

Donbas Conflict Actors Map: Positions, Interests, Actions

▣ Ukrainian actors

▣ Actors from the SADLR

▣ Russian actors

▣ International actors



This analytical review of the actors of the conflict in Donbass was prepared in the framework of the "Map of Conflict" subproject of the CivilM+ civil society platform.

The overall goal of the work on the "Map of Conflict" is to identify the actors and groups involved in the conflict in Donbass at various levels, as well as their influence, mutual relationships, interests, fears, and expectations. It is assumed that this analysis will help identify possible ways of influencing various stakeholders in order to resolve the conflict.

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Content

INTRODUCTION	6
CHAPTER I. UKRAINIAN ACTORS	7
1.1. State institutions	7
1.1.1. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi	7
1.1.2. Office of the President of Ukraine – Head Andrii Yermak	9
1.1.3. National Security and Defence Council – Secretary Oleksii Danilov	10
1.1.4. Security Service of Ukraine – Head Ivan Bakanov	12
1.1.5. Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine – Prosecutor General Iryna Venedyktova	13
1.2. Parliamentary factions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the IX convocation	14
1.2.1. Parliament Speaker – Dmytro Razumkov ("Servant of the People" faction)	14
1.2.2. "Servant of the People" faction (248 MPs) – Head of the faction Davyd Arakhamia	15
1.2.3. Faction Opposition Platform "For Life" (44 MPs) – Co-heads of the faction Yurii Boiko and Vadym Rabinovych	16
1.2.4. "European Solidarity" faction (27 MPs) – Co-heads of the faction Iryna Herashchenko and Artur Herasimov	17
1.2.5. "Batkivshchyna" faction (24 MPs) – Head of the faction Yuliia Tymoshenko	18
1.2.6. "Holos" faction (20 MPs) – Head of the faction Serhii Rakhmanin	19
1.2.7. Deputy groups "Za Maibutnie" (22 MPs) and "Dovira" (17 MPs)	21
1.3. Government and ministries of Ukraine	22
1.3.1. Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine – Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal	22
1.3.2. Ministry of Defence – Minister Andrii Taran	22
1.3.3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Minister Dmytro Kuleba	24
1.3.4. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) – Minister Arsen Avakov	24
1.3.5. Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories – Minister Oleksii Reznikov	26
1.3.6. Ministry of Veterans Affairs – Minister Serhii Bessarab	26
1.3.7. Ministry of Social Policy – Minister Mariia Lazebna	27
1.3.8. Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – Ombudsman Liudmyla Denisova	28
1.4 Ukrainian oligarchs	29
1.4.1. Ihor Kolomoiskyi – Ukrainian politician, businessman, co-founder of "Privat" Group	29

1.4.2. Viktor Medvedchuk – Ukrainian politician, businessman, chairman of the political council of the party Opposition platform "For Life"	29
1.4.3. Petro Poroshenko – Ukrainian politician and businessman, owner of "Roshen" group of companies	31
1.4.4. Rinat Akhmetov – Ukrainian businessman, owner of "DTEK" and "Metinvest" groups of companies	32
1.4.5. Viktor Pinchuk – Ukrainian businessman, owner of "East One" group of companies	33
1.4.6. Vadym Novynskyi – Ukrainian businessman of Russian origin, owner of "Smart-Holding" group of companies	34
1.4.7. Dmytro Firtash – Ukrainian businessman, owner of "DF Group" group of companies	34
1.4.8. Serhii Taruta – Ukrainian politician and businessman	35
1.5. Other non-governmental actors	36
1.5.1. Volunteer battalions: National Corps, VUC "Right Sector", Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion	36
1.5.2. Entrepreneurs along the demarcation line	37
1.5.3. Internally displaced persons	37
1.5.4. Volunteers and veterans of hostilities	38
1.5.5. Think tanks	38
1.5.6. Human rights groups	38
CHAPTER II. ACTORS FROM THE SADLR	39
2.1. "Head" of the so called "DPR" Denis Pushilin	39
2.2. "People's council" of the so called "DPR"	40
2.2.1. "Donetsk republic" faction (68 representatives)	40
2.2.2. "Free Donbas" faction (32 representatives)	41
2.3. "Government" and "ministries" of the so called "DPR"	41
2.3.1. "Government" of the so called "DPR" – "prime minister" Alexander Ananchenko	41
2.3.2. "Ministry of internal affairs" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Aleksey Dikiy	42
2.3.3. "Ministry of state security" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Vladimir Pavlenko	43
2.3.4. "Ministry of defence" of the so called "DPR" / "people's militia" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Vladimir Kononov / "head of the people's militia department" Denis Sinenkov	43
2.3.5. "Ministry of foreign affairs" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Nataliya Nikonorova	44

2.3.6. "Commissioner for human rights" of the so called "DPR" – "ombudsman" Daria Morozova	44
2.4. "Head" of the so called "LPR" Leonid Pasechnik	45
2.5. "People's council" of the so called "LPR" – "head of the people's council" Denis Miroshnichenko	46
2.5.1. "Peace for Luhansk region" ("Mir Luhanshchine") faction (37 representatives)	46
2.5.2. "Luhansk economic union" faction (13 representatives)	47
2.6. "Government" and "ministries" of the so called "LPR"	47
2.6.1. "Head of the government" of the so called "LPR" – "prime minister" Sergey Kozlov	47
2.6.2. "Ministry of internal affairs" of the so called "LPR" – "minister" Igor Kornet	48
2.6.3. "Ministry of state security" of the so called "LPR" – "minister" Anatoliy Antonov	49
2.6.4. "People's militia" of the so called "LPR" – Sergey Ignatov, codename "Tambov"	49
2.6.5. "Ministry of foreign affairs" of the so called "LPR" – "minister" Vladislav Dainego	50
2.7. Relations of the so called "DPR" and "LPR" with other unrecognized states: South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistrian Moldavian Republic	50
2.8. Mercenaries	51
CHAPTER III. RUSSIAN ACTORS	53
3.1. President of the RF – Vladimir Putin	53
3.2. "Towers of influence" in the Kremlin	54
3.2.1. Influence group of Dmitry Kozak	54
3.2.2. Influence group of security forces "Shoigu-Bortnikov-Naryshkin"	55
3.2.3. Influence group of Sergey Lavrov	56
3.2.4. Influence group of Vladislav Surkov	57
3.3. Chairperson of the Government of the RF – Mikhail Mishustin	58
3.4. Federal Assembly of the RF	58
3.4.1. Chairperson of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin	59
3.4.2. Chairperson of the Federation Council Valentina Matvienko	59
3.5. Investigative Committee of the RF – Head Alexander Bastrykin	60
3.6. Ombudsman of the RF – Tatyana Mosalkova	61
3.7. Russian mercenaries PMC "Wagner", "Kadyrovtsy", "Cossacks"	61

CHAPTER IV. INTERNATIONAL ACTORS	63
4.1. UN	63
4.1.1. General Assembly	63
4.1.2. Security Council	63
4.1.3. International Court of Justice	64
4.1.4. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine	65
4.1.5. UNICEF	66
4.1.6. UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	66
4.2. OSCE	67
4.2.1. OSCE Permanent Council	67
4.2.2. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office	68
4.2.3. Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk	68
4.2.4. OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine	69
4.2.5. OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints "Gukovo" and "Donetsk"	73
4.3. EU and EU countries	70
4.3.1. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	70
4.3.2. Germany	71
4.3.3. France	73
4.3.4. Poland, Baltic countries, Romania	73
4.3.5. Italy, Greece, Austria, Hungary	74
4.4. The USA	75
4.5. International non-governmental actors	76
4.5.1. International Committee of the Red Cross	76
4.5.2. People in Need	77
4.5.3. Première Urgence Internationale	77
4.5.4. Médecins Sans Frontières	78
4.5.5. Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group	78
4.5.6. Norwegian Refugee Council	79
4.5.7. Caritas Internationalis	79
4.5.8. Save the Children	80

Introduction

This analytical review of actors of the conflict in Donbas was prepared as part of a subproject "Conflict Map" of civil society platform CivilM+.

The overall goal of the work on the Conflict Map is to identify the actors and groups involved in the conflict in Donbas at various levels, as well as their impact, relationships, interests, fears and expectations. It is assumed that this analysis would help determine possible ways for influencing various stakeholders in order to resolve the conflict.

Methodology of working on the Conflict Actors Map

Preparation of the analytical review was preceded by two international expert meetings held on November 18 – 22, 2018 in Yerevan (Armenia) and May 29 – 30, 2019 in Kyiv (Ukraine). CivilM+ platform members and invited external experts from Ukraine, Russia and European countries participated in these meetings.

During the first expert meeting, a preliminary list of actors involved in the conflict was developed, as well as a matrix for their description.

The second expert meeting was aimed at working with Ukrainian, Russian and European experts and analysts to gain an in-depth understanding of actors involved in the conflict in Donbas, as well as ways to influence the problems arising from the conflict by participants of the CivilM+ platform.

This publication presents four groups of actors:

- Ukrainian actors,
- Actors of the separate areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (SADLR),
- Russian actors and
- International actors.

Herewith, according to the authors of this study, actors from the SADLR do not have a full subjectivity. Thus, their positions should be considered only in the context of their relations with the Russian Federation.

It should be borne in mind that the list of actors represented in the publication is the result of a joint brainstorming of CivilM+ platform members and experts involved. This list does not claim to be exhaustive, and it will be supplemented in the process of further work on the Conflict Actors Map. We already plan to include the following groups of actors in the analysis: members of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk, local actors in the conflict zone (MPs with economic and political interests in the region, deputies of local councils, mayors of cities, directors of large enterprises, etc.), religious actors (Christian churches of various denominations, civic organizations and initiatives operating under them), Russian civic organizations and journalistic investigation groups, etc.

When working on this study, we mainly used the method of participant observation, which provides for, among other things, obtaining information from various actors directly involved in the processes associated with the conflict in Donbas. In this case, it is not always possible to name the source of information, as is assumed

in academic research. At the same time, the publication contains links to official documents and institutions analysed.

Target audience

This analytical study is the first attempt to systematize as much as possible material on all institutions and actors whose participation in the conflict in Donbas and its settlement has political and social significance.

This study may be used in work of diplomats, representatives of international organizations, decision-makers, experts working in various fields related to resolution of the conflict in Donbas.

In addition, it is expected that the document will become the methodological support for the CivilM+ platform members and other representatives of the civic sector from Ukraine, Russia and European countries in their work with various actors influencing promotion of a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas.

Electronic version

The electronic version of this document can be downloaded in Russian, Ukrainian and English on the website <https://civilmplus.org>. We plan to create a digital version of this product over time.

Chapter I. Ukrainian actors

1.1. State institutions

1.1.1. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyi

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

According to the President of Ukraine, the Minsk agreements in terms of implementation modalities are a flexible document that sets political framework for a political dialogue. In opinion of Zelenskyi, the parties to the conflict shall make a political compromise in order to establish peace in Donbas. The main issues for the Ukrainian President are security and withdrawal of the armed forces from Donbas. In the Ukrainian information space, Zelenskyi advocates the establishment of control over the border before elections in the SADLR (amendment to paragraph # 9 of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements dated February 12, 2015), and does not support the idea of providing a special political and economic status for the SADLR, which should be enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine on an ongoing basis. Zelenskyi also offers a compromise in the form of a joint (representatives of Ukraine, OSCE, UN, and the SADLR) patrolling of an uncontrolled section of the border.

In general, Zelenskyi demonstrates a contradictory and ambivalent approach to the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, avoiding acute and unpopular issues within Ukraine. The President of Ukraine opposes the special status for the SADLR in the Constitution, but advocated the promotion of the "Steinmeier Formula".

As a person from the show business, President Zelenskyi reacts very sharply and painfully to public opinion, and adjusts his statements concerning Donbas depending on the reaction in the media and political circles. In all other political issues, except for Donbas, Zelenskyi quite easily subordinated weak and ruined Ukrainian state institutions to his political will. At the same time, despite the high personal ratings, Zelenskyi continues to be afraid of street protests, which he does not control. He sees a direct threat to himself in protests.

During the first year of Zelenskyi's presidency, an understanding was formed that the Ukrainian President is replacing the state policy on Donbas with information bombs, loud media tricks and "hype". Zelenskyi is a supporter of quick tactical decisions that can have an effect in the short term, rather than of strategic actions. In the long term, such tactical decisions can provide certain risks and threats, primarily for the political survival of Zelenskyi and his authority architecture.

