CivilM+

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 December 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+

CivilM+ Policy paper: Reintegration of the population affected by the conflict in Donbas and restoring justice and peace

CivilM+ experts have prepared recommendations for the successful reintegration of the region and its residents. This Policy Paper was developed based on the results of the 2nd International Forum «Reintegration in Donbas – improving the humanitarian situation and strengthening people to people contacts in the conflict region», which was held on November 13-14, 2019 in Kyiv.

The following are amongst the priority measures for the effective reintegration of the ORDLO and their population, as well as IDPs:

- resolution of the humanitarian crisis and provision of the population's effective access to their rights/ basic services;
- eliminating all forms of discrimination and ensuring equal access to services and rights;
- development of a concept of transitional justice;
- ensuring access to the citizens' right to the freedom of movement and the restoration of social connections;
- access to education for all citizens;
- implementation of a consistent policy towards local self-governance in the territories under the control of the Government of Ukraine;
- minimisation of risks for the environment in the conflict-affected region;
- information and language policy.

You can download the publication "Reintegration of the population affected by the conflict in Donbas and restoring justice and peace: current state and priorities" in Russian and English.

2. Political processes and the situation in the conflict zone

- October 29, 2019 - the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) and its working subgroups was held in Minsk. The focus was on the general security situation, as well as the withdrawal of forces and hardware. The issues of water supply and the beginning of the international audit of the "Voda Donbassa" company, the exchange of detainees, and the implementation of the Steinmeier formula were also discussed *(text in Russian and English)*

- October 29, 2019 - "The sides have just renewed the disengagement of forces and hardware in Zolote. They launched the white and green signal flares confirming their readiness to proceed", said the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the TCG, Ambassador Martin Sajdik. The Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, Yaşar Halit Çevik, welcomed the ongoing disengagement of forces. OSCE SMM observers confirmed that Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel and members of the armed formations are exiting the disengagement area, together with their weapons *(text in English)*

- November 2, 2019 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and illegal armed formations in non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region [notified the OSCE about the end of the withdrawal of forces in the area near Zolote](#) *(text in English)*

- November 8, 2019 - [The UN International Court of Justice issued a procedural decision in the case on the application of the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination](#) (Ukraine vs Russia), thereby confirming the possibility of the hearing within the framework of the claims of Ukraine *(text in English)*

- November 9, 2019 - The [OSCE SMM confirmed the beginning of the withdrawal of forces and hardware from the Petrivske disengagement area](#), this step was welcomed by the head of the OSCE SMM *(text in English)*

- November 12, 2019 - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and illegal armed formations in non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk region [notified the OSCE about the end of the withdrawal of forces in the Petrivske area](#) *(text in English)*

- November 15, 2019 - [the next Normandy Format meeting is scheduled for December 9](#) *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 18, 2019 - [three ships that were captured in the Kerch Strait in November 2018, were returned to Ukraine by Russia](#). An examination of the ships is ongoing *(text in Russian)*

- November 20, 2019 - The [procedure of crossing the demarcation line has been simplified](#) for teenagers in the non-government-controlled areas of Luhansk and Donetsk regions by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine *(text in English)*

- The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) published [data on the negotiations of the leaders of the so-called "DPR"](#) indicates the participation of Russian special services in the administration of the "People's Republic" *(text in Russian)*

- November 25, 2019 - ahead of the meeting in the "Normandy format", the presidents of Ukraine and Russia, [Vladimir Zelensky and Vladimir Putin, held a telephone conversation](#), discussing the return of ships detained in the Sea of Azov and gas supplies *(text in Russian)*

- November 26, 2019 - The foreign ministers of Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden and Ukraine issued a [joint statement regarding Russian policy and "long-term aggression" against Ukraine](#) *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 27, 2019 - a meeting of the Tripartite Contact Group was held with discussion of topical issues of water supply, payment of pensions, exchange of detained persons and amnesty. The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office in Ukraine and the TCG, Ambassador [Martin Sajdik, noted a number of positive changes in the situation in Donbas](#), in particular, the opening of a pedestrian bridge in Stanitsa Luhansk and the end of the withdrawal of forces and assets on the site in the Zolote district (*text in [Russian](#) and [English](#)*)

- December 4, 2019 - a parallel OSCE civil society conference was held in Bratislava, which resulted in the adoption of a [statement on the occasion of the meeting in the "Normandy format"](#), emphasizing the importance of restoring civil rights of freedoms in Eastern Ukraine *(text in English)*

