to Defense Foundation has published the results of the monitoring study [“Restoring Social Relations of Residents of Temporarily Occupied Territories through Improving Access to the Most Required Services”](#) (*text in Ukrainian and English*)
- The online magazine Balkaninsight.com has published an [overview of the discussion on civic initiatives on transitional justice](#), which was attended by experts from the CivillM+ platform (*text in English*)
- The European network of election monitoring organizations has published [final reports on monitoring the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine](#), which separately describe the situation with the voting of voters from among internally displaced persons (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Report on crimes committed in the frontline areas of Donetsk and Lupansk regions](#) from August 2018 to August 2019, released by Truth Hounds (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The monitoring report [“Crossing the line of collision through the checkpoints”](#) for August 2019 published by the Right to Protection Fund (*text in Ukrainian and English*)
- OSCE report [“Restrictions on freedom of movement and other obstacles to fulfilling the mandate of the SMM”](#) published in January-June 2019 (*text in Ukrainian, Russian, English*)

- Report of [East-SOS Charity Fund on human rights violations](#) in the occupied regions of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in August 2019 (*text in [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#)*)
- The [study of changes in public opinion of the inhabitants of Donbas](#) that occurred from 2016 to 2019 both in controlled and occupied territories was prepared by the German Center for East European and International Studies (*text in English*)
- [Analysis of problematic issues of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine Resolution # 778](#) on the procedure for the appointment, restoration and implementation of pension payments for IDPs, published by the Right to Protection Fund (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [The banking system of the occupied territories of Donbas is supposedly being reformed for further functioning within the framework of the financial system of the Russian Federation](#). The so-called "Central Bank of the DPR" announced the transition to a new settlement plan (*text in [Ukrainian](#), [English](#), [Russian](#)*)
- In anticipation of a new meeting of the "Norman format" Center for Eastern Studies reflects on the [prospects for resolving the conflict in the Donbas](#) (*text in English*)
- [A review of opinions on the attitude to the possibility of holding local elections](#) in certain regions of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions was prepared by Donbass.Realii (*text in Ukrainian*)

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

- 24 September, 2019 - a [press conference was held "Supporting Employment of the Population Affected by the Conflict"](#), during which a memorandum on cooperation between the State Employment Center and the Stabilization Support Services Charitable Fund was signed (*text in Ukrainian*)
- East-SOS Charitable Foundation in partnership with MTÜ Mondo (Estonia) and the Human Rights Education House - Chernigov [announced the launch of a competition for the project "Understanding Human Rights"](#) for schools in the Luhansk region (*text in Ukrainian*)
- In August, the East-SOS Foundation provided humanitarian [assistance to residents of eight front-line settlements of the Luhansk region](#), as well as a humanitarian aid program for [institutions](#) (*text in Russian*)
- The public group ["Influence Group" invites participants to the project "Local Advocacy for IDPs"](#). The selection is held until October 3 (*text in Ukrainian*)
- In the frontline zone of Donetsk region, a [guardianship project for older people has been launched](#); it is being implemented by Caritas-Mariupol (*text in Russian*)

## 6. Interviews and opinions

- [Interview with Oksana Kolyada](#), appointed Minister for Veterans, Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Ukrainian political prisoners returning from Russia as part of the exchange gave a number of interviews: [Pavel Grib](#), [Oleg Sentsov](#), [Nikolai Karpyuk](#), [Vladimir Balukh](#), [Arthur Panov](#), [Alexander Kolchenko](#), a press conference of the freed Ukrainian sailors was also held (*texts in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- [What kind of people are convicted in the uncontrolled territories of Donbas for treason](#), and what is the policy of Ukraine for their release - in the [material](#) by “Radio Liberty” (*text in Russian*)
- [Interview with Victoria Ivleva, a Russian journalist and civil activist](#) on how to end the war in the Donbas and what the parties to the conflict must do for this (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- Member of the program “Mutual Understanding Engineers” of the public organization “Space of Dignity” - on [how members of communities located on opposite sides of the conflict can agree](#) (*text in Russian*)
- [Interview with Konstantin Eliseev, ambassador, ex-adviser to the President of Ukraine](#), a long-term participant in meetings in the “Norman format” - on the course of negotiations, the exchange of prisoners and the consequences of contacts between the presidents of Ukraine and Russia (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Interviews with experts from the Eastern Human Rights Group and the Media Initiative for Human Rights](#) on the situation with Ukrainian prisoners held in so-called L/DPR (*text in Russian*)
- [Interview with Alexander Hug](#), former first deputy head of the OSCE SMM in Ukraine: “The window of opportunity has now opened, and it is important not to miss it” (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Journalist [Pavel Kazarin reflects on whether Ukraine and Russia have the opportunity to negotiate](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- New York Times [report on destroyed infrastructure, lack of medical care and government inattention](#) to the problems of people living along the front line in the Donbass (*text in English*)
- [Photo-project dedicated to the mothers of the dead soldiers](#) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Luhansk has turned 224 years old. [His story told in the publication](#) by TheBabel (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [How veterans of military operations on the side of the so-called “L/DPR” are used by the Russian authorities to suppress protests](#) - Medusa report (*text in Russian*)
- The [movie by “Hromadske” about the fate of 24 Ukrainian sailors](#), held for 9 months by Russia (*video in English*)



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.

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".

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