Personnel policy is one of the acute problematic issues for Zelenskyi. The President is inclined to trust his media team from the "95th Quarter," rather than professional Ukrainian diplomats, experts, and lawyers offering alternative opinions and formats for policy on Donbas. Such an approach may harm the peace process, as well as limit the ability to develop an inclusive state policy on Donbas.

Another feature of Zelenskyi in the settlement of the conflict in Donbas is his political unpredictability and poor communication with Ukrainian society and Western partners. In particular, coordination with the Russian side of the Protocol on the establishment of an Advisory Council for conducting direct political dialogue with the SADLR dated March 11, 2020 was a huge surprise not only for Ukrainian society, but also for partners from Germany and France.

Interests in the conflict region.

During the election cycle in 2019, Volodymyr Zelenskyi positioned himself as the "President of peace" who would negotiate with Vladimir Putin and reintegrate Donbas. The use of peacekeeping rhetoric during political competition allowed Zelenskyi to win the presidential election and form a mono-majority of the "Servant of the People" in Parliament. President Zelenskyi constantly emphasizes that he, first of all, wants to reduce the suffering of people in the SADLR and save the life of every military and civilian in Donbas. The President sees the second priority task in the struggle for the minds and mentality of the Ukrainians living in the SADLR. To this end, the government of Zelenskyi plans to launch information broadcasting in the uncontrolled territories of Donbas and Crimea in order to fight for "people's minds", convey information about Ukraine and counter Russian propaganda.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The first year of the presidency of Volodymyr Zelenskyi passed in the light of the restoration of dialogue around implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements. President Zelenskyi was very actively involved in the negotiation process, and in this context, the following key events in 2019 should be noted.

On September 7, 2019, the first exchange of prisoners under the "35 for 35" formula took place between Russia and Ukraine. It resumed negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow, and set a new track for dialogue on Donbas.

On October 1, 2019, representatives of the Trilateral Contact Group signed the so-called "Steinmeier formula" in Minsk. The disengagement of forces in Zolote and Petrivske was agreed; and the prerequisites for a summit of the Normandy Four member countries (N4) were created.

On November 18, 2019, Russia returned to Ukraine three naval warships that were captured by Russian border guards during the Kerch incident in November 2018.

On December 9, 2019, a meeting of the leaders of the N4 countries was held in Paris – Angela Merkel (Germany), Emmanuel Macron (France), Vladimir Putin (Russia) and Volodymyr Zelenskyi (Ukraine). The parties agreed on the further disengagement of forces in Donbas, agreed on the continuation of the exchange of the detained persons, and also discussed the further implementation of the political component of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

On December 29, the second exchange of the detained persons took place between Ukraine and the SADLR. The Ukrainian side returned 127 persons to the self-proclaimed republics of the so called "DPR" and "LPR", while 76 hostages returned to Ukraine.

On April 16, 2020, the third exchange of the detained persons took place between Ukraine and the SADLR. Ukraine freed 13 persons, while the SADLR – 20 detainees.

The main steps of Volodymyr Zelenskyi aimed at resolving the conflict:

- restoration of direct communication with the Russian side at the level of Presidents and informal negotiators;
- reduction of anti-Russian rhetoric and anti-Kremlin state propaganda in Ukraine and abroad;
- a steady course towards the complete ceasefire and ignoring provocations in Donbas;
- desire to solve humanitarian problems and reduce the suffering of people in the SADLR;
- distancing from the use of linguistic and religious issues in domestic political competition;
- gradual withdrawal from economic and trade confrontation with the Russian Federation.

Experts believe that, the negotiation process with Zelenskyi's mediation will come to a standstill in the future, since neither Russia nor Ukraine are ready to make concessions concerning the special political status of the SADLR.

1.1.2. Office of the President of Ukraine – Head Andrii Yermak

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Office of the President of Ukraine is a bureaucratic body with the main goal of ensuring and supporting the activities of the President of Ukraine. After the appointment of the President's Assistant for International Affairs Andrii Yermak as the head of the President's Office, many experts and analysts began saying that the President's Office has entirely turned into a "shadow MFA". Yermak himself openly says in interviews with the media that the priority in his work at the President's Office

remains the settlement of the conflict in Donbas and the performance of mediation functions with Russia. Andrii Yermak is completely loyal to the President. He sticks to the general line of Zelenskyi on the settlement of the conflict in Donbas, which comes down to the fact that it is impossible to hold elections in the SADLR without establishing Ukrainian control over the uncontrolled section of the border.

Interests in the conflict region.

Andrii Yermak is a confidant of President Zelenskyi and serves as an informal negotiation channel with the Russian side. According to many experts, now the main negotiation channel between Russia and Ukraine is being built on the basis of the President's Office and the Administration of Putin. Andrii Yermak has political and economic ties with Russian business and the political establishment in the Kremlin. The head of the President's Office agreed with the Russian side on a new gas contract between Ukraine and Russia, as well as on direct supplies of Russian gas and oil to Ukraine. Representatives of opposition parties believe that Yermak is a Russian agent of influence promoting Russian interests in Ukraine, which causes concern in Ukrainian civic and political circles.

Activity regarding the conflict.

As the main negotiator from Zelenskyi's side on Donbas, Andrii Yermak repeatedly held meetings with Russian representatives on the Ukrainian issue – Vladislav Surkov and Dmitry Kozak. Yermak managed to build a working channel with Dmitry Kozak, deputy head of the Administration of the Russian President. They decided and agreed upon issues of the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees, gas contracts, etc. Yermak is also considered one of the ideologists of resuming supplies of Ukrainian water to the occupied Crimea in exchange for concessions of Kremlin concerning Donbas. Yermak is considered one of the ideologists of a political rapprochement with the "For Life" party, which supported Zelenskyi's initiative to introduce other important changes to the Constitution of Ukraine in terms of reducing the deputy corps from 450 to 300 MPs, as well as changing the electoral system.

1.1.3. National Security and Defence Council – Secretary Oleksii Danilov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) is the key and guiding state body in the field of developing security policies and draft state decisions regarding the settlement of the conflict in Donbas. However, under President Volodymyr Zelenskyi, the role and influence of the NSDC on the formation of the agenda for Donbas significantly differs from the role it played during the time of Petro Poroshenko. For example, the NSDC led by independent player Oleksandr Turchynov, was an autonomous brain and political centre for the development of government decisions, concepts and strategies for Donbas, policy of sanctions and blockades, etc. Now the NSDC under the leadership of Oleksii Danilov is nothing more than a technical body involved in the implementation of decisions and the relaying of the position of President Zelenskyi.

Interests in the conflict region.

As part of the conflict resolution in Donbas, the NSDC has concentrated its efforts on developing the new national security strategy for Ukraine called "Human Security – Country Security", as well as developing and modelling 5 scenarios of the Donbas reintegration. The draft national security strategy was presented on January 17, 2020 at the meeting of the NSDC. It is based on the values of a human life, health, honour, dignity, integrity and security. Special attention in this strategy is given to the protection of Ukrainians in the uncontrolled territories of Donbas and Crimea. More interesting is the NSDC closed document on five policy scenarios concerning Donbas, which was approved at the closed meeting of the NSDC on December 7, 2019 on the eve of the Normandy meeting in Paris. The draft of this document was developed at the President's Office and it had several key provisions. An analysis of various and scattered statements by the President, the Speaker of Parliament, and the Secretary of the NSDC suggest that various development scenarios were laid down from optimistic to pessimistic. The first scenario provides only for the return of all the captured and detained persons during continuation of the low-intensity conflict. The second scenario provides for a complete ceasefire and deep freezing of the conflict according to the Transnistrian scenario. The third scenario provides for the modification of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements: first, the return of control over the border and then – elections. The fourth scenario of the development of the situation around Donbas was described personally by Zelenskyi. He called this scenario "The Wall", in which the main priority was the people, rather than territories. Under this scenario, the Ukrainian authorities should create living conditions in the controlled territories for people from the SADLR who want to live in Ukraine. The last fifth scenario is the readiness of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to react and respond to the escalation of hostilities by the self-proclaimed republics supported by Russia. At the same time, both the NSDC and President Zelenskyi publicly declare that the solution of the conflict by military means is excluded.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The NSDC Secretary Oleksii Danilov does neither make political statements nor shows any political actions concerning Donbas without coordination with the President's Office. However, in this context, one should note the efforts and activity of the adviser to the Secretary of the NSDC on reintegration and restoration of Donbas, showman Serhii Syvokho who has direct access to President's assistant Andrii Yermak and Zelenskyi. In general, Syvokho is building himself an image of a "dove of peace" in Donbas. It is possible that this is done with an eye to local elections in Donbas in the fall of 2020, including in the uncontrolled territories.

Serhii Syvokho was very closely involved in exchanges of prisoners of war, as well as building an informal political dialogue with representatives of the self-proclaimed republics. In this context, it is worth noting the statements of Syvokho regarding the inclusion in the dialogue with the representatives of the SADLR of the structures of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP), which can play the role of a mediator in the conflict, since the church has retained its influence in the uncontrolled territories and is also under the jurisdiction of the Kyiv Metropolitan Onufry. In addition, Serhii Syvokho is one of the main lobbyists of debt repayment and pension payments for Ukrainians who live in the uncontrolled territories of

Donbas and Crimea. Syvokho is one of the few in the structures of the "Servant of the People" who strongly criticized the Parliament's refusal to pay pensions for residents of Donbas. Serhii Syvokho is also developing his political brand under the "Servant of the People" umbrella – "Syvokho Team in Donbas", which, according to many experts, may indicate his preparation for the local elections in Donbas in the fall of 2020. On March 12, 2020, Serhii Syvokho presented the platform of national reconciliation and dialogue. However, this platform was disrupted by the right-wing ATO veterans.

1.1.4. Security Service of Ukraine – Head Ivan Bakanov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) is the central law enforcement agency that protects state security in Ukraine and is subordinate to the President of Ukraine. The position of the SSU regarding the conflict in Donbas is set out in a closed decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine dated April 13, 2014 "On Urgent Measures to Overcome the Terrorist Threat and Preserve the Territorial Integrity of Ukraine". The SSU interprets the conflict in Donbas as a terrorist threat to the constitutional order of Ukraine, which is carried out with the support of Russia, pro-Russian separatists and mercenaries. In 2014, Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov enacted the secret decision of the NSDC and launched the ATO process. From April 14, 2014 to April 30, 2018, the SSU was in charge of the management and coordination of the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Donbas. Formally, forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), the State Border Service, partially territorial self-defence units and volunteer units were under the control of the SSU. On April 30, 2018, the ATO format was changed to the Operation of Joint Forces (OJF). As a result, coordination, planning and execution of military operations were transferred from the SSU into control of the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

Interests in the conflict region.

Functions of the SSU in the zone of the OJF are regulated by closed instructions and orders of the SSU, as well as by the Law of Ukraine "On Peculiarities of the State Policy to Ensure the State Sovereignty of Ukraine in the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions". In the OJF zone, the SSU implements functions of conducting intelligence and counterintelligence activities, countering hybrid aggression, the counterterrorism threat, protecting economic interests of Ukraine, information, and infrastructure, fulfilling other orders of the state leadership, the General Staff of the AFU and the OJF command.

Activity regarding the conflict.

In addition to performing various secret operations and military tasks to eliminate and abduct militants, Russian mercenaries, the SSU is involved in the exchange of prisoners of war in Donbas. For example, the SSU was credited with carrying out special operations to eliminate the "Motorola" and "Givi" militants, as well as kidnapping a valuable witness Vladimir Tsemakh in the case of the downed Malaysian Boeing. In addition, the key direction in the activities of the SSU is the prevention

of the counter-terrorism threat, as well as countering the intelligence activities of Russia and the self-proclaimed republics in Donbas.

The SSU traditionally compiled lists and carried out verification and special check of the persons exchanged in 2017, 2018 and 2019. On April 8, 2019, the SSU created the Joint Centre for the Release of Hostages, Prisoners of War, and Detainees, and the Search for Missing Military Personnel in the OJF Zone. In this activity, the MIA, the Ministry of Defence and other power structures are subordinated to the SSU. In 2019, the SSU successfully coordinated two effective exchanges of prisoners of war and persons detained in Russia and in the territory of the self-proclaimed republics.

1.1.5. Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine – Prosecutor General Iryna Venedyktova

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Office of the Prosecutor General investigates war crimes in the uncontrolled territories of Donbas and Crimea, crimes against humanity, and crimes against state security. Prosecutors use various terms – “military aggression of Russia against Ukraine”, “armed annexation of Ukrainian territories” and “armed conflict in Donbas”. The last wording is the most common. The issues related to investigation of crimes in Donbas and in the occupied Crimea are dealt with by the Chief Military Prosecutor and the Military Prosecutor's Office, as well as the Prosecutor's Office of the AR of Crimea.

