



PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS

monthly newsletter

- COVID-19 in Donbas. Analysis and useful links
- News of CivilM + and member organizations
- Political processes and the situation in the conflict zone
- Legislative initiatives and analyses of the conflict
- Human dimension of the conflict
- Interviews and journalism

COVID-19 in Donbas

According to data from [the Ukrainian Ministry of Health](#), as of September 3, 1,549 people were recorded as having COVID-19 in the part of the Donetsk region controlled by Ukraine, and 373 people - in the Luhansk region. As of [September 3](#), the self-proclaimed "DPR" had announced 2,626 cases of coronavirus, and "LPR" - 704 cases. The leadership of "L/DPR" declares they are in control of the situation and count on Russia's [assistance](#) in vaccination against COVID-19.

As of August 24, the Luhansk and Donetsk regions were classified by the Ministry of Health of Ukraine as a "[green](#)" zone in terms of the epidemiological danger of the spread of COVID-19.

The situation on the contact line is still complicated, as people are forced to [wait](#) for [weeks](#) for the opportunity to enter the checkpoint. So, on August 21, 10 people stayed overnight at the Novotroitskoye checkpoint in the Donetsk region as they [failed](#) to enter the territory

of the so-called "DPR". Only those persons who had permission from the "DPR headquarters" were allowed to enter through irregularly operating checkpoints, and those who were registered in the territory controlled by Ukraine were allowed to leave. Those who, under these conditions, were able to enter the territory temporarily outside the control of the government of Ukraine, were required to go through a two-week [observation](#), and then had to remain in self-isolation at home for another two weeks. Also the "border" between the so-called "LPR" and "DPR" remains [closed](#). A [report](#) by Radio Liberty details the situation and the life of the city of Snizhne. .

Pensioners living in particular areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions cannot receive a pension for five months due to the restrictions imposed, as [reported](#) by Human Rights Watch.

Ukrainian NGOs have published an open [appeal](#) to the Commander of the Joint Forces and the Prime Minister of Ukraine with a demand to regulate the procedure for crossing the contact line in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions under quarantine conditions, without applying discriminatory norms against residents of the temporarily occupied territories.

News from CivilM+ and member organizations

- NGOs from Germany, France, Poland and Russia issued a [statement](#) in support of Ukrainian human rights defenders detained in Minsk. In particular, the statement was signed by member organizations of the CivilM + platform: DRA eV, the European Civil Assembly (AEC) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, Women of the Don, as well as Memorial Germany and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (*text in [Russian](#) and [English](#)*)
- The CivilM+ member organization Center for Civil Liberties and the Ukrainian Bar Association launched a [campaign](#) in support of the Ukrainian political prisoner, lawyer Igor Kiyashko, who is currently held in Russia (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 5, 2020 - the results were published from the work of the international monitoring [mission](#), a joint project of the German NGO DRA eV and the Ukrainian charitable foundation East-SOS. According to the experts from the five countries that took part in the mission, the conflict in Donbas is still active and they note the continuation of daily shelling and numerous restrictions on the rights of residents of this region due to the ongoing quarantine (*text in Russian and Ukrainian*)
- August 13, 2020 - a [round table](#) "Activities of human rights public organizations in overcoming the negative consequences of the armed conflict in the East of Ukraine for the civilian population" was held by [Drukarnya](#) (Slavyansk, Ukraine), together with the Luhansk regional human rights center Alternative. A number of human rights reports was presented at the event prepared by the NGO Coalition "Justice for Peace in Donbas" (*text in Ukrainian*)

Political processes and events in the conflict zone

Negotiations on Donbas

Minsk Process

- August 6, 2020 - the head of the Ukrainian delegation to the trilateral contact group (TCG) Leonid Kravchuk proposed an alternative [format](#) of negotiations to resolve the situation in Donbas. It suggests the signing of a new Budapest Memorandum with an expansion of the list of participants in case the current negotiations in Minsk reach a dead end (*video in Ukrainian*)
- August 18, 2020 - President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky [introduced](#) former Prime Minister Vitold Fokin as Deputy Head of the Ukrainian delegation in the TCG (*text in Russian*)
- August 20, 2020 - a regular meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) was held in the format of a video conference with Leonid Kravchuk as the head of the Ukrainian delegation. The security team reached agreements on 20 new sites for demining and 4 disengagement areas. Heidi Grau, OSCE Special Representative to the TCG [reports](#) that an agreement on demining sites is awaiting signature. Leonid Kravchuk [stated](#) that Ukraine will proceed with the implementation of the political part of the Minsk agreements after the establishment of a complete ceasefire along the entire contact line. He also [reported](#) that Russia in the TCG insists on holding local elections throughout the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, including the territory not controlled by Ukraine. The results of the meeting were [analyzed](#) by Sergei Garmash, representative of uncontrolled parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in the TCG, and Maria Zolkina, political analyst from the Ilya Kucheriv "Democratic initiatives" Foundation (*text in [Ukrainian](#), [English](#) and [Russian](#)*)
- September 2, 2020 – the regular meeting of the TCG [included](#) disputes around the decision of the Verkhovna Rada on the appointment of local elections. Heidi Grau, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine, added that this discussion has hampered progress in other working groups (*text in [Russian](#) and [English](#)*)

