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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 February 2020.

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+

- "For the world to see this conflict with new eyes" - video of the 2nd International Forum on Eastern Ukraine was published. On November 13 in Kiev the CivilM+ platform organized the forum "[Re-integration in Donbas – improvement of the humanitarian situation and enhancement of people to people contacts in the conflict region](#)". Diplomats, civil society representatives, local and international experts discussed the issues of integration of the population living under the

heavy burden of the ongoing conflict. The speakers of the forum shared their ideas, theses and impressions from the conference in our [video](#) (*text and video in English and Russian*)

- Experts of CivilM+ platform prepared an [appeal to the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the renewal of the mechanism of absentee conviction](#) (*text in Russian and English*)
- Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, member of CivilM+, has prepared a translation into Ukrainian of a document developed by the German government - "[A joint interagency strategy to support work with the past and reconciliation \(transitional justice\)](#)" (*text in Ukrainian*)

2. Political processes and sociation in the conflict zone

- The next date for the [meeting in "Normandy format"](#) are being discussed, the preliminary date is April 9 (*text in Russian*)
- General Staff of the armed Forces of Ukraine [said that 97 soldiers had been killed in the Donbas since the beginning of 2019 to 17 December](#) (*text in Russian*)
- In December 2019 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported on [three cases of death or injury to civilians in the Donbas](#), which is a quarter less than in November (*text in Ukrainian*)
- December 23, 2019 - [Russia has declared its readiness to provide data on the investigation into the MH17 flight crash](#) (*text in Russian*)
- December 23, 2019 - [The EU has accused Russia anew of violations of Ukrainian sovereignty](#) in connection with the start of the rail movement on the Crimean Bridge (*text in Russian*)
- December 29, 2019 - exchange of prisoners took place at the checkpoint "Mayorskoe". [76 Ukrainians have returned home](#) from the prisons of the self-proclaimed "Republics", Ukraine [handed over 127 people](#) to the so-called "L/DPR". [Preparation](#) for it was lengthy, at least 14 civilians and 8 military persons from Ukraine [did not participate](#) in the exchange (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- January 11, 2020 - Russian President Vladimir Putin [urged Ukraine to consolidate the "Special Status" of Donbas in the Constitution](#) during a joint briefing with German Chancellor Angela Merkel (*text in Russian*)
- January 15, 2020 - Russian President Vladimir Putin gave his annual message to the Federal Assembly. Radio Svoboda [about how the topic of the Donbas conflict sounded in the east of Ukraine](#) (*text in Russian*)
- January 16, 2020 - Petro Poroshenko, the fifth President of Ukraine, [believes](#) that the message of Vladimir Putin and the announced constitutional reform may contain threats to Ukraine. A similar [concern](#) was expressed by the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavel Klimkin (*text in Russian*)
- January 16, 2020 - the first meeting of the trilateral contact group (TCG) on Donbas in 2020 was held in Minsk. [The parties proposed new sites for troop withdrawal](#) (*text in Russian*)

- January 20, 2020 - President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky [discussed with the head of OSCE the expansion of the mandate of the monitoring mission](#) in the Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)
- January 21, 2020 - head of OSCE Edi Rama as part of his visit to Ukraine [called for an intensification of efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis](#) (*text in English*)

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

- East-SOS Charitable Foundation sums up the results of the completed [project of comprehensive support and empowerment of public activists](#) living in the frontline territory of the Lugansk Region (*text in Russian*)
- A [discussion on local wars and opportunities for civil society to participate in their resolution](#) was held in Saint Petersburg organized by members of Women's Initiatives for Peace in the Donbas, an international project involving activists and community leaders living in different territories affected by conflicts (*text in Russian*)