Interests in the conflict region.

After the change of power in Ukraine, the new President Zelenskyi set several political tasks for the new leadership of the Prosecutor General's Office regarding investigations and establishment of truth. The priority cases included: investigation into the killings of activists on Maidan in 2014; investigation into the actions of the military and political leadership of Ukraine during the Illovaisk and Debaltseve operations, as a result of which the AFU were surrounded by the Russian army; investigation of the downed MH-17 aircraft in Donbas; as well as investigation into events concerning the annexation of Crimea in March 2014.

Activity regarding the conflict.

One of the key areas of activity of prosecution bodies is the investigation into the downed MH-17 aircraft in Donbas in July 2014. For more than 5 years, prosecution bodies, including the military prosecutor's office, have been working on collecting information and establishing facts of Russia's involvement in the killing of 298 passengers of the MH-17 aircraft. From the Ukrainian side, the international investigative team included 4 prosecutors under the leadership of the Deputy Prosecutor General of Ukraine Gunduz Mammadov. In addition to the MH-17 case, in 2019–2020, prosecution bodies conducted investigations into actions of representatives of Ukrainian volunteer battalions who were suspected of committing crimes in the conflict zone (Tornado battalion, Aydar, Shakhtar, Right Sector). On December 29, 2019 the head of the Prosecutor's Office of the AR of Crimea Ihor Ponochovnyi stated that the main directions for the prosecution bodies were not only investigation into facts of treason, but also into violations of the rules of war, as

well as Russia's implementation of the Geneva Conventions in Crimea and Donbas.

1.2. Parliamentary factions in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the IX convocation

1.2.1. Parliament Speaker – Dmytro Razumkov ("Servant of the People" faction)

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Speaker of the Parliament Dmytro Razumkov in his speeches calls the armed conflict in Donbas "war against Ukraine", "Russian aggression against Ukraine". As Parliamentary Speaker, Razumkov tries to give softer assessments of the conflict, and avoids harsh and sharp expressions towards Russia and the SADLR. Dmytro Razumkov believes that the resolution of the conflict is possible only through diplomatic means. Negotiations on the resolution of the conflict should be conducted with Russia and Western partners, rather than puppets from the so called "DPR" and "LPR". Razumkov also promotes Zelenskyi's thesis that it is impossible implement the political components of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, in particular to hold elections, without implementing the security component and gaining control over the border. As for amnesty, Razumkov has repeatedly stated that amnesty could be carried out for those who have not committed serious war crimes and crimes against humanity in Donbas. Razumkov also believes that Ukraine will have to actively rebuild and economically revive Donbas after the war.

Interests in the conflict region.

Dmytro Razumkov builds himself the image of a moderate politician, calm chairman of Parliament, who is far from radical actions and aggressive statements. Razumkov has political ambitions, and aims to fight for the status of Zelenskyi's political heir who could become the presidential candidate from the "Servant of the People" in 2024. Therefore, Razumkov principally communicates in Russian in order to please the East and the South, as well as the Russian-speaking electorate from the SADLR.

Activity regarding the conflict.

At the current political moment, Razumkov is completely dependent on Zelenskyi in political and apparatus terms, and therefore is not considered an independent player who could form the agenda on Donbas. Razumkov in the chair of the Speaker of Parliament promotes the President's narratives, and often tests public opinion through various statements and messages in the media. Therefore, as of the settlement of conflict in Donbas, the role of Razumkov is purely technical and does not go beyond the mandate presented to him in the President's Office.

1.2.2. "Servant of the People" faction (248 MPs) – Head of the faction Davyd Arakhamia

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The presidential faction "Servant of the People" is a very heterogeneous and motley political force. It combines at least five different political and oligarchic groups with different visions concerning Donbas. Various MPs from the "Servants of the People" promote opposite theses: from integration of territories on the basis of the special status and implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements to termination of negotiations, construction of the "Wall" and continuation of the blockade of the SADLR.

For example, the group of MPs focused on Avakov takes the most radical position in relation to Donbas. The group of oligarch Kolomoiskyi is always against everything; it simply sabotages all Zelenskyi's processes and initiatives, without reference to the ideology and decisions of the faction. The largest "Quarter" group supports Zelenskyi. It is a monolithic force (about 160 MPs), which the President can rely on. The MPs guided by the oligarch Viktor Pinchuk take a pragmatic position concerning Donbas. Pinchuk is the supporter of peace in Donbas on any conditions. The remaining groups of majoritarian MPs from the "Servant of the People" do not show their positions and are likely to support Zelenskyi's proposals if they receive political and economic preferences in exchange.

Interests in the conflict region.

The "Servant of the People" faction is a very heterogeneous political organism in which various shareholders pursue their goals and objectives. This faction is based on the rating of Zelenskyi who constantly calls on his force to support his initiatives. While Zelenskyi's ratings are not particularly sagging, the faction maintains a more or less internal unity, supported, among other things, by Zelenskyi's constant threats to dissolve the Parliament. The main function of the "Servant of the People" in the conflict is legislative support for the ideas and bills of the President in Parliament. In fact, this is a technical vote for the initiatives of the President and the President's Office, where the strategic development and discussion of the key decisions on Donbas take place. The main speaker on behalf of the faction is its leader Davyd Arakhamia who always tests public and political opinion on sensitive issues. For example, Arakhamia launched into the public and media environment information about possible water supplies to the occupied Crimea in exchange for Russia's concessions on Donbas; information on the joint patrolling of the border, on the amnesty, on the wall with the SADLR, etc. The President's Office, in turn, analysed the reaction of the media and the public to these statements and took into account in the development of its policy concerning Donbas.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The presidential faction "Servant of the People" often provides vote for Zelenskyi's initiatives under the pressure from the President's Office. Among such state decisions is the vote of the "Servant of the People" in 2019 for the extension of the Law on special procedure for local self-government in separate areas of Donetsk

and Luhansk regions, which had been approved under President Poroshenko. At the same time, on February 5, 2020, the "Servant of the People" failed a very important bill on pension payments for the occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea in the first reading. The document provided for the receipt of pensions by residents of the uncontrolled territories without a certificate of a displaced person; payment of pension arrears without statute of limitations; providing residents of temporarily occupied territories with the opportunity to purchase labour experience without sanctions; providing the opportunity to calculate the pension to residents of temporarily occupied territories who have lost their documents and other items. A part of the MPs from the "Servant of the People" faction and the Ministry of Finance called not to vote for this initiative, as it would cost the treasury UAH 115 billion.

According to many analysts, the issue of amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine in terms of providing the special status for the SADLR would be a turning point for the presidential faction, and could lead to its collapse and internal crisis. In addition to the Constitutional amendments, the "Servant of the People" faction has a polar understanding of the processes concerning amnesty and transitional justice in Donbas.

1.2.3. Faction Opposition Platform "For Life" (44 MPs) – Co-heads of the faction Yuri Boiko and Vadym Rabinovych

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The pro-Russian party "For Life" openly advocates normalizing relations with Russia and resolving the conflict in Donbas on Russian conditions, which ultimately provides for the federalization of Ukraine in post-Crimean borders. Representatives of the "For Life" faction systematically criticize Zelenskyi for insufficient steps to establish peace, as well as Zelenskyi's reluctance to gradually implement the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements in the modalities in which they were written – changes to the Constitution of Ukraine in terms of the special political status for the SADLR (Medvedchuk talks about autonomy for Donbas), elections in the SADLR, the beginning of establishment of control over the border from the Ukrainian side.

Interests in the conflict region.

The Opposition platform "For Life" calls itself the only political ally of Zelenskyi, who is able to support amendments to the Constitution in terms of special status for the SADLR. Representatives of "For Life" are interested in resolving the conflict in Donbas on Russian terms, because they believe that the position of the SADLR as a separate intra-Ukrainian entity would help Russia keep the rest of Ukraine from further integration into the EU and NATO. This political force traditionally promotes political neutrality, non-aligned status of Ukraine, and economic cooperation with Russia.

Secondly, the political interests of the "For Life" party regarding the reintegration of the SADLR include increase in the number of its supporters and potential voters – at least 1.5 million voters live in the SADLR. Thirdly, the "For Life" party aims at strengthening its influence on the political processes in Ukraine by strengthening cooperation with Russia, including economic one. However, the global goal of this

party is to return Viktor Medvedchuk his former informal influence on the negotiation channel with Russia, so that he remained the only communicator with the Kremlin.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The Opposition platform "For Life" forms itself an image of a peace party that would end the war in Donbas and achieve social prosperity and economic revival of Donbas and Ukraine as a whole. Since the "For Life" faction is numerically small and cannot influence state decisions, representatives of this force focused their efforts on working with the media. The leaders of the Opposition platform "For Life" have large media resources – Inter, 112, ZIK, News One, and partly "NASH" TV channels, on which the pro-Russian political agenda in the media space is being promoted. In addition, the "For Life" party is actively using its ties with Russian elites and the authorities in the Kremlin. On the eve of the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019, representatives of "For Life" met with the former Prime Minister of the RF Dmitry Medvedev, where they discussed issues of economic and humanitarian cooperation. At the beginning of March 2020, the MPs from "For Life" visited the State Duma of the RF. The image of politicians contracting with Russia mobilized pro-Russian voters around "For Life", while other oligarchs Kolomoiskyi and Akhmetov competed for these voters. After changing the leadership of the President's Office from Andrii Bohdan to Andrii Yermak, the political role and influence of "For Life" can further grow. This party may transform into an informal political ally of the "Servant of the People" faction, and even delegate its people to the government.

1.2.4. "European Solidarity" faction (27 MPs) – Co-heads of the faction Iryna Herashchenko and Artur Herasimov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The "ES" party of Petro Poroshenko is particularly focused on the implementation of the security component in Donbas, without which it is impossible to advance in resolving political issues. In addition, the party of Poroshenko has a very predictable and understandable strategy for Donbas. This force opposes the special status for the SADLR enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine. The "ES" faction believes that the reintegration of the SADLR should be carried out on the basis of a broad decentralization only after the complete de-occupation of the SADLR, and gaining control over the border before the election. They discard the possibility of direct dialogue, including constitutional, with the leaders of the self-proclaimed republics. Representatives of the "ES" party believe that the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements fulfilled its main role – it stopped the direct military invasion of Russia and reduced the intensity of the conflict. According to the leaders of the "ES" faction, the main mechanism that should influence and pacify Russia is the strengthening of international anti-Russian sanctions.

The "ES" party actively promotes messages about the need to unite the occupied Crimea and Donbas into a single negotiation menu.

Interests in the conflict region.

The "ES" faction continues to articulate the line "neither war nor peace", which was conducted by Petro Poroshenko throughout his presidential cadence. The "ES"

faction holds a hawkish line in conflict in Donbas and simultaneously criticizes all Zelenskyi's initiatives, even constructive ones. The main interest of this party is the political mobilization of patriotic and nationalist voters around Poroshenko who has actually squeezed out other forces from the right flank – "Svoboda", the "National Corps", and discredited the "People's Front" party, as well as its leader Arsenii Yatseniuk. In addition, the articulation of warlike narratives concerning Donbas helps the "ES" party position itself as the only force that opposes Zelenskyi and any attempts to "betray" Ukraine in favour of Russia. The leader of the "ES" party Petro Poroshenko uses aggressive warlike rhetoric to protect himself from criminal proceedings and pressure from the side of new authorities, and also prepares a field for participation in the presidential election in 2024.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The "ES" faction nominally supports the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, considering it the product of the activities of its leader Petro Poroshenko. The MPs from the "ES" also supported the extension of the law on the special procedure for local self-government in the SADLR, which had been developed by the "BPP-Solidarity" under the cadence of Poroshenko. Due to the fact that the fraction of the Poroshenko's party is very small and lacks power, this force makes the main effort in working in the media, social networks and in the "fields". Before the preparation to the Normandy meeting and on the eve of the approval of the so-called "Steinmeier Formula" in Minsk in 2019, the party of Poroshenko held a series of protests called "Stop Surrender". Poroshenko wanted to mobilize the street, but the protests were not wide and gathered only supporters of the "ES" party.

