



<http://civilmplus.org>

issue № 20, October 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 November 2019.

You can send your information for the newsletter or ask any questions at: 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. News of the CivilM+

What does Russia's withdrawal from the jurisdiction of the International Fact-Finding Commission mean?

Comment by a member of the CivilM+ Coordinating Board Sergei Krivenko

President Putin is to initiate Russia's withdrawal from the jurisdiction of the International Fact-Finding Commission. The [Draft bill](#) can be found on the website of the Russian State Duma.

The Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 on the Protection of Victims of Armed Conflict, adopted by all the states of the world, provide protection for the sick, wounded, and shipwrecked, civilians and prisoners of war, protection for the medical service, medical workers, medical units and institutions and sanitary vehicles. But these Conventions did not cover several important aspects, for example, the protection of civilians from hostilities and their consequences. To fill these gaps, two Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions were adopted in 1977, supplementing the 1949 Geneva Conventions:

- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I);
- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II).

(further information at e.g. [ICRC Website](#))

Protocol I attempts to establish an international institution to investigate violations of International Humanitarian Law during international conflicts. Article 90 of Protocol I provides for the establishment of an International Fact-Finding Commission to investigate serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I.

Any State could accept the compulsory jurisdiction of this Commission or not. If the State voluntarily accepted the Commission's right to investigate any violations of the Geneva Conventions and Protocol I committed by that State during an international conflict, then upon ratification of the Protocols, it should have made a corresponding statement.

If a State did not make such a statement upon ratification of the Protocols, the International Commission may investigate violations of the norms of International Humanitarian Law committed by that State only upon the consent of that State.

Additional information on the activities of the Commission is [here](#).

The Soviet Union only ratified the Additional Protocols (I and II) on August 4, 1989 – after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan (which took place in February 1989). [The corresponding Decree](#) of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was signed by M. Gorbachev. Along with the ratification of the Protocols, the same Decree made a statement recognizing the jurisdiction of the International Commission:

“The USSR recognizes ipso facto and without special agreement in relation to any other High Contracting Party that assumes the same obligation, the competence of the International Fact-Finding Commission.”

And now, Russia is falling outside the jurisdiction of the International Fact-Finding Commission. Currently, Russia is participating in two conflicts – in Syria and in Ukraine. The bill brought in by the President of Russia, if supported by the Federal Assembly of Russia (which is beyond doubt), means that the International Commission alone will not be able to initiate investigations into cases of Russian violation of the norms of International Humanitarian Law during the operation in Syria, and if it is recognized that the conflict in Ukraine is international, then in Ukraine as well.

Sergei Krivenko

Expert of the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights,

Moscow, 21 October 2019

The program of the II International Forum on Eastern Ukraine has been published

On November 13 in Kyiv, the CivilM+ platform will organise the 2nd International Forum on Donbas “Reintegration in eastern Ukraine – improving the humanitarian situation and enhancing people-to-people contacts in the conflict region”.

The Forum’s program is available on [the CivilM+ website](#).



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

**November 13
Kyiv**

2. Political processes and the situation in the conflict zone

- October 1, 2019 - the [meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group \(TCG\)](#) was held in Minsk. The meeting resulted in the signing of a [document](#) developing the "Steinmeier formula". Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [confirmed](#) at a press briefing that Ukraine had agreed on the text of this document. A [BBC report](#) on what the perspectives and consequences of the implementation of the Steinmeier Formula are (*text in Ukrainian, Russian and [English](#)*)
- October 2, 2019 - a [street rally was held in Kyiv against the “Steinmeier formula”](#) being signed. The event brought together several thousand people (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 4, 2019 - a [round table](#) was organized in Mariupol to discuss mechanisms for restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine, including the holding of elections in uncontrolled territories (*text in Russian*)