- December 9, 2019 - the sixth ["Normandy Four" summit](#) was held at the level of heads of state, including a bilateral meeting of the presidents of Ukraine and Russia. Among the agreed [positions](#) are: support for the inclusion of the "Steinmeier formula" in the legislation of Ukraine, the implementation of the Minsk agreements as a basis for further work, the establishment of a ceasefire in Donbass and the "all for all" exchange by the end of the year. Work on gas transit will [continue](#) at government level. [The Bell](#) tells about the gas agreements between Putin and Zelensky. "Is there some kind of warming? I think so", Putin said, according to BBC reports. The Normandy Summit failed to deliver peace in Donbas," [Politico](#) said *(text in Ukrainian, [Russian](#) and [English](#))*

- December 12, 2019 - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Vadim Pristayko [said that the Ukrainian side has completed the definition of new areas for the separation of forces and assets](#) from the demarcation line in Donbass *(text in Ukrainian)*

- December 12, 2019 - deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [supported the draft law, which extends the special order of local government](#) in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions for another year *(text in Ukrainian)*

- December 12, 2019 - Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov [said police have detained suspects in the case regarding the murder of journalist Pavel Sheremet](#), including war veterans in Donbass *(text in Russian)*

- December 13, 2019 - President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky submitted a [bill providing for the simplification of the procedure of obtaining Ukrainian citizenship](#) for foreign contractors *(text in Ukrainian)*

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

- October 30, 2019 - the "[Forum of Unity](#)" was held in Mariupol, the theme of which was the institutionalization of the dialogue between society and the authorities *(text and [video](#) in Ukrainian)*

- In Poltava, the [training "Internal Displacement in Ukraine: Gender Sensitivity of Local Policies, Legal Instruments and Business Practices"](#), organized by the Public Alternative Foundation, was held *(text in Ukrainian)*

- In the framework of the initiative "Effective cooperation of civil society with security services in Ukraine", [regional platforms were created in five regions of Ukraine](#); their main task is to collect information about human rights violations and increase the transparency of the work of law enforcement agencies *(text in Ukrainian)*

- Journalists from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia published a [study on how coal mined in uncontrolled territory enters the EU](#) *(text in Russian)*

- More than three dozen public organizations issued a joint [statement on the inadmissibility of adopting an election code](#) without taking into account provisions for the electoral rights of internally displaced persons *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 28, 2019 - the [discussion "Resolution of the armed conflict in Ukraine: political and humanitarian challenges"](#) took place in Paris organized by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the German-Russian Exchange (DRA), the European Civil Assembly (AEC) and Ukraine Action *(text in Russian)*

- December 8, 2019 - parallel [demonstrations of Ukrainian and Russian activists for a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas](#) took place. Among the demands are: lifting of the economic blockade of territories not under the control of Ukraine, cessation of pension discrimination, provision of security for the residents of the zone of troop withdrawal, inclusion in the negotiation process of members of the public who support the peaceful transformation of the conflict *(text in Russian)*

- December 8, 2019 - the [action "Watch on the Bankova street"](#) began in Kyiv, demanding that President Vladimir Zelensky prevent the surrender of state national interests during negotiations in the "Normandy format" *(text in Russian)*

- November 30, 2019 - a [social cohesion hackathon](#) took place in Kyiv, where its participants developed IT-products designed to help overcome the social consequences of the war in Ukraine *(text in Ukrainian)*

4. Legal initiatives and analytics on war conflict

- November 1, 2019 - The [round table "Freedom of Speech in the Conditions of Armed Conflict"](#), organized by the Human Rights Platform, was held. The [collection](#) "Freedom of expression during armed conflict" was also presented. Review of the practice of the European Court of Human Rights *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 7, 2019 - a [meeting of the working group on missing persons,](#) hostages, and prisoners of war was held at the office of the President of Ukraine *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 8, 2019 - [the bill on the social and legal protection of persons deprived of their liberty](#) as a result of armed aggression against Ukraine, has been presented *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 12, 2019 - an expert [discussion was held on scenarios for securing voting rights for IDP](#)s, in particular, changes to the legislation on local elections and drafting a bill on the registration of IDPs in the communities where they live. It was organized by the initiative of the Public Group "Hrupa Vplyvu" ("Influence group") and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) *(text in Ukrainian)*

- According to the UN, since the beginning of 2014, [more than 3.3 thousand civilians have been killed in the Donbas](#) *(text in Russian)*