4. Legal initiatives and analytics on war conflict

- Foreign Policy Research Institute prepared a publication on possible scenarios for the development of conflicts in the Black Sea region in 2020. [One of the scenarios concerns the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and involves escalation in Odessa](#) (*text in English*)
- A [selection of comments by experts and officials on decentralization reform](#) in Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- [Overview of human rights violations in the occupied areas of Lugansk and Donetsk regions in December 2019](#) released by the East-SOS Charitable Foundation (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- Human rights organizations of Ukraine issued a [statement in connection with the decision of the country's authorities to release people who were accused of executions on Institutskaya Street in 2014](#) for exchange with persons held by the so-called "L/DPR" (*Ukrainian text*)
- [An analysis by Kharkiv human rights group on cases of arbitrariness of military personnel](#) of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the possibilities of responsibility for it (*text in Ukrainian*),
- Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group and Peace Coast public organization (Lutsk) published the [review "Responsibility for international crimes committed in Eastern Ukraine during the period 2014–2019"](#) (*text in Russian*)
- ["Escalation or diplomacy"](#)- experts from the US comment on conflict resolution options in eastern Ukraine (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union together with the Legalife-Ukraine Charitable Foundation issued a [report "The impact of armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine on commercial sex workers"](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)

- [Analysis](#) published by the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union on the possibility of obtaining financial aid from the state for people released from captivity in 2014-2016 (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union developed [methodology to analyse the compliance of Ukrainian legislation and draft legal acts with international civil law and principles of transitional justice](#) in terms of ensuring the rights of persons affected by armed aggression (*text in Ukrainian*)
- January 16, 2020 - The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [voted in favor of the introduction of free meals for IDP children](#) in kindergartens, schools and vocational schools, as well as IDP children under the age of two years (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Experts analyzed the annual message of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin and its [possible impact on the conflict in Eastern Ukraine](#) (*text in Russian*)

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

- According to the Joint Center for Search Coordination, there are [184 persons held in captivity](#) in the occupied territories of Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)
- East-SOS Charitable Foundation gave [Christmas gifts to 150 children living along the contact line in the Donbas](#) (*text in Russian*)
- Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine, together with the East-SOS Charitable Foundation, developed [recommendations for the media about psychological aspects of working with those released from captivity](#) (*Ukrainian text*)
- Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group on [inconsistencies in the case of Nikolai Ruban](#), one of the persons transferred by Ukraine to the so-called “L/DPR” as part of an exchange, and his possible innocence of an alleged crime (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Volunteer initiative from Russia “Lights Eirene” [summed up the collection of gifts for children from the front-line zones](#) of Donbas together with the volunteer group from Ukraine “Deer of St. Nicholas”. In total, more than 1000 [gifts](#) were collected. [Report](#) from one of the trips (*text and video in Russian and Ukrainian*)

6. Interviews and opinion

- Martin Sajdik, former OSCE representative in the Trilateral Contact Group, during his [interview for Kommersant](#), called Russia a party to the conflict and raised the question of the influence of Russian domestic political factors in the decisions of Donbas (*text in Russian*)
- What did the Donbas actually sound like - a teacher from Kramatorsk organizes [folklore expeditions to record old songs in the settlements of Donetsk region](#) (*text and video in Russian*)
- "Focus" tells the stories of the Ukrainians [who have returned to government-controlled territory](#) in the framework of the exchange of December 29

2019 (text in Russian)

- The first [interview of journalist Stanislav Aseev](#) after returning from captivity in the so-called "LPR" (video in Russian)
- [Interview with Galina Tereshchenko](#), who has returned home after the prisoner exchange, after she had been kept in captivity in the so-called "DPR" (text in Russian)
- [What are the passports used by the inhabitants in the particular territories](#) of Lugansk and Donetsk regions (text in Ukrainian)
- Many [Ukrainian experts and officials are skeptical about possible movement toward peace](#) in relations with Moscow, in a [publication](#) by The Daily Signal (text in English)
- [EU policies towards the overcoming of the conflict in Ukraine and building relations with Russia](#) (text in English)
- BBC [Report](#) on the system used by Ukraine's armed forces work staff responsible for notifying families of the victims (text in Russian)
- "Radio Liberty" has collected [the views of Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians](#) who watched the New Year's greeting by the President of Ukraine Vladimir Zelensky (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.

Implemented with the support of the German government in the framework of the project "Dialogue for mutual understanding and law: European NGOs together for overcoming the conflict in the Donbass".

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