- October 6, 2019 - street rallies against the “Steinmeier formula” were held in [Kyiv](#), [Kharkiv](#), other Ukrainian cities, and [abroad](#) (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- October 7, 2019 - President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky signed a [decree](#) and instructed the Cabinet of Ministers to consider the issue of [facilitating the entry and exit of citizens and the movement of goods to the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 10, 2019 - Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky held a [press marathon, during which he announced his intention to “stop the war”](#), and also commented that direct negotiations with Russian President Vladimir Putin turned out to be an effective format for the exchange of prisoners (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- October 15, 2019 - the meeting of the TCG ended, the parties [did not agree on the start date of the separation of forces](#). [According to Darka Oliifer](#), speaker of the representative of Ukraine in the TCG Leonid Kuchma, the Ukrainian side [considers the dissolution of the so-called “L/DPR”](#) as one of the conditions for the implementation of the political block of the Minsk agreements (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 15, 2019 - Alexander Shumkov, a Ukrainian citizen kept in a Russian prison, [went on hunger strike](#) (*text in Russian*)
- October 22, 2019 - journalist Stanislav Aseev was [sentenced in the so-called “DPR” to 15 years in prison](#). Reactions to this are in Radio Liberty's [publication](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 23, 2019 - Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, [said at a press conference that NATO is calling for increased military assistance to Ukraine](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The company "Water of Donbass", which supplies water to the entire Donetsk region, could be [disconnected from the power supply for debts](#), as a result of which residents in the controlled and uncontrolled territories will remain without water (*text in Russian*)
- October 29, 2019 - Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the TCG, Ambassador Martin Sajdik announced the start of the [disengagement of forces and hardware in Zolote](#). OSCE SMM monitors confirmed that Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel and members of the armed formations are exiting the disengagement area, together with their weapons (*text in English and Russian*)

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

- September 27, 2019 - a round table [discussion “Court review of cases whose materials are in uncontrolled territories and in the occupied Crimea”](#) was held in the Supreme Court of Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 2, 2019 - DRA e.V. opened a resource center for civil society in Slavyansk. The mission of "[Drukarnya - the center of civil society in Slavyansk](#)" is to bring together activists from eastern Ukraine and other regions of Europe to work together, implement projects, communicate and collaborate (*text in Russian*)

- October 2, 2019 - the first ever [meeting of women civil society leaders](#) from the opposite sides of the conflict in Ukraine was held. It was called “Women’s dialog beyond the borders” and is planned to become a regular event (*video in Russian*)
- October 7, 2019 - Vadim Pristaiko, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, [said that the separation of forces was postponed due to the shooting](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 15, 2019 - [round table “Challenges to the negotiations on Donbas: how can we make reintegration more secure for Ukraine”](#) was held in Kyiv (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- October 23, 2019 - a [conference “Attention: a threat!”](#) was held in Kyiv organized by Ukrainian and foreign NGOs. It was held to spread information about the conflict in Donbas and technogenic risks from it (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 25, 2019 - a [lecture “Military crimes in Donbas”](#) was held in Kyiv for the students at military university. It was organized by the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Ukrainian NGOs published a joint statement](#) stressing they appreciate the attempts of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky to get the negotiation process in the Donbas conflict off the ground, while paying attention to a number of risks (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [“East-SOS”](#) and [Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union](#) published their positions on the implementation of “Steinmeier formula” (*text in Ukrainian*)

4. Legal initiatives and analytics on war conflict

- October 1, 2019 - the [presentation of the research report “Children Affected by the Armed Conflict in Ukraine”](#) and the discussion of proposals for the development of the state protection system for such children took place. Report prepared by the Stabilization Support Services Foundation Charity Fund - [here](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- October 4, 2019 - Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union presented a [draft methodology for examining the legislation of Ukraine for compliance with international humanitarian law and transitional justice measures](#) to ensure the rights of persons affected by armed aggression (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [One of the variants for the future separation of forces](#) was published by Radio Liberty. According to it the “grey zone” may include cities and villages from the territory controlled by Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)
- From October 1 to October 14 in the so-called “L/DPR” there is a “census” - [Ukrainian experts comment on how its results can be used](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- In October, [on-site meetings of the Verkhovna Rada Human Rights Committee were held in the Donbas](#). The main topics that deputies worked on were roads, pensions, decentralization and crossing the contact line (*text in Ukrainian*)
- A group of journalists from Poland and Slovakia [investigated how coal mined in the occupied territory of Ukraine enters the EU](#) (*text in Russian*)
- [More than 71% of respondents believe that Ukraine needs peace most](#) of all - according to the results of a survey conducted by the Sociological Group “Rating” October 19-22, 2019 (*text in Ukrainian*)