The active media work to highlight the conflict and promote nationalist rhetoric is carried out on social networks by the so-called groups of supporters of Petro Poroshenko (in Ukraine they have been called "porokhobots"), as well as on Poroshenko's channels "Priamyi" and "Channel 5", where loyal experts and political scientists are being invited. In addition, representatives of this political force have serious influence and experience in international and diplomatic circles, where they condemn Russian aggression and violations in the field of international and humanitarian law by the Kremlin. Representatives of the "ES party" also strongly condemned the "Twelve Steps Toward Greater Security in Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic Region" plan to resolve the Ukrainian crisis, which was presented by a group of pro-Russian experts at the Munich Security Conference in February 2020.

1.2.5. "Batkivshchyna" faction (24 MPs) – Head of the faction Yuliia Tymoshenko

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The "Batkivshchyna" faction quite aggressively opposes changes to the Constitution and consolidation of the special status of the SADLR, a general amnesty and the elections until control over the border is gained. Yuliia Tymoshenko articulates the deepening of existing sanctions, the introduction of new sanctions against Russia, and regularly raises the issue of the status of Crimea, which should be on the same negotiation menu as the SADLR. Representatives of the "Batkivshchyna" faction believe that one of the possible solutions of the conflict and de-occupation

of Donbas is the deployment of an international peacekeeping mission and an international transitional administration in the SADLR, after which it would be possible to conduct elections under the Ukrainian legislation.

Interests in the conflict region.

In comparison with other parliamentary factions, the "Batkivshchyna" faction pays the least attention to the settlement of the conflict in Donbas, which is a rather sensitive issue. Firstly, this party is poorly represented in the electoral field of the Southeast, where the issue of the peaceful settlement is of primary concern to the local voter. In addition, the "Batkivshchyna" faction does not play on the electoral field of radicals, nationalists and conservatives, since this niche has also been occupied. Politically, the conflict in Donbas is not interesting for Tymoshenko, since her messages are focused on care for the poor electorate living in villages and small towns. Therefore, the party of Yuliia Tymoshenko focuses attention in political competition on issues of poverty, high tariffs and low salaries, as well as land reform. Nevertheless, Tymoshenko's party does not miss a single chance to get political points for criticizing Zelenskyi's initiatives, as it officially turned into opposition towards the President.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The "Batkivshchyna" party was one of the initiators of the development and approval of the political memorandum in the Parliament "On Avoiding Concessions in Relations with Russia". The memorandum on not crossing the red lines in relations with the Kremlin was signed by the "Holos" and "European Solidarity" parties. In fact, the political speakers of the "Batkivshchyna" party are building their theses on the impossibility of granting special status for the SADLR enshrined in the Constitution, holding elections in the SADLR until gaining control over the border and withdrawal of Russian armed forces from Donbas, the impossibility of compromises with the Kremlin around the status of the occupied Crimea, the impossibility of terminating claims against Russia in international courts. The conflict in Donbas is a convenient tool of political criticism for Tymoshenko who thus demonstrates to the electorate that she is not a pro-Russian politician, which she has been accused of in the presidential election in 2019.

1.2.6. "Holos" faction (20 MPs) – Head of the faction Serhii Rakhmanin

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The "Holos" faction is the smallest parliamentary faction, consisting of only 20 MPs; the formal leader of the faction is Serhii Rakhmanin. The party brought to parliament by Sviatoslav Vakarchuk supports the idea of Ukraine leaving the Minsk process and freezing the conflict in Donbas until the better geopolitical conditions. The "Holos" party believes that the Ukrainian authorities should choose the tactics of "strategic patience": to strengthen the negotiating position concerning Donbas by modernizing the country and carrying out structural reforms. The Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements has already fulfilled its main task – it halted the direct military invasion of Russia in Donbas, as well as the

active hostilities with the use of regular army units. The Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements is a dead and vague document that does not have a clear framework, and is interpreted as beneficial to a stronger opponent, meaning Russia. The "Holos" party believes that France and Germany support the position of Russia regarding the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, because the European countries are interested in lifting sanctions from the RF and resuming trade. Representatives of the "Holos" party have repeatedly stated that the EU sanctions against Russia were not tied to the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and were a voluntary political decision by the collective countries of the West, which could change at any time.

Interests in the conflict region.

The "Holos" party is represented in Parliament by a very small fraction. Therefore, this force does not have much influence on the process of political decision-making in Parliament. This party does not seem to pursue economic or certain political interests in the SADLR. The theme of conflict resolution in Donbas is used to mobilize political supporters who are flowing to the more aggressive party of Petro Poroshenko – "European Solidarity". Even in the electoral plan, the "Holos" party is not aimed at the SADLR, since its voter is liberal and patriotic, concentrated mainly in the West and the Centre of Ukraine. The party of Vakarchuk as a whole supports warlike rhetoric and in most issues expresses solidarity with Petro Poroshenko's "European Solidarity".

Activity regarding the conflict.

The "Holos" proposes to withdraw from the Minsk agreements at the legislative level, as well as to develop a new plan for resolving the conflict, providing the unification in a single negotiation package on Donbas and Crimea. The Ukrainian government should concentrate resources to strengthen the state's defence, carry out reforms and fight corruption, which in general should be aimed at strengthening the negotiating positions of Ukraine and improving the geopolitical situation around Kyiv. This concept is framed in the Strategy of Cold De-Occupation of Donbas and Crimea. The "Holos" faction criticizes peace initiatives of President Zelenskyi and takes an active part in "Stop Surrender" political events. In addition, the "Holos" faction signed a memorandum with the "Batkivshchyna" and "European Solidarity" parties, which was addressed to Zelenskyi and aimed at the impossibility of compromising with Russia. At the end of February 2020, the "Holos" faction introduced the concept and registered in Parliament the bill on the creation of the National Agency for Overcoming the Consequences of Russian Armed Aggression in Donbas and Crimea. Representatives of the "Holos" party want to calculate the losses in Donbas and Crimea that were caused by Russian aggression, and demand compensation from Russia for the damage and annexed territories in a judicial proceeding in the future.

1.2.7. Deputy groups "Za Maibutnie" (22 MPs) and "Dovira" (17 MPs)

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Deputy groups "Za Maibutnie" (22 MPs) and "Dovira" (17 MPs) are associations of majoritarian MPs who have personal clearly expressed business interests or who are guided by Ukrainian oligarchs. In Ukrainian political circles, these groups are called "clubs for big businessmen" and a "hodgepodge" because politicians from different political camps and parties are represented there. Interests of the oligarchs Ihor Kolomoiskyi, Arsen Avakov, and the Zakarpattia clan of the Baloha brothers and others are predominantly represented in the "Za Maibutnie" group. The "Dovira" group includes Donetsk clients of oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov, agrarian oligarch Andrii Verevskyi, and representatives of regional clans. These deputy groups do not have a political ideology, and for the most part, they do not articulate their generalized position on the settlement of the conflict in Donbas.

Interests in the conflict region.

In conditions of Ukrainian political competition, these players often cover for the "Servant of the People" mono-coalition and give the missing votes in the Parliament to the majority in exchange for posts, new contracts for their business, or simply for the sake of political immunity from law enforcement and anti-corruption bodies. The pragmatic "Za Maibutnie" and "Dovira" groups can support Volodymyr Zelenskyi's peace initiatives in Parliament, provided the President agrees to cooperate with the main beneficiaries who finance and control these groups.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The most prominent political representative of the "Za Maibutnie" group is the majoritarian MP from Volnovakha city Dmytro Lubinets who heads the parliamentary committee on human rights, de-occupation and reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea. Dmytro Lubinets united around himself MPs originating from the industrial Donbas and territories under occupation. As the head of the committee, Dmytro Lubinets is active in developing regulatory documents related to the reintegration of Donbas (issues of pensions, crossings along the contact line, medical care, consultations on the strategy of reintegration of the SADLR). In general, this activity is conducted as a private political initiative of Lubinets, which is not covered in the framework of the deputy group and does not reflect its position.

1.3. Government and ministries of Ukraine

1.3.1. Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine – Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The new head of the government Denys Shmyhal was approved as Prime Minister instead of Oleksii Honcharuk on March 4, 2020. Denys Shmyhal is considered the political client of the oligarch Akhmetov who has his own economic interests in Donbas. For the short time as Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal has not yet formulated a clear position on Donbas. However, Denys Shmyhal's statements regarding Donbas will definitely not be aggressive. Secondly, Prime Minister Schmyhal will try to promote the lifting of the trade and economic blockade of the SADLR.

Interests in the conflict region.

In his rare interviews, Shmyhal declares the need for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas through diplomatic means. According to Shmyhal, after the reintegration of Donbas, the Ukrainian government should pay pensions, revive the economy of Donbas, and in particular its coal and heavy industry. In the future, the Prime Minister may develop and coordinate the economic and financial policies of the government aimed at the reintegration of the SADLR.

Activity regarding the conflict.

It is very likely that Denys Shmyhal will be guided by the political messages of the President's Office, as well as by the instructions of the oligarch Akhmetov. The main tool of Shmyhal's influence is future government decisions on Donbas, as well as political statements forming and testing the information space. It should be noted that on the first day after his appointment, Shmyhal made a scandalous statement regarding the supply of water to the occupied Crimea, which caused a wave of indignation in Ukrainian society and political circles. With high probability, this statement was made upon instruction of the President's Office.

1.3.2. Ministry of Defence – Minister Andrii Taran

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

During 2014–2020, the Ministry of Defence interpreted the conflict in Donbas in the paradigm of Petro Poroshenko, as "inciting separatist sentiments in Donbas from the Russian side", "operation to restore constitutional order in the East of Ukraine", "Anti-Terrorist Operation", "Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas", "Russia's military aggression against Ukraine", "armed conflict". As a rule, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) used the term "armed conflict in Donbas" in its public statements. After Volodymyr Zelenskyi came to power, the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff mitigated anti-Russian rhetoric to a certain extent and began to make less emphasize on the Russian military presence in Donbas. Statements by the General Staff of the AFU and the Ministry of Defence transformed from tougher anti-Russian rhetoric into neutral and softer formulations in relation to Russia. We predict that

this course will be deepened under the new Minister of Defence Andrii Taran who has been appointed on March 4, 2020.

Interests in the conflict region.

The Ministry of Defence is the central body of executive power and military command. The AFU are subordinated to the Ministry. The Ministry of Defence provides material and technical support for the armed forces in Donbas, organizes the conscription of military personnel, attracts contract personnel, trains the participants of OJF in Donbas, and conducts administrative and economic activities. Former Minister of Defence Andrii Zahorodniuk has repeatedly stated that it was important for the Ministry of Defence to unify the standards of the AFU in accordance with NATO standards. This is one of the main tasks for the current Minister of Defence. The main military body for planning defence of the state, managing the use of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, coordinating and monitoring the implementation of tasks in the field of defence is the General Staff of the AFU headed by Ruslan Khomchak. On September 13, 2017, President Poroshenko signed a decree on the creation of the Headquarters of the Supreme Commander, where the General Staff of the AFU was approved as the working body of the Headquarters. The new President Zelenskyi, unlike Poroshenko, does not pay much political attention to the functioning of the Headquarters. In addition, the General Staff of the AFU provides leadership and coordination of the military and law enforcement agencies in the framework of the Operation of the Joint Forces (OJF) in Donbas. On August 5, 2019, President Zelenskyi issued decree appointing Lieutenant General Volodymyr Kravchenko as the commander of the OJF in Donbas.

Activity regarding the conflict.

During 2019–2020, one of the key areas of activity of the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff was the withdrawal of forces and means on the contact line, in particular in the area of the bridge in Stanytsia Luhanska, Bohdanivka, Zolote and Petrivske. In February 2020, the meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group also discussed the disengagement of forces in the area of Hnutovo, Novoselovka-2 and the railway bridge near Stanytsia Luhanska. The work on continuation of disengagement of forces and means is being carried out at the political level. In general, the leadership of the General Staff and the Ministry of Defence opposed the idea of the disengagement of forces and means on the contact line. In particular, the Minister of Defence Zahorodniuk stated in January 2020 that it would take tens of years to disengage forces on more than 400 kilometres of the uncontrolled border and this would lead to a deep freeze of the conflict. During the speech at the Munich Security Conference, President Volodymyr Zelenskyi proposed the idea of a sectoral disengagement of forces and means. In accordance with the sectoral principle, the demarcation line would be divided into sectors, a gradual separation of forces and means would be carried out. The transition from one sector to another would be possible only after the OSCE SMM determined that there are no illegal armed groups, troops and military equipment in the sector. According to the Ukrainian side, implementation of this idea requires full round-the-clock access of the OSCE SMM to the entire territory of the SADLR, as well as the political desire of the Russian leadership to compromise.

