

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



July 2 – 8, 2021

TORTURES AND ILL-TREATMENT: AROUND 4000 VICTIMS IN THE CONFLICT IN EASTERN UKRAINE

Around four thousand persons among the detained due to the conflict in Donbas [suffered](#) from of ill-treatment and tortures from 2014 to the end of April 2021. This information is presented in the [report](#) of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Although the number of cases of tortures or ill-treatment has decreased on both sides of the contact line since 2016, this problem is systematic in some detention locations in the areas controlled by “L/DPR”. The last detainees exchange within the Minsk process took place around a year ago. According to the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), there are 286 detainees in “L/DPR”, including 25 females - Gaide Rizaeva, the adviser to the head of the Ukrainian delegation in the TCG, told about it in her [interview](#) with “Hromadske Radio”. Moreover, there are more than 160 illegal prisons where more than 3.5 thousand Ukrainian citizens are held - as stated by Emine Dzhaparova, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, with reference to the Prosecutor General’s Office of Ukraine. The international human rights organization “Human Rights Watch” [released](#) a statement on tortures and ill-treatment of persons detained in the uncontrolled by Ukrainian government areas of Donbas. The statement is based on the information received about several women held imprisoned on trumped-up charges in “espionage”, who have serious health issues.

COVID-19 TEST IS NEEDED WHEN EXITING OCCUPIED AREAS OF DONBAS THROUGH RUSSIA

Residents of the non-government controlled areas of Donbas who are exiting the areas through Russia have to [take a rapid test](#) for coronavirus in the area of the border crossing points or go through mandatory self-isolation after entering the country – they are subjected to the [new rules](#) for entry to Ukraine.

TCG MEETING: NO RESULTS REACHED

On 7 July, the regular TCG meeting [took place](#). Representatives of Ukraine and the OSCE in the TCG called upon the Russian side to provide updated lists of detainees before the next meeting to accelerate preparation for exchange. Also, organization of IAEA inspectors' visit to the non-government controlled areas of Donbas in order to check nuclear materials at several objects was discussed. Agreements related to plans for demining of 19 areas agreed on in summer 2020 as well as opening EECP at the contact line have not been reached. The day before, the planned meeting of the [political subgroup](#) of the TCG took place. Due to engagement of Maja Pirogova convicted in Ukraine for terrorism to participation on "DPR"'s side, the Ukrainian delegation left the meeting. In her [statement](#) after the regular TCG meeting, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the TCG Ambassador Heidi Grau noted the deterioration of the security situation in Donbas over the last weeks highlighting that during the meeting, the sides did not show readiness to eliminate the breaches of ceasefire regime observed by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. At the OSCE Permanent Council meeting on 8 July, it [became known](#) that Heidi Grau will quit her position in the nearest future.

DEPUTY PROSECUTOR GENERAL OF UKRAINE REMOVED FROM INVESTIGATION OF WAR CRIMES

Access of the Deputy Prosecutor General of Ukraine Giunduz Mamedov to classified information [has been discontinued](#). Previously, the department of oversight over investigations into crimes committed in the armed conflict was removed from his subordination. Ukrainian human rights organizations published a [statement](#) demanding to ensure unhindered work of the department and highlighting that systematization of work on investigations into grave breaches of the international humanitarian law in the temporary occupied areas of Ukraine at the central level, including adoption of the law on war crimes #2689 by Verkhovna Rada, was possible due to Giunduz Mamedov's activities. The Centre for Journalistic Investigations [offers](#) their analysis of the situation. [According to Oleksandr Pavlivhenko](#), the Executive Director of Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, these decisions will adversely affect the results reached in the area of investigations into war crimes and crimes against humanity in the conflict in Donbas.

WAYS TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT IN DONBAS: OPINIONS OF SIDES

The RF MFA [allowed](#) the possibility of the US' participation in the settlement process of the conflict in eastern Ukraine noting the lack of willingness to account for Russian approaches and assessments regarding the conflict as an issue. Oleksiy Arestovych, the speaker of the Ukrainian delegation to the TCG, [underscored](#) that the military resolution of the conflict in Donbas is unacceptable for Ukraine. He also [noted](#) that in case of the scenario of "freezing" the conflict, the question of recognition of the Russian control over "L/DPR" and Russian responsibility for maintaining these areas may be put forward to the national referendum. Oleksiy Arestovych added that this scenario does not envisage a ban on social ties with the uncontrolled areas, however, there is a likelihood that Ukrainian citizens could not cross the contact line in case of the total break-up of relations with the certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.