Normandy Format

- August 13, 2020 – the foreign ministers of Ukraine and Germany [discussed](#) the prospects for a meeting of ministers of the Normandy Four. According to Interfax sources, the talks between the advisers to the heads of state of the Normandy Four are [scheduled](#) to be held by the end of August. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmitry Kuleba [reported](#) that this could happen in September. However, the spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova [stated](#) that the Russian side is not aware of the possible meeting of foreign ministers in September (*text in Russian*)

- August 25, 2020 - the news was published regarding [the cancellation](#) of the meeting of the Normandy Four advisers, which was scheduled for August 28 (*text in Ukrainian*)

Other events

- July 31, 2020 - Russia announced possible [deliveries](#) of weapons to the uncontrolled territories of Donbas in the event that the United States provides financial military assistance to Ukraine. The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine [called](#) this evidence of direct armed aggression and support of the so-called "L/DPR" from Russia (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 5, 2020 - the Russian Ministry of Justice received [notice](#) of the claim of the Netherlands against Russia in the MH-17 case (*text in Russian*)
- August 8, 2020 – the Election Committee of Ukraine [said](#) that it is impossible to hold local elections in ten communities in the Donetsk region and in eight in the Luhansk region (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 10, 2020 - according to the [headquarters](#) of the Joint Forces Operation, there have been no wounded or killed people in the Donbas for more than two weeks (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 11, 2020 - German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in an [interview](#) that holding democratic elections in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions is currently impossible due to the lack of necessary conditions provided for by the Minsk agreements (*text in Russian*)
- August 12, 2020 - The Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine sent to the Prosecutor General's Office of Belarus [requests](#) for the extradition of the 28 arrested mercenaries of the Russian PMC “Wagner” who participated in operations in the Donbas, including 9 citizens of Ukraine. However, on August 14 2020, the Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation [reported](#) that they have all returned to the territory of Russia (*text in Ukrainian and Russian*)
- August 13, 2020 - the prosecutor's office of the Donetsk region of Ukraine [reported](#) on the verdict of one of the organizers of the "referendum" in the so-called “DPR”. She was sentenced to 5 years in prison with a probationary period of 1 year (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 20, 2020 - according to the [Federal Security Service](#) of Russia, 7 Russian citizens were detained for trying to [kidnap](#) one of the leaders of the so-called “DPR” from Russia, the identity of the abducted person has not been disclosed (*text in Russian*)
- August 25, 2020 - Leonid Kravchuk, head of the Ukrainian delegation to the TCG, sent [an appeal](#) to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine with a proposal to “consider the compliance” of the parliamentary resolution on the appointment of the next local elections in 2020 with the law of Ukraine on a special procedure for local self-government in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as with the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Andrei Yermakov, head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, said that Ukraine is hoping to have the next [exchange](#) of prisoners to take place in mid-August. As of September 3, the exchange had not taken place (*text in English*)

- The Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine began a criminal [investigation](#) into the participation of more than 100 foreign mercenaries in armed conflict against Ukraine in the Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Anton Korinevich, the Head of the President of Ukraine's Representation office in Crimea, [said](#) that 95% of residents of the territories temporarily not controlled by the government of Ukraine will not incur criminal punishment (*text in Ukrainian*)