1.3.3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Minister Dmytro Kuleba

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) calls the armed conflict in Donbas Russian aggression, as a result of which parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are the temporarily occupied territories. Effective Russian control has been established in these territories, which is carried out through pro-Russian quasi-state institutions of power and the armed forces under the leadership of Russian instructors and curators. After the change of power in Ukraine, the MFA softened anti-Russian rhetoric in a certain way. The statements of the MFA became softer and not as aggressive as during the time of Petro Poroshenko.

Interests in the conflict region.

The MFA deals with technical issues, and promotes theses and narratives of President Zelenskyi through diplomatic channels. After the victory of Volodymyr Zelenskyi in the presidential election, the MFA was relegated to the background in the context of developing and ensuring communication and working out political decisions on Donbas with the Russian side. This change also concerned Western partners, where the centre of influence was shifted towards the President's Office. This contrast was especially noticeable after the appointment of Andrii Yermak. The MFA under the leadership of former Minister Vadym Prystaiko made political statements that were not coordinated with the President's Office. Objectively, from September 2019 to March 2020, Prystaiko did not receive information and was excluded from the negotiation process due to political distrust on the part of Zelenskyi and Yermak.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The MFA carried out diverse activities in the context of the settlement of the conflict in Donbas. In particular, diplomatic work was conducted for the exchange of hostages and detainees; preparation and technical support was conducted for the Normandy meeting in Paris in December 2019; the leadership of the MFA held briefings for foreign diplomats on the progress of negotiations with Russia and the activities of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk; regarding the strengthening of sanctions pressure on Russia and so on. In addition, the MFA of Ukraine actively reacted to various statements in the media by politicians and experts, and outlined the red lines which the Ukrainian government would not cross. For example, joint patrolling of an uncontrolled border; impossibility of holding elections until the moment of gaining control over the border; parameters of the amnesty; disengagement of forces and means; impossibility of concessions on Donbas from the Russian side in exchange for water supply to the annexed Crimea and so on. Thus, the actions of the MFA under President Zelenskyi concerning the conflict in Donbas were conducted in a diplomatic direction, and consisted of providing political comments on hot issues. The MFA was removed from solving real issues and conducting political negotiations.

1.3.4. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) – Minister Arsen Avakov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict. The political agenda in the Ministry of Internal Affairs is being formed by Arsen Avakov who completely controls

this institution. Back in 2018, Arsen Avakov formulated his programmatic idea for the reintegration of the SADLR, better known as the "Small Step Mechanism". This idea meant the gradual reintegration and transfer of settlements in the SADLR under the Ukrainian sovereignty. This concept was even approved at the level of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the position of the Minister was formed around it. Arsen Avakov categorically opposes elections in the SADLR until control over the uncontrolled section of the Russian-Ukrainian border is established. Avakov opposes the disengagement of forces on the entire contact line. He is also against the mass amnesty in the SADLR. In media statements, Avakov also sharply opposed special status for the SADLR enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine on an ongoing basis. The Minister of Internal Affairs supports the unitary constitutional status of Ukraine and the deployment of an international peacekeeping mission on the territory of the SADLR.

Interests in the conflict region.

Arsen Avakov is an opportunistic politician who uses the image of the representative of the "party of war" to achieve his political or corporate interests. Avakov, as one of the leaders of the "People's Front", is the only person from the old power team of Petro Poroshenko time who retained his influence in the new architecture of authority of Zelenskyi.

Avakov retained the portfolio of the Minister of the MIA, as well as the influence on a number of radical forces used in political competition. The Minister of the MIA Arsen Avakov is one of the strongest informal players in Ukrainian politics. In many respects (political influence in authority structures, influence on political decision-making, availability of business and media resources) he meets oligarchic criteria. Having the controlled police and radical groups, Arsen Avakov controls the street, and thus influences the political decision-making on Donbas. Avakov has no distinct business interests in the SADLR. However, he seeks to use the theme of a peaceful settlement in order to strengthen his domestic political positions, maintain the post of Minister of Internal Affairs and, as a maximum plan, participate in the struggle for the post of Prime Minister.

Activity regarding the conflict.

As for the settlement of the conflict in Donbas, now Arsen Avakov is in the political shadow of Volodymyr Zelenskyi. In fact, Avakov now acts as a shield for President Zelenskyi, protecting him from the radicals and the street. The National Police, the National Guard and the State Border Service are involved in the conflict in Donbas, subordinated to the Joint Operations Headquarters and to the Minister of Internal Affairs. Formally, Avakov has leverages over the power structures located in the zone of the Operation of Joint Forces. However, the Minister of the MIA does not demonstrate steps and intentions, and does not infringe on the President's monopoly in terms of decision-making in the OJF zone. If Arsen Avakov is fired, he can activate radical groups against Zelenskyi's peace initiatives and incite nationalists to destabilize the domestic political situation. Therefore, according to many political experts, Avakov is safer for Zelenskyi, being in power than in the opposition. This is the reason why Arsen Avakov retained his post in the government of Denys Shmyhal for the second time.

1.3.5. Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories – Minister Oleksii Reznikov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories was established on March 4, 2020 as part of the new government of Denys Shmyhal. The new Ministry was headed by lawyer Oleksii Reznikov who also serves as the profile Vice Prime Minister for reintegration. The official position of the Ministry regarding the war in Donbas has not yet been presented. However, Reznikov himself, being the representative of Ukraine in the Minsk Trilateral Contact Group, called the war in Donbas an "armed conflict", which takes place with the active support of Russia.

Interests in the conflict region.

Creation of the new Ministry was caused by purely political motives. The new Minister Oleksii Reznikov is considered the political nominee of the head of the President's Office Andrii Yermak who, in turn, wants to control all the processes concerning Donbas. Secondly, the creation of the new Ministry for reintegration is a political sign for Western and Russian partners that Kyiv is ready to engage in reintegration of territories at the institutional level. Thirdly, performing functions of Vice Prime Minister for reintegration, Oleksii Reznikov will also have to formulate a political reconciliation agenda in the media. The direct functions of the Ministry and the contours of state policy on Donbas are not yet known, since the Ministry is new, and any programs, regulations and strategies have not yet been approved at the time of this survey.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The Ministry for Reintegration is currently in the process of legalizing and staffing, as well as reviewing the functions and powers that intersect with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs and the Ministry of Social Policy. Oleksii Reznikov said that the formation of a new ministry would take from 6 months to a year.

1.3.6. Ministry of Veterans Affairs – Minister Serhii Bessarab

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Minister Serhii Bessarab was approved as head of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs on March 4, 2020. In 2015–2016, Serhii Bessarab was the commander of the ATO, and called the conflict in Donbas the "Russian-Ukrainian war". In official documents, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs uses the term "armed conflict in Donbas", and less often refers to the term "Russian military aggression in Donbas" at the level of performers.

Interests in the conflict region.

The Ministry of Veterans Affairs was created in order to reduce tensions in society, as well as to reintegrate combatants into peaceful life. The main goal and function of the Ministry is to support veterans who participated in combat operations in Donbas (combatants), as well as their families, help in reintegration and adaptation into society and peaceful life. According to the Regulation on the Ministry, the main

functional areas in the work of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs include assistance to veterans in finding employment, psychological support, assistance in treatment and rehabilitation, provision of benefits, land plots and so on. As of administrative functions, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs is responsible for the preparation of documents and certificates for combatants. In its activities, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs mainly coordinates its work with the parliamentary committee on social policy and protection of the veterans' rights, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Policy and regional state administrations.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The annual report of the Ministry of Veterans Affairs for 2019 is not publicly available on the government website. However, according to the Ministry, as of December 9, 2019, 375 thousand people received official status of combatants (about 160 thousand of them were marked "volunteer"). Almost 11 thousand veterans have the status of persons with disabilities due to the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas. The Ministry also keeps a register of identified military graves. As of December 1, 2019, information about 4,640 deceased participants in the ATO and OJF was entered into it. The Ministry of Veterans Affairs conducts educational and ideological work concerning the conflict in Donbas, holds commemorative events, commemorates war veterans in Donbas, and directs the patriotic education of youth. In addition, the new Minister Serhii Bessarab, after his appointment, stated that the Ministry should pay special attention to those veterans who were in captivity or who will be released from captivity in the foreseeable future.

1.3.7. Ministry of Social Policy – Minister Mariia Lazebna

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Minister of Social Policy Mariia Lazebna was approved as Minister of the Ministry of Social Policy on March 4, 2020 as a member of the Cabinet of Ministers of Denys Shmyhal. Minister Mariia Lazebna has not yet formulated her position on the conflict in Donbas in comments to the media. The working documents, orders and decrees of the Ministry of Social Policy contain the term "armed conflict in Donbas". Even in the time of Petro Poroshenko, the Ministry of Social Policy did not express political position regarding the war in Donbas.

Interests in the conflict region.

The Pension Fund, the State Labour Service, and the State Social Service are subordinate to the Ministry of Social Policy. The main task of the Ministry is to provide the population of Ukraine with social services, social guarantees and protection of the population, pensions, and support of social standards and social policies of the state, formed by government and approved by Parliament. However, there is a consensus in the new authorities of Zelenskyi that, Kyiv is not able to conduct social policy in those territories that it does not control (until Russia de-occupates Crimea and the SADLR).

Activity regarding the conflict.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyi has repeatedly stated that the government would

create all conditions so that the residents of the uncontrolled territories gained access to education, medicine and social services. However, in political terms, this is impossible to implement, since there are no financial resources for the payment of pensions in Ukraine. Therefore, in January 2020, the Parliament failed to adopt the bill "On the Right to Pensions for Residents of the Occupied Territories" (# 2083-Д). As of 2014, 1 million 264 thousand pensioners were registered in Donbas. In 2020, about 612 thousand elderly citizens received the status of IDP. About 200 thousand from among them live in the occupied territories. At the same time, the debt on pensions for residents of the SADLR for the entire time since the outbreak of the war is about UAH 55 billion.

1.3.8. Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine – Ombudsman Liudmyla Denisova

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Ombudsman Liudmyla Denisova is a representative of the "People's Front" party of Arsenii Yatseniuk, and has quite strong anti-Russian views. Denisova calls the armed conflict in Donbas "Russian armed aggression", where Russia should be responsible for stirring up war. It is worth noting that after Volodymyr Zelenskyi came to power, Denisova's statements became more balanced and less acute in relation to Russia and its actions in Crimea and in the SADLR.

Interests in the conflict region.

The main task of the Ombudsman is to protect human rights, prevent violence against people, ensure respect for their rights and respect for international humanitarian law. One of the main functional tasks of the Ombudsman is to record violations of human rights, cooperate with competent law enforcement agencies, verify crimes, and control over the transfer of materials to the court. According to Denisova at the conference "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts", Ukraine lost over 13 thousand people, more than 3 thousand civilians, and 146 children during the six years of the war in Donbas. In addition, 5 thousand Ukrainian citizens are reported missing, and the number of the wounded exceeds 7 thousand. As a result of the war in Donbas, almost 1.5 million citizens of Ukraine were forced to leave their homes and become internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Activity regarding the conflict.

Liudmyla Denisova takes an active part in information campaigns aimed at protecting the rights of Ukrainian prisoners of war in the SADLR and political prisoners in Crimea. Denisova repeatedly made efforts to visit Ukrainian prisoners in Russia in order to check the conditions of their detention. In addition, in 2019, the Office of Ombudsman checked the conditions of Russian citizens who fought as mercenaries in Donbas. Currently, the Ombudsman is making efforts to create more convenient infrastructure at the checkpoints, and expand the number of checkpoints. The Office of Ombudsman of Ukraine confirmed 27 deaths at the checkpoints with the SADLR in 2019.

1.4 Ukrainian oligarchs

1.4.1. Ihor Kolomoiskyi – Ukrainian politician, businessman, co-founder of “Privat” Group

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

As relations with the West deteriorated and criminal proceedings were launched in the United States and Switzerland in 2019, Ihor Kolomoiskyi's position regarding the conflict in Donbas began to transform significantly. The oligarch began an informational drift towards Russia; he began calling the conflict in Donbas an internal “civil war”. According to the oligarch, this conflict can only be resolved if the Ukrainian authorities begin a direct dialogue and come to an agreement with those who are in the so called “DPR” and “LPR”. According to the oligarch, a conflict can be resolved only if the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements is implemented in a sequence as the measures are written.

Interests in the conflict region.