- The report "[A protracted temporality: how IDPs live in places of compact residence](#)" was published by the "Right to Protection" Charity Fund (*text in Ukrainian and English*)
- [Review of human rights violations in the occupied regions](#) of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in September 2019 from the "East-SOS" Foundation (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- [Commentary](#) by a lawyer of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union regarding the [need to separate the receipt of pensions from the status of IDPs](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- "Right to protection" Charitable Fund has published a 6-month [report on results of monitoring the checkpoints in Donbas](#) (*text in Ukrainian and English*)
- Commentary by Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union regarding [housing programs for IDPs](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Radio Liberty has published [infographics on countries of origins of people taking part in fighting in Donbas](#) on both sides (*text in English*)
- Can employees of the [judicial system](#) of the so-called "L/DPR" be punished - an [analysis](#) by Radio Liberty (*text in Russian and Ukrainian*)
- [Comments from experts on the draft state budget of Ukraine 2020](#) and the costs laid down in it in the Donbas (*text in Russian*)
- A coalition of NGOs assisting IDPs and people living in uncontrolled parts of Donbas prepared a [shadow report for the UN Human Rights Committee](#) on the observance of civil and political rights of people affected by the armed conflict in Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The NGO "Influence group" published a [newsletter on the situation of voters rights of IDPs and labor migrants](#) in September (*text in Ukrainian*)

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

- October 5, 2019 - a [temporary passage was opened on the bridge near Stanitsa Luganskaya](#). The final opening of the bridge is scheduled for November 27th (*text in Russian*)
- October 17, 2019 - The humanitarian mission "Proliska" [launched the second electric car on the checkpoint "Stanitsa Luganskaya"](#) - the only checkpoint in the Luhansk region that connects both parts of Luhansk region (*text in Russian*)
- Lyudmila Denisova, Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, [said that residents of the occupied territories were not paid pensions to the amount of 33 billion hryvnias, and pensions of IDPs - to the amount of 8 billion hryvnias](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The "East-SOS" Charitable Foundation talks about a [program of assistance to medical institutions](#) located along the demarcation line in the Donbas, using the situation in the village of [Stakhanovets](#) as an example (*text in Russian*)
- The [results of the work of the "East-SOS" Foundation hotline](#) to record violations of human rights by security forces in the joint forces operation zone for six months (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Since the beginning of 2019, [more than 30 people have died while crossing the](#)

- [contact line](#) in the Donbas (*text in Russian*)
- Why are relatives of prisoners held in the so-called “L/DPR” denied assistance, what problems they face - in the [material](#) by “Donbass.Realii” (*text in Russian*)
- In 2016, a group of teenagers was detained in Yasinovataya (the territory of the so-called “DPR”), who were later illegally convicted on charges of sabotage. [What is happening to them now](#) - in a joint project of the Center for Civil Liberties and Radio Liberty (*text in Russian*)

6. Interviews and opinions

- How does the [war influence the psychological state of children](#) living in Donbas, and what can be done to [help](#) them - in a report by Radio Liberty (*text in Russian и Ukraine*)
- Interview with Alexander Litvinenko, director of National Institute of Strategic Research, on [plans of action of Vladimir Zelenskyy](#) in Donbas and Crimea (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Story of Alexander Marchenko](#), Ukrainian citizen, who was detained in the so-called “DPR” and given to Russia later (*text in Russian*)
- [Report by “Novoye vremya” from Zolote village](#), which was on the frontline for several years and will now be in the “grey zone” due to the plans on forces separation (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Opinions](#) of Donbas residents on the “Steinmeier formula” (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Story of the former catholic priest helping people living near the frontline](#) (*text in Russian*)
- Ukrainian poet and activist Sergey Zhadan on the [mood of people in Donbas](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Photoshoot from demolished village Shirokino](#) which was left by its inhabitants (*text in Ukrainian*)
- “When Europe gets concerned, it means you came too far” - David Stulik, former press attache of EU mission in Ukraine gave an [interview to Hromadske about events on Maidan and the further perspectives and developments in Ukraine](#) (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- “I did not make it to the war, I ended up in prison” - [interview of Oleg Sentsov](#) to “Novaya Gazeta” (*text in Russian*)

About the platform CivilM+

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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