Legislative initiatives and analyses of the conflict

- July 31, 2020 - Leonid Kravchuk, Ukraine's representative in the TCG, [named](#) two possible compromise scenarios for Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)
- In an [interview](#) with Radio Liberty, Prime Minister of Ukraine Denis Shmyhal supported the idea to create free economic zones in Donbas, which would improve the situation in the region from a business point of view. He called the 15-20-kilometer zone from the contact line as one of main priorities (*text in Ukrainian*)
- August 10, 2020 - 53% of Ukrainians [support](#) the resumption of transport connection with uncontrolled territories - these are the results of a survey by the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The charitable foundation "Right to protection" published the July report "Crossing the contact line through the checkpoint" (*text in [Ukrainian](#) and [English](#)*)
- International Crisis Group published [the report](#) "Peace in Ukraine (II): A New Approach to Disengagement", which notes that the parties to the conflict in Donbas cannot achieve a complete end to the shelling due to different approaches to the future of Donbas and fears that a ceasefire will consolidate the preferred results for the enemy (*text in Russian and [English](#)*)
- The charitable foundation "Stabilization Support Services" published the results of the study "Migrants: life before and during COVID-19" (*text in [Ukrainian](#) and [English](#)*)
- The Treasury of Ukraine does not pay compensation established by the court for property destroyed during the armed conflict in Donbas. Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union [analyzes](#) the situation (*text in Ukrainian*)
- "Media Detector" prepared an [overview](#) of the penetration of Russian propaganda into the Ukrainian information space in July 2020 (*text in Ukrainian*)
- The details of the partially declassified [report](#) of the Intelligence Committee of the Senate of the US Congress were published. The report speaks about Russia's unfulfilled plans in 2016-2018 to create an "Autonomous Republic of Donbas" in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions and other forms of interference in Ukrainian politics. The document is analyzed – in a [publication](#) by "European Truth". The report was published as part of an investigation into Russia's interference in the US presidential elections in 2016 (*text in English and Ukrainian*)

Human dimension of the conflict

- August 3, 2020 - Human Rights Watch [said](#) that pensioners residing in the uncontrolled parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions have been cut off from payments due to quarantine restrictions at checkpoints (*text in Russian*)
- August 3, 2020 - The Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine [resumed](#) payments of the scholarship named after Levko Lukyanenko for Ukrainian political prisoners held by Russia (*text in Ukrainian*)
- According to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, by the beginning of 2020, 39,000 children had received the [status](#) as victims of the hostilities, which is only 20% of the number of IDP children (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Oleg Ustenko, adviser to the President of Ukraine on economic issues, [said](#) that the estimated sum of money needed to restore the part of Donbas occupied by Russia, is about 10 billion dollars - which is about 5-7% of Ukraine's GDP (*text in Ukrainian*)

Interviews and journalism

- [Interview](#) about Leonid Kravchuk's plans to work in the TCG on Radio Liberty (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Publication](#) by “Donbas.Realii” on different views on the idea of direct negotiations between Ukraine and representatives of territories not controlled by Ukraine (*text in Russian*)
- Reports on life in the territories temporarily not controlled by the government of Ukraine: [Horlivka](#) and [Yenakiieve](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Publication](#) by RBC-Ukraine on the plans of the Ukrainian authorities to apply the concept of transitional justice (*text in Ukrainian*)
- Head of the Ukrainian delegation to the Trilateral Contact Group Leonid Kravchuk gave an [interview](#) to Ukrainian journalist Dmitry Gordon, in which he said that most residents of the uncontrolled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions are ready to be part of Ukraine, on the condition of these territories having received an autonomous status (*video in Ukrainian*)
- "What do monuments talk about when people are silent" - BBC published [a report](#) on the study of Russian monuments to “soldiers who died in local military conflicts”, where the names of Russian servicemen allegedly killed in Donbas and / or Syria appear (*text in Russian*)
- The story “My Brother” was published as a part of the graphic novel “Crossroads: Nine Stories about War and Violence”, created by the Eastern Ukrainian Center for Public Initiatives together with partners from the coalition Justice for Peace in Donbas and the NGO Libereco - Partnership for Human Rights (*text in Ukrainian and English*)
- About the development of stand-up in the so-called “DPR” - in an [article](#) by Radio Liberty (*text and video in Ukrainian*)
- Interview with the coordinators of the IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) Councils in the [Luhansk Oblast](#) and [Kramatorsk](#) (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Material](#) by UNHCR about Yevgeny Kaplin, head of the Proliska humanitarian mission (*text in Ukrainian*)
- [Report](#) by Radio Liberty on the development of the Ukrainian church in Donbas (*text in Ukrainian*)

About the Platform

International Open Platform [CivilM +](#) was created in 2017. It includes 19 organizations and three independent experts from Ukraine, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia and France. Within the framework of CivilM +, they contribute to the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbass: they inform the governments and the public of their countries about the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, implement projects in the areas of peacekeeping, transitional justice, dialogue and human rights.

Follow the platform news on the [website](#) and Facebook [page](#).

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The selection of news items presented in the newsletter is subjective. The opinions expressed in journalistic materials may not coincide with the opinions of the authors of the newsletter.



You can send your information for inclusion in the newsletter or ask a question: newsletter@civilmplus.org