Political aggravation of the oligarch with President Zelenskyi around the return of his assets, debts and compensation for the nationalized “Privatbank” are pushing Kolomoiskyi to more pro-Russian rhetoric. Kolomoiskyi calls on the authorities to lift the blockade from the SADLR, stop the military escalation in Donbas, and implement the political components of the Minsk agreements. Kolomoiskyi's main interest also lies in the struggle for economic assets in the SADLR, previously owned by Ukrainian oligarchs. In addition, Kolomoiskyi hopes that he will be able to receive Western assistance as part of the economic reconstruction of Donbas to modernize his enterprises. Kolomoiskyi is also interested in gaining access to cheap Russian energy sources – oil, gas, electricity and opening up markets for the sales of his products.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Ihor Kolomoiskyi uses informal channels to try normalizing relations with the Russian leadership; he offers his services in resolving political and economic issues in Donbas. In addition to a certain influence in the authority structures, the oligarch has a powerful information resource “1+1”, which can adjust its policy regarding the SADLR and Russia. A separate track in relations between Kolomoiskyi and Russia takes place around the return or compensation for Kolomoiskyi's lost assets in Crimea. As Kolomoiskyi's relations with the collective West and Zelenskyi worsen, this oligarch may turn into a pragmatic partner of Russia in Ukraine, and promote the Russian agenda in Ukraine.

1.4.2. Viktor Medvedchuk – Ukrainian politician, businessman, chairman of the political council of the party Opposition platform “For Life”

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Viktor Medvedchuk considers the conflict in Donbas a “civil war that arose after

the coup in Kyiv in 2014". The positions of Viktor Medvedchuk regarding the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements provide for a broad amnesty for all parties to the conflict; start of the political and constitutional dialogue of Kyiv with representatives of the SADLR. Medvedchuk supports the idea of granting a special political status to the SADLR (autonomy for Donbas), which should be enshrined in the Constitution on an ongoing basis, as well as holding local elections in Donbas under Ukrainian law and the OSCE monitoring. The beginning of the establishment of control over the uncontrolled section of the Russian-Ukrainian border should begin only after elections in the SADLR.

Interests in the conflict region.

During the presidency of Petro Poroshenko in 2014 – 2019, Viktor Medvedchuk was the main negotiation channel with the Kremlin, through which all communication concerning Donbas passed. Now Medvedchuk is one of the most active Ukrainian oligarchs, articulating the modalities of the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements in order that the Russian side insists on. Viktor Medvedchuk is rightly called the conductor of Russian political interests in Ukraine, as well as the lobbyist for the country's neutral status without membership in NATO and the European Union. The strategic goal of this politician is to use the special status of the SADLR to block the Euro-Atlantic aspiration of Kyiv and in the long term – return Ukraine to the sphere of influence of Russia. He wants to show Ukrainian society and the political class that only Medvedchuk is a negotiable politician for Russia, who can bring peace to Donbas. The second goal of Medvedchuk is to stake out and consolidate around himself the pro-Russian electorate in the SADLR, which is also claimed by the political projects of the oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov and Ihor Kolomoiskyi. Medvedchuk uses exclusive family relations with President of the RF Vladimir Putin to promote his own business interests. Since 2014, Viktor Medvedchuk has been building a very profitable fuel empire "Proton Energy", which pumps the oil products of the Russian company "Rosneft" into Ukraine. Then, he sells oil products to Ukrainian consumers, including in the SADLR with the help of the operator of the gas stations "Glusco".

Activity regarding the conflict.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyi did not want to use Medvedchuk's intermediary services and began to build an alternative negotiation channel with the Kremlin. Thus, the political position of Medvedchuk and his mediating role in the conflict in Donbas was shifted to the background. For example, two exchanges of detainees and prisoners of war in 2019 took place without the participation and mediation of Medvedchuk. However, Medvedchuk controls the network of Ukrainian information channels "112-Ukraine", "ZIK" and "News One", through which the oligarch promotes and shapes the political agenda – normalization of relations with Russia, reconciliation with Donbas, and so on. Viktor Medvedchuk and the "For Life" party systematically criticize Volodymyr Zelenskyi's peace initiatives, considering them one-legged and insincere politically.

1.4.3. Petro Poroshenko – Ukrainian politician and businessman, owner of “Roshen” group of companies

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The owner of “Roshen” group of companies, oligarch and former President Petro Poroshenko believes that there is a Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas, aimed at changing the civilizational and geopolitical choice of Ukraine. The former President Poroshenko formally supports the Minsk Agreements, which are the product of his presidency in 2015. However, Poroshenko opposes elections and the reintegration of the SADLR until the establishment of control over the uncontrolled section of the border. In addition, Poroshenko opposes the provision of special status for the SADLR and any changes to the Constitution.

Interests in the conflict region.

Petro Poroshenko pursues own political interests with the help of the conflict in Donbas. Firstly, it is Poroshenko's chance to mobilize the right electorate and consolidate own core for the next election; secondly, the radical position in respect of Donbas is an instrument of political protection from prosecution and criminal proceedings. Poroshenko has a faction in Parliament, his own media (“Channel 5” and Channel “Priamyi”), network of “experts-porokhobots” on social networks, certain influence and even majority in some regional councils, which altogether gives him an opportunity to influence the political agenda and form his opposition opinion, differing from the authorities. In this context, it is worth noting that Donbas is not electorally interesting for Poroshenko. He also has neither economic production nor supply chains in this territory.

Activity regarding the conflict.

After losing the presidential election and weak results in the parliamentary campaign in 2019, Poroshenko went into political survival mode. Therefore, in 2019, Poroshenko held several mobilization protests called “Stop Surrender” against the approval of the so-called “Steinmeier Formula” by Zelenskyi. In addition, there were several initiatives in conjunction with other factions about the inadmissibility of crossing the red lines around Donbas. Politically, Poroshenko and his faction are trying to sabotage all Zelenskyi's peace proposals, while his activity has been reduced to media work and participation in international conferences and diplomatic meetings. At the current political moment, Poroshenko has no influence on political processes because of the small fraction, and on the street and radicals – because of his toxicity and corruption plume. Currently, Petro Poroshenko has concentrated his efforts on protection from criminal prosecution by anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies.

1.4.4. Rinat Akhmetov – Ukrainian businessman, owner of “DTEK” and “Metinvest” groups of companies

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The owner of “DTEK” and “Metinvest” groups of companies, oligarch Rinat Akhmetov did not particularly advertise and express his political position regarding the conflict in Donbas. However, it is known that Akhmetov is interested in the full implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the resumption of pragmatic and economic relations with Russia. Now there is a political rapprochement between Akhmetov and Zelenskyi, since the President is forced to balance between the oligarchs Kolomoiskyi, Avakov and Pinchuk. Akhmetov expects certain benefits from the new authorities, and Zelenskyi needs media and financial support from the oligarch, especially if it will be necessary to enter Donbas after the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Interests in the conflict region.

Rinat Akhmetov is the oligarch who suffered the most from the armed conflict in Donbas. According to various estimates of financiers and economists, Akhmetov lost about 30% of his assets in Donbas, which were privatized, looted or destroyed. Due to the blockade of Donbas, closure of the Russian market and the blocking of the Kerch Strait by the Russian military, Akhmetov lost profit and markets for his products. The main sea gate of Akhmetov for the sale of raw materials and metallurgical products – the Mariupol port has also actually stopped. Akhmetov's main goal is to enter the SADLR and return lost assets in Donbas, receive compensation from the Ukrainian government, and, if possible, use the help of Western funds to restart and modernize production in Donbas. No less priority for Akhmetov is protecting his assets in Donbas from the claims of other oligarchs – Kolomoiskyi and Medvedchuk. In addition, Akhmetov is interested in cheap Russian energy sources (oil, gas, coal and electricity), which can be used for own production needs, as well as for export to the EU countries.

Activity regarding the conflict.

All political projects of Akhmetov – the Radical Party and the Opposition Bloc – failed the election campaign in July 2019. Without a strong political lobby in Parliament, Akhmetov managed to nominate his manager Denys Shmyhal (former director of the Burshtyn TPS DTEK) to the post of Prime Minister. The new Prime Minister gradually began to test public opinion on water supplies to Crimea and on other sensitive issues concerning the SADLR (pensions, mines, etc.). Now Akhmetov is providing Zelenskyi's authorities with his information platform on the “Ukraine” channel, which has the largest coverage in the South-East of Ukraine. In addition, Akhmetov and Zelenskyi jointly launch messages on upholding the coal sector of the economy and reviving the industrial potential in Donbas. The President's Office is even thinking of creating a new ministry for industry, which may be headed by a representative of the Akhmetov's influence group. Due to his production capacities, humanitarian aid and the “Ukraine” media holding, as well as personal recognition in the SADLR, Akhmetov has good chances for renewing the political potential in the SADLR.

1.4.5. Viktor Pinchuk – Ukrainian businessman, owner of “East One” group of companies

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The owner of “EastOne” group of companies, oligarch Viktor Pinchuk supports implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements according to the modalities and sequence that were signed in Minsk in February 2015. Pinchuk is a supporter of Ukrainian state policy, which should take into account the balance between European integration and pragmatic relations with the RF. In general, Pinchuk openly declares support for the painful compromises between Ukraine and Russia in respect of Donbas and Crimea.

Interests in the conflict region.

Viktor Pinchuk's businesses are tightly connected with the post-Soviet sales markets, where Russia occupies the largest part. Pinchuk suffered heavy economic losses from the outbreak of war in Donbas and the sanctions confrontation between Ukraine and Russia. His business fell into decay due to the closure of Russian markets, and Pinchuk steadily have been losing his fortune in the annual Forbes ratings. Therefore, for Pinchuk, normalization of Russian-Ukrainian trade and economic relations is more important than the issue of resolving the conflict in Donbas and its further political status. Pinchuk's main interest is doing business in Russia and selling his products to the Russian market. However, normalization is simply impossible without resolving a set of bilateral problems and de-occupation of Donbas and Crimea.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Viktor Pinchuk outlined his programmatic vision for resolving the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in his column in the Wall Street Journal at the end of 2016. Pinchuk suggested the Ukrainian authorities to make a painful compromise with Russia: to fully implement the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and provide a special status for the SADLR; postpone the issue of annexed Crimea for 15–20 years; start a political dialogue with Russia and begin economic normalization. In addition, Ukraine should have removed issues of joining NATO and the EU from the political agenda in the medium term. Pinchuk uses his StarLightMedia group to conduct a fairly balanced and non-aggressive media policy regarding the conflict in Donbas and Russia's participation in it. The oligarch is very well represented in Zelenskyi's authority structures, and therefore has certain levers of influence on authorities. Another important player around Pinchuk is his father-in-law, former President Leonid Kuchma who works as a representative in the Minsk Trilateral Contact Group. Leonid Kuchma has a different position than Pinchuk. Kuchma advocates the full implementation of the security component, the impossibility of holding elections in the SADLR without establishing effective control over the uncontrolled section of the Russian-Ukrainian border.

1.4.6. Vadym Novynskyi – Ukrainian businessman of Russian origin, owner of “Smart-Holding” group of companies

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The owner of “Smart-Holding” group of companies, oligarch Vadym Novynskyi traditionally entered the zone of influence of Akhmetov and was his partner in the metallurgical business. Novynskyi reliably entrenched in the list of the top 10 richest businessmen in Ukraine. Unlike Akhmetov, Novynskyi, starting in 2014, made pro-Russian statements regarding the conflict in Donbas. Novynskyi called the conflict a “civil conflict”, “civil war”, “fratricidal war of the Christian Slavonic brothers”, and so on. Novynskyi maintains a special political and economic status for Donbas, advocates massive amnesty and direct political dialogue with the leaders of the so called “DPR” and “LPR”. The oligarch also supports the idea of holding elections in the SADLR before Kyiv gains control of the border.

Interests in the conflict region.

Vadym Novynskyi pursues economic, political and ideological interests in Donbas. Novynskyi owned the metallurgical assets concentrated in the SADLR; and he seeks to regain the control over them in the future. Secondly, the inhabitants of the SADLR are a potential electorate for Novynskyi who has ambitions and opportunities to launch his political project. Thirdly, Novynskyi promotes pro-Russian narratives in the Ukrainian political space, as he has the political and ideological support of the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Novynskyi lost the parliamentary elections in 2019 as part of the Opposition bloc and does not have particular political instruments of influence. However, Novynskyi retains influence in the Russian Orthodox Church, through which he has access to the SADLR and key church hierarchs in Ukraine and Russia. In 2020, Novynskyi does not demonstrate political and media activity in respect of Donbas. Currently, Novynskyi is focused on protecting his economic assets from other oligarchs, as well as from possible criminal investigations by the new authorities.