- The Bellingcat investigation team published [data on the system of foreign passports for Russian GRU officers who participated in hostilities in eastern Ukraine](#), and who could also be involved in the crash of the Boeing MH-17 *(text in Russian)*

- The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union - on the [work on the bill "On the foundations of state policy for protecting human rights in the face of overcoming](#)

- the consequences of armed conflict" - a kind of "constitution" of transitional justice in Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)

- Perspectives on lustration - around 15% of Ukrainians think that the rights of those who used to work for separatists should be restricted (*text in Ukrainian*)

- Robert Hamilton (Foreign Policy Research Institute) on the causes, consequences and possible solutions to the armed conflict in the Donbas. One section contains recommendations for resolving the conflict, the success of which is associated with the abandonment of the military solution to the conflict (*text in English*)

- Donbas Peace Talks 2.0: Russia's aims and Ukraine's limits - publication of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. (*text in English*)

- Network of civil society hubs published a report on the results of research of 30 communities in 6 regions of Ukraine, which took place during 2019. The aim of the research was to define barriers and obstacles for citizen participation. The report says that 50% of local democratic mechanisms are discriminatory for IDPs, people with no residence and foreigners (*text in Ukrainian*)

- UN International Court of Justice conducting research on discrimination and terrorism in Crimea and Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)

- The report was published by "Right to protection"on the results of the monitoring of checkpoints in Eastern Ukraine in October 2019 (*text in Ukrainian*)

- The charitable Foundation "East-SOS" have published a review on human rights violations in the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in October 2019 *(text in Ukrainian, Russian)*

- More than 40% of Ukrainians believe that a state-owned Russian-speaking TV-channel would help the process of Donbas reintegration (*text in Ukrainian*)

- December 6, 2019 - An informational announcement was issued to the International Criminal Court about the perpetration of war crimes by Russia during the battles for Ilovaisk and Debaltseve *(text in Ukrainian)*

- An overview of the four transitional justice concepts under development *(text in Ukrainian)*

- Charity Fund "Right to Protection" published a report on the results of monitoring the situation at the Donbas checkpoints in January-September 2019 *(text in Ukrainian)*

- The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) has developed a transitional justice roadmap for Ukrainian society in situations of armed conflict, the ultimate goal of which is to introduce international standards for ensuring justice for victims of the conflict *(text in Ukrainian)*

- The UHHRU analytical report "The provision of social services to residents of communities affected by armed conflict and internally displaced persons" was published *(text in Ukrainian)*

- The Center for European Political Analysis (CEPA) has developed five possible scenarios of armed conflict in eastern Europe, with Russia as the aggressor in each. Three of them are threatening Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)

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

- November 7, 2019 - UNHCR in cooperation with UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have organized a [humanitarian convoy with construction materials and non-food products](#) to be delivered to the uncontrolled territories. Since 2015, 57 of such convoys have been organized to provide assistance to the most affected residents of the conflict zone *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 11, 2019 - human rights organizations held a [press conference on the changes to the new law "Order of crossing the contact line",](#) the enforcement of which had been delayed till 29th of November (*text in Ukrainian*)

- November 14, 2019 - Press-briefing "[Not a Switzerland. Stanytsia Luhanska after troop withdrawal](#)" was organized by the "Mezha" public movement. Local and human rights activists said that the state does not ensure the protection of civilians living in the villages where the troops have been moved (*text in Ukrainian*)

- Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union [published a "Legal handbook for IDPs"](#) uniting all the basic information of their legal protection (*text in Ukrainian*)

- [More than 18,000 people have crossed the contact line in "Stanytsia Luhanska"](#) checkpoint in October using electric cars run by the Proliska humanitarian mission. The average age of the passengers is 72 years (*text in Ukrainian*)

- November 26, 2019 - expert [discussion "Introduction of the foundations of transitional justice as a prerequisite for preparing for post-conflict public policy, de-occupation of territories and reintegration of the population"](#) was held, organized by the UGSPL in conjunction with the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on human rights, de-occupation and reintegration of temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk, Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, national minorities and interethnic relations (*text in Ukrainian)*

- November 28, 2019 - expert [discussion "Overcoming Impunity for International Crimes in the Occupied Territories: Problems of Legislative Regulation"](#) was organized by the NGO Center for Civil Liberties and the international organization Parliamentarians for Global Actions with the support of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Foreign Policy and Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation *(text in Ukrainian)*

- November 25, 2019 - a [discussion was held on the development of new national legislation and a strategy to address the problems faced by over 1.4 million IDPs](#), organized by UNHCR in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) *(text in Ukrainian)*