1.4.7. Dmytro Firtash – Ukrainian businessman, owner of “DF Group” group of companies

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

As of 2020, the owner of the group of companies “DF Group” Dmytro Firtash is not a player in the conflict in Donbas. The oligarch is busy with political survival and rescue from American justice, where he may face at least 80 years in prison for fraud and money laundering. At the beginning of the conflict in Donbas in 2014, Firtash called this confrontation a “civil conflict” that arose after the revolution in Kyiv. Firtash also said that Ukrainian politicians unleashed the war in Donbas to raise their ratings. At the same time, Firtash emphasized that Ukraine should not become a bridge between the West and Russia, rather than a bridgehead for a showdown between them.

Interests in the conflict region.

The main interest of Firtash in the conflict is to return the lost assets in the SADLR and Crimea. Production of mineral fertilizers is the oligarch's main business. Through the "Ostchem" holding (part of "Group DF"), he controls four chemical plants producing nitrogen fertilizers: Cherkasy "Azot" (Cherkasy), "RovnoAzot", Severodonetsk association "Azot" and "Concern Stirol" (Horlivka, Donetsk region), which remained in the uncontrolled territory. The nitrogen empire of Firtash has been destroyed by the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine, high gas prices, unfavourable global conditions and the closed Russian market. Therefore, Firtash's second interest is the restoration of trade with Russia, as well as access to cheap Russian energy sources (gas and oil).

Activity regarding the conflict.

Since 2017, Dmytro Firtash has not taken any political and economic actions around the settlement of the conflict in Donbas, since he is engaged in criminal investigations initiated by the American law enforcement agencies. Now the oligarch Firtash is in Vienna trying to stop his extradition to the United States by all means. Dmytro Firtash has no political and economic leverages over the conflict, except for the media giant "Inter" TV channel.

1.4.8. Serhii Taruta – Ukrainian politician and businessman

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Throughout 2014 – 2019, Serhii Taruta was one of the most active politicians offering various options for resolving the conflict in Donbas. Serhii Taruta considers the Minsk negotiation process and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements ineffective, which have exhausted themselves, and only stopped the active phase of hostilities. In 2017, Serhii Taruta presented his Plan of Conflict Resolution "Three Foundations: Legitimacy – Security – Trust" at the Munich Security Conference. During the 2019 presidential election, Taruta proposed moving the negotiation process to Vienna and building it on the basis of the OSCE. Taruta calls the conflict in Donbas "the war of Russia against Ukraine". At the same time, this conflict has elements of both civil and geopolitical confrontation along the "collective West – Russia" line. At one time, Taruta proposed various mechanisms for resolving the conflict with the involvement of international peacekeepers, launching the mechanism of international transitional administration, and so on. Taruta discards the possibility of resolving the conflict by military means.

Interests in the conflict region.

Serhii Taruta pursues exclusively political goals in the process of forming the image of the country's main peacekeeper. Taruta has no economic interests in Donbas, since the metallurgical complex "Industrial Union of Donbas" (Taruta was a shareholder) was sold to Russian "Vnesheconombank" before the conflict began. After his dismissal from the post of governor of the Donetsk region, Taruta developed his political project "Osnova", which eventually merged with Yuliia Tymoshenko. In addition, during the presidential campaign in 2019, Taruta withdrew from the elections in favour of Yuliia Tymoshenko. In turn, she brought Taruta to Parliament

within her "Batkivshchyna" party. One of Taruta's main tasks is to get the minister's portfolio and return to the government.

Activity regarding the conflict.

In 2020, Serhii Taruta does not show personal activity around the settlement of the conflict in Donbas, since all activities take place around the authorities and personally President Zelenskyi. However, in February 2020, three Ukrainian experts associated with Taruta signed the plan for Ukraine's exit from the crisis, which is known as "Twelve Steps Toward Greater Security in Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic Region". The plan was harshly criticized by Ukrainian experts and politicians because it offered many controversial issues, in particular, the search and formation of a new Ukrainian identity, taking into account the interests of Russia and European neighbours. In Parliament, Serhii Taruta works in the Committee on Economic Development and primarily deals with business issues, rather than reintegration of the SADLR.

1.5. Other non-governmental actors

1.5.1. Volunteer battalions: National Corps, VUC "Right Sector", Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion

The volunteer battalions have been disbanded.

They have lost their influence on political processes, since Ukraine has a strong structure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) and special services interested in controlling the zone of collision. This was especially acute shown in the process of disengagement of forces and assets in Donbas.

During the presidency of Petro Poroshenko, participants of volunteer battalions began to be forcibly transferred to the structure of the AFU, the National Guard or territorial defence regiments. Those who did not want to surrender weapons faced force methods and pressure by special services. In 2019, Military Prosecutor Anatolii Matios called volunteer battalion representatives "illegal unconstitutional units". Most of the volunteer groups were disbanded, high-profile criminal trials were launched against veterans and volunteer battalions (for example, "Tornado" battalion, "Aydar", "Right Sector", and so on).

In 2019 – 2020, representatives of volunteer battalions ceased their autonomous existence. For example, the "Azov" regiment operates in the structure of the National Guard under the support of the Minister of Internal Affairs Avakov; the core of the Volunteer Ukrainian Corps "Right Sector" (VUC RS) transferred to contract service in the AFU. Representatives of the Dzhokhar Dudayev Battalion, who are fighting in Ukraine against the Russians in Donbas for ideological reasons, also actively receive Ukrainian citizenship, work as instructors or enter into contracts with the AFU.

After Volodymyr Zelenskyi came to power, the direction to discredit volunteers and veterans only intensified, as the new government headed for a peaceful settlement. Veterans of hostilities in Donbas are the main opponents of Zelenskyi's authority, who can take up arms and go on a street protest. Currently, representatives of volunteer groups and veterans of hostilities are actively engaged in registering the "Participant in Hostilities" status (PH). In January 2020, Parliament simplified the

procedure for obtaining the PH status. In addition, Zelenskyi's Office is thinking on how to legalize foreign citizens as veterans, as well as how to control hundreds of thousands of the PHs who are unemployed and create tension in society. One of the possible options is the formation of private military companies that can guard important facilities in the country, or fight outside Ukraine and carry out military tasks. This idea is currently being worked out at the NSDC. In addition, the bill on military consulting activities was introduced in Parliament, providing for the creation of "private armies" to serve abroad. However, the risk is that Ukrainian oligarchs may want to create private armies for themselves, which would be used to achieve political and economic goals.

1.5.2. Entrepreneurs along the demarcation line

Position of entrepreneurs along the demarcation line is difficult to identify. Analysis of information in open data indicates that entrepreneurs are worried about the problem of the trade blockade of the SADLR, which complicates and minimizes trade, the movement of goods and services, including labour. In fact, the SADLR switched to the use of Russian goods, and to development of local goods for the Russian market. The second generalized business problem is poor logistics and insufficient checkpoints. Thirdly, the biggest business problems include the very weak purchasing capability of the local population, risks regarding the spread of coronavirus, the lack of a normal financial infrastructure (limited number of ATMs, bank branches), different exchange rates of hryvnia and the dollar, and so on. According to information in the media, the local business on the contact line also complains about a number of problems related to state regulation (high taxes, lack of support for the national producer, pressure by tax services and so on).

1.5.3. Internally displaced persons

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) lack a single elaborated program regarding issues of concern to them. One of the main problems of the IDPs – the ability to vote in local elections – is already being actively addressed. In December 2019, the Parliament passed the bill in the first reading, allowing IDPs and labour migrants vote in local elections at their place of actual residence. The unresolved problems include integration of IDPs in local communities, increase in state aid for IDPs for the purpose of starting business, creation of programs and low loans for the purchase of housing, and so on. Many IDPs also point out the problem of cooperation with local authorities. The last neither do always pay attention to IDPs nor provide them with financial support.

Politically, Volodymyr Zelenskyi has repeatedly stated that in the case of promoting a political dialogue with Russia, he would like to attract representatives of the IDPs for constitutional dialogue on amendments to the Constitution regarding decentralization of power.

1.5.4. Volunteers and veterans of hostilities

The positions of volunteers and veterans regarding the conflict in Donbas are predominantly radical and anti-Russian. It is impossible to identify a single position, because specialized civil associations of veterans and volunteers formulate politicized assessments. Most veterans and volunteers criticize Zelenskyi's peace

initiatives, support the idea of freezing the conflict in Donbas, building a wall, and so on. Many of these actors reject the idea of reintegrating the SADLR in general. Veterans of the conflict in Donbas are mostly concerned about social guarantees provided by the state, aid, pensions and benefits for family members. Now the volunteer and veteran organizations of the PHs in Donbas are working closely with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs, which organizes various events (memorable evenings, competitions, meetings and national competitions) for these categories of people.

1.5.5. Think tanks

Leading think tanks of Ukraine (for example, the Razumkov Centre, the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Ukrainian Institute for the Future, "Ukrainian Prism", the "New Europe" Centre, "Democracy House", etc.) do not support the idea of providing a special status for the SADLR, which would be enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine on an ongoing basis. Reintegration of Donbas should take place on the basis of broad decentralization, rather than federalization.

In addition, the expert community of Ukraine categorically rejects the idea of holding elections in the SADLR, until the establishment of control over the border and withdrawal of armed foreign armies from the territory of the SADLR are carried out. The expert community promotes the dominant narratives about the need to freeze the conflict in Donbas until a more favourable geopolitical situation, and until Russia comes in a state of crisis; that Kyiv needs strategic patience and reforms in the country to achieve the market economy, strong army, effective diplomacy. The vast majority of Ukrainian experts and think tanks made general statements and condemned the Munich plan to resolve the Ukrainian crisis "Twelve Steps Toward Greater Security in Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic Region", calling it pro-Russian and one that does not meet the interests of Ukraine. There are also several experts in Ukraine who support the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements in the sense promoted by the Kremlin and Russian propaganda media. However, these experts are discredited and toxic, and do not have much influence on the formation of the expert agenda in the country.

1.5.6. Human rights groups

The general position of human rights groups could not be identified due to a huge number of actors. In 2019, a coalition of human rights organizations "Protection of Human Rights in Donbas" was created in the controlled territory of Donbas. The coalition has announced work and joint efforts to protect human rights in Donbas.

Human rights organizations draw public attention to human rights issues in the uncontrolled SADLR and in Crimea, and form public opinion regarding certain processes. For example, human rights organizations opposed the exchange of valuable witness Viktor Tsemakh (suspected of attack on the civilian plane of MH-17 in Donbas), because the exchange was made with violations of Ukrainian law. Human rights organizations demonstrate their position regarding the impossibility of holding elections in the SADLR without fulfilling the security component, withdrawing foreign mercenaries and armies, and gaining control over the border.

Chapter II. Actors from the SADLR

According to the authors of this study, the actors discussed in this chapter do not have full subjectivity. Therefore, their positions should be considered only in the context of their relations with the Russian Federation.

2.1. "Head" of the so called "DPR" Denis Pushilin

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

According to the "Constitution" of the so called "DPR", the "head" of the so called "DPR" is the head of state and has executive power. At different times, this position was held by several people, including citizens of the RF. The appointment/election procedure changed depending on the need.

The official position of Pushilin in relation to the conflict consists of three components, periodically changing depending on the circumstances.

The first component: the gradual building of an independent state on the basis of the so called "DPR" and "LPR", which other regions of the south-east of Ukraine should subsequently join, forming the so-called "Novorossiia". Within the framework of this component, it is planned to build close economic and political ties with the Russian Federation (RF).

The second component: integration with the RF, the entry of the so called "DPR" into the RF as a full-fledged entity by analogy with Crimea.

The third component: reintegration into Ukraine on the basis of the special status of the region with the observance of additional requirements: economic and political relations with the RF, non-aligned status of Ukraine, revision of the European integration direction of Ukraine's development, consolidation of the Russian language as the state language, etc.

Interests in the conflict region.

Denis Pushilin stood at the origins of the conflict and played different roles at all its stages, in particular he headed protests and participated in the seizure of administrative buildings in the spring of 2014. In early April 2014, Pushilin became "deputy people's governor" of the so called "DPR". Since then, he held various positions: "chairman of the presidium of the people's council" of the so called "DPR", coordinator and co-chair of the "People's Front of "Novorossiia", "head of the people's council" of the so called "DPR", "acting head" of the so called "DPR", representative of the so called "DPR" in the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. In November 2018, he was elected to the post of "head" of the so called "DPR". In the near future, Pushilin is expected to be displaced due to a departure of Vladislav Surkov from the issues on Donbas. Pushilin obtains the position of the "head" of the so called "DPR" thanks to Surkov.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Denis Pushilin takes an active part in issues concerning the conflict, focusing on political rather than military aspects, while insisting on the need for direct negotiations with Ukraine as between the two sole parties to the conflict.

Since the beginning of the conflict, the RF has been unsuccessfully trying to subjectify the leadership of the so called "DPR", including the "head" of the so called "DPR", in order to persuade Ukraine to conduct direct negotiations with representatives of the SADLR. The decisions made during the negotiations between Ukraine and the RF are fully implemented by the "head" of the so called "DPR". He only coordinates certain details within the framework of the Minsk Trilateral Contact Group.

2.2. "People's council" of the so called "DPR"

The "people's council" of the so called "DPR" is the unicameral parliament of the unrecognized republic, and the permanent supreme and sole "legislative" body. The "people's council" consists of 100 MPs representing two factions: "Donetsk Republic" and "Free Donbas". The "head of the council" Vladimir Bidevka represents the "Donetsk Republic" faction.

The main legislative work was done by the "parliament" at the very beginning of its existence, when a normative field was created in the so called "DPR", which for the most part was constituted by the normative legal acts of Ukraine in the old wording.

2.2.1. "Donetsk republic" faction (68 representatives)

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Since its inception, the "Donetsk republic" party adheres to a clear and consistent position of separation from Ukraine. Its reluctance to change and implement individual decisions adopted in the framework of the Minsk process led to a split. This also led to the resignation of the party's creator and ideologist Andrei Purgin from the post of "chairman of the people's council" of the so called "DPR" in 2015.

The main position of the party constantly migrates from complete separation and independence to return to Ukraine if the "special status" is provided. Despite the fact that Purgin owns the concept of creating the so called "Donetsk People's Republic", he is completely marginalized and eliminated from any decision-making in the so called "DPR", together with the remnants of the asset.

Interests in the conflict region.

The "Donetsk republic" is the ruling party in the so called "DPR". The updated "Donetsk republic" is represented in the authorities of the so called "DPR" at all levels.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Since its foundation in 2005, in the form of a civic organization, the "Donetsk republic" has been conducting anti-Ukrainian activities aimed at secession of Donbas. In relation to the activities of representatives of the "Donetsk republic", the Ukrainian authorities initiated criminal cases, and the activities of the organization were prohibited. Representatives of the organization took a direct part in the seizure of administrative buildings in 2014. Later, its members participated in the hostilities, and headed senior posts in the so called "DPR" bodies at various levels.

2.2.2. "Free Donbas" faction (32 representatives)

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The "Free Donbas" calls itself a constructive opposition in the "people's council" of the so called "DPR". Its tasks include promotion and establishment of the ideas of the Russian world, including the reunification of a single civilizational space with the RF.

Interests in the conflict region.

After its creation, the "Free Donbas" bloc united civic organizations and parties of the so called "DPR", which advocated secession from Ukraine, including the "Novorossiia" party headed by Pavel Gubarev. Subsequently, the cadre composition of the party was transformed. The "Free Donbas" is represented in the so called "DPR" authority bodies at various levels.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The "Free Donbas" was created as a social movement in October 2014 in Donetsk. The faction takes part in establishing relations with the RF, in particular, assistance in obtaining Russian passports for the residents of the SADLR region. Representatives of this faction carry out regular working visits to the RF, within the framework of which a number of cooperation agreements were signed with civic organizations, as well as with the "A Just Russia" party.

2.3. "Government" and "ministries" of the so called "DPR"

2.3.1. "Government" of the so called "DPR" – "prime minister" Alexander Ananchenko

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

"Head of government" Alexander Ananchenko and "deputy prime minister" Vladimir Pashkov are people of Sergey Kurchenko (Ukrainian oligarch who fled to Russia). They both were transferred to positions in the government of the so called "DPR" from positions in Kurchenko's companies. The official position is quite pragmatic: ensuring the further functioning of the largest enterprises in the region. In the process of its implementation, a nationalization policy was pursued. In particular, some enterprises of Rinat Akhmetov were nationalized. He managed to regain control over them only in 2020.

Interests in the conflict region.

The main interests are the control and management of industrial enterprises in the territories of Donbas controlled by the so called "DPR" and "LPR". The activities are mainly carried out through "Vneshtorgservice", a company registered in the territory of the self-proclaimed South Ossetia. These enterprises were provided a "tax-free" status by the decree of the former head of the so called "DPR" Zakharchenko. Therefore, they only pay pension contributions from the salaries of staff to the so called "DPR" treasury. Moreover, some enterprises that have their own production facilities on the territory of the so called "DPR" continue to pay taxes to the state

budget of Ukraine. Despite the large transfer of ownership in the so called "DPR", the "head of government" in most cases played a less significant role than people with weapons.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The leaders of the "government" are focused on socio-economic issues and control over the further existence of schemes for the transfer (nationalization) of spheres of influence in the so called "DPR" industry, established prior to their appointment. Mostly, it concerns the nationalized enterprises owned by oligarchs Rinat Akhmetov and Viktor Nusenkis: PJSC "Donetskstal" (now called "Branch #1 of Vneshtorgservis"), PJSC "Yenakievo Metallurgical Plant" (now called "Branch # 2 of Vneshtorgservis"), as well as Yenakievo, Makeevka and Yasynovskiy by-product coke plants, Khartsyzk Pipe Plant, Dokuchaevsk Flux-Dolomite Plant, "Komsomolskoye Ore Extraction Enterprise" (now called "Branch #8 of Vneshtorgservis").

2.3.2. "Ministry of internal affairs" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Aleksey Dikiy

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Aleksey Dikiy is a former employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. In different years, he held senior positions in the Donetsk Department of the MIA. In the spring of 2014, the head of the MIA of Ukraine Arsen Avakov appointed Dikiy as the head of the Office for Combating Organized Crime (OCOC) of the Donetsk Regional Department of the MIA of Ukraine. Immediately after the appointment, Dikiy switched to the so called "DPR" side and was appointed to the post of "deputy minister of internal affairs" of the so called "DPR". Later, Dikiy was appointed the "minister".

Interests in the conflict region.

Aleksey Dikiy had a protracted conflict with the former head of the so called "DPR" Alexander Zakharchenko and the leadership of the "ministry of state security" of the so called "DPR". Through activities in the "ministry of internal affairs", Dikiy was able to build a personal business related to crime, which, according to some data, brought him a huge fortune. The legalization of cars stolen in Ukraine has become one of such successful businesses, since the "ministry of internal affairs" exercises control over the registration of vehicles and the issuance of license plates. The influence and role of the "MIA" was also partly strengthened in connection with the trade blockade by Ukraine and the establishment of control over smuggling.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Dikiy was one of the organizers and curators of the seizure of administrative buildings in 2014. In the process of redistributing zones of influence in the so called "DPR", he was repeatedly removed from his post, and was also imprisoned on various charges, such as embezzlement of funds, "protection racketeering" of drug trafficking, fraud with Russian humanitarian aid, and even in relations with Ukrainian intelligence services. Then, he was appointed "minister of internal affairs" of the so called "DPR" under the new head of the so called "DPR" Pushulin. Dikiy is called the organizer

of the parade of captured Ukrainian military in Donetsk. Dikiy was convicted by a Ukrainian court in absentia and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

2.3.3. "Ministry of state security" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Vladimir Pavlenko

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Pavlenko Vladimir Nikolaevich is a pseudonym. According to official information, the "minister of the MSS" of the so called "DPR" is the former head of the department of labour and social protection of the Slaviansk City council. During the capture of this city, he briefly performed the duties of the "people's mayor". The "MSS" of the so called "DPR" is a completely closed and independent body. Even the head of the so called "DPR" does not have the ability to influence certain decisions of the "MSS" of the so called "DPR".

Interests in the conflict region.

The "MSS" of the so called "DPR" actually leads the entire power block with the exception of the military vertical. It is engaged in inspections of all former employees of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies for cooperation with Ukraine. There were cases of arrests and detentions of former employees of the Ukrainian Security Service by the "MSS", despite the fact that they had immunity of international organizations, needed for presence of such organizations on the territory of the so called "DPR".

Activity regarding the conflict.

There is every reason to consider the "MSS" of the so called "DPR" a branch of the Federal Security Service of the RF. It deals with issues of identifying and detaining citizens who cooperate with the Ukrainian authorities, the so-called "spies and saboteurs". It makes decisions on including persons in exchange lists upon coordination with the RF. It exercises control over the activities of criminals, raiding, kidnapping, seizing the property of citizens (vehicles, real estate).

2.3.4. "Ministry of defence" of the so called "DPR" / "people's militia" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Vladimir Kononov / "head of the people's militia department" Denis Sinenkov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Prior to the dissolution, the "ministry of defence", as well as Kononov himself, represented the major centre of influence, due to the fact that he was built into the vertical of the Russian military forces, which are the basic and decisive force in the occupied part of Donbas. It played the first roles, including in controlling budgetary flows from the RF for the development of local army structures. After the dissolution of the "ministry of defence" and the removal of Kononov, which is directly related to the death of Zakharchenko, all powers, personnel, weapons and material support came under the control of the former commander of the so called "DPR" operational command Denis Sinenkov who now heads the "people's militia".

Interests in the conflict region.

These structures manage all the supplies for military purposes from the RF, and control over personnel consisting of both citizens of Ukraine and citizens of other countries. It is planned that the "people's militia" will occupy a further key position in matters of disengagement of forces, restoration of control over the border and its possible joint patrolling with representatives of Ukraine.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Formally, "ministry of defence" of the so called "DPR" managed to form a single structure by organizing all kinds of militarized units, consisting of both local residents and foreign mercenaries who came to the territory of the so called "DPR". For this purpose and with the support of the RF, these units were forcibly transferred under the control of the "ministry of defence" or were disbanded.

2.3.5. "Ministry of foreign affairs" of the so called "DPR" – "minister" Nataliya Nikonorova

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The "minister of foreign affairs" of the so called "DPR" Nataliya Nikonorova, before her appointment, was a member of the political subgroup in Minsk and held the position of "acting minister of foreign affairs" of the so called "DPR". She is considered close to the head of the so called "DPR" Pushilin and is in the zone of his influence.

Interests in the conflict region.

She has been a participant in the negotiation process within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk for a long time. At the negotiations in Minsk and on the public plane, she voices a position synchronous with the position of representatives of the RF.

Activity regarding the conflict.

She actively criticizes the Ukrainian authorities for "the lack of political will in the process of implementing the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the unwillingness to make concessions for its citizens", referring to the inhabitants of the SADLR. In this regard, Nikonorova becomes an object of attack by adherents of accession to the RF. In addition, the "MFA" of the so called "DPR" is trying to conduct active international activities in relations with the unrecognized states, and also organizes visits of delegations of citizens of foreign states, thereby creating the appearance of independence and legitimacy of the so called "DPR".

2.3.6. "Commissioner for human rights" of the so called "DPR" – "ombudsman" Daria Morozova

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

"Ombudsman" has been directly involved since the outbreak of armed conflict

in Donbas. At first, Morozova headed the "committee on matters of refugees and prisoners of war" of the so called "DPR", and subsequently was elected to the position of "commissioner for human rights". She has long been a key player in resolving humanitarian issues, including those related to the exchange of prisoners. She was a member of the team of the former head of the so called "DPR" Alexander Zakharchenko.

Interests in the conflict region.

According to the Ukrainian citizens released from captivity in the so called "DPR", Morozova plays a key role in matters of exchange. The inclusion of certain persons in the exchange lists often depends on her decisions, which testifies to her close relations with the "ministry of state security" of the called "DPR".

Activity regarding the conflict.

She participates in the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk. She forms and coordinates preliminary lists for exchange with representatives of the RF and the "ministry of state security". She is the contact person for representatives of international organizations dealing with humanitarian issues in the region. Due to involvement in the schemes with the release of prisoners of war for money during the time of the former head of the so called "DPR" Zakharchenko, Morozova was forced to hide from an attempt on her.

2.4. "Head" of the so called "LPR" Leonid Pasechnik

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The main position expressed by the Pasechnik is based on the consistency of the course of integration into the RF. At the same time, Pasechnik calls relations with Ukraine possible only in case of granting the special status, meaning, not just autonomy with the return to Ukraine, but primarily its own border throughout the territory of the Luhansk region (not only within the borders of so called "LPR"), its own army, judiciary, governing bodies and the electoral system. According to Pasechnik, only recognition