- December 3, 2019 - the Human Rights Center ["Memorial" recognized Ukrainian citizen Alexander Marchenko as a political prisoner.](#) Marchenko is awaiting sentence in the Krasnodar jail on charges of preparing for the acquisition and illegal movement of military-purpose products from Russian territory *(text in*

Russian and *English*)

- December 12, 2019 - Head of the UN Human Rights Mission in Ukraine Matilda Bogner said that since the beginning of the year until mid-November, 26 civilians were killed and 136 injured on both sides of the demarcation line in Donbas *(text in Ukrainian)*

6. Interviews and opinions

- Speech by Konstantyn Reutski (Charitable Foundation "East-SOS") at the 2nd International Forum "Reintegration in Eastern Ukraine" on the development of the humanitarian situation and strengthening the contacts between people living on other sides of the contact line (*text in Russian*)

- Speech by Russian political analyst Alexander Morozov at the 2nd International Forum "Reintegration in Eastern Ukraine" (*text in Russian*)

- "Atlantida", a movie on the restoration of Donbas won a prize at the Toronto Film Festival (*text in Russian*)

- Russian human rights NGO "Team29" published a podcast about the case of the Ukrainian journalist Roman Suschenko, who was arrested in Russia accused of espionage. He was recently released together with other Ukrainian political prisoners (a*udio in Russian*)

- "While everyone in DC talks about Ukraine, there is an actual war going on" - a report by BuzzFeed about the life of soldiers on the frontline in Eastern Ukraine (*text in English*)

- "The trains had left" - how did the conflict in Eastern Ukraine affect the lives of people residing on both sides of the Ukrainian-Russian border in Kharkiv and Belgorod regions (*text in Russian*)

- Ukrainian oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky in an interview with the New York Times addressed the need to restore relations with Russia (*text in English, Russian*)

- The Center for Strategic Litigations of Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union - on the case of an applicant detained in the summer of 2013 by law enforcement agencies of Ukraine and who is still being held on the territory of the so-called "DPR" (text in Ukrainian)

- What do civil society activists from the Donetsk and Luhansk regions think of the Steinmeier formula - an interview by the head of the "Drukarnia" resource center (Slavyansk, Ukraine) with activists and inhabitants of Eastern Ukraine (*text in Russian*)

- Expert opinions on concepts of transitional justice in Ukraine and its possible consequences (*text in Ukrainian*)

- Writer Nikita Grigorov on his story of fleeing from Donetsk (*audio in Russian*)

- Interview with Oleg Martynenko (Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union) about transitional justice and its possibilities in Ukraine (*text in English*)

- A publication by "Kommersant" about how relations between Russia and the EU will change after the Paris summit on the Donbass *(text in Russian)*

- Interview on the "Advice to IDPs" project with Olga Ivanova, Executive Director of the Stabilization Support Services charity *(text in Russian)*

- Radio Liberty interview with Ex-President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko - on his assessment of the meeting in the "Normandy format" and its outcome *(text in Ukrainian)*

- Interview with Nina Potarskaya, coordinator of the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in Ukraine, on an inclusive world and the possibility of dialogue between people on both sides of the contact line *(text in Ukrainian and Russian)*

- "Donbass.Realii" about the situation in women's prison colonies on the territory of the so-called "L/DPR" *(text in Russian)*

- CBC report on residents of the "grey zone" from the so-called "L/DPR" *(text in English)*

- BuzzFeed's report on the Ukrainian military and people living near the frontline *(text in English)*

- Environmental problems in the Donbas have only worsened as a result of the conflict. The question of what they are now and what effect they have on neighboring territories in the Spektr publication *(text in Russian)*

- BBC interview with Elliot Higgins, founder and head of Bellingcat, about the work of the publication, including the investigation into the MH17 flight, shot down in the sky over Donbass *(text in Russian)*

- "Donbass.Realii" on higher education in the so-called "L/DPR" *(text in Russian)*

- "Donbass.Realii" speak about bloggers from Donetsk and Luhansk *(text in Ukrainian)*

- German director Georg Genot staged the play "City with yourself" along with students from three cities of Donbass. In the production, children talk about their most private experiences: friendship, first love, war, and life in their cities *(text in Russian)*
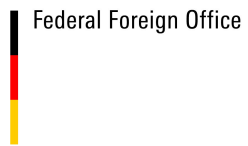
About the platform CivilM+

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.

rule of law: European NGOs together to overcome the Donbass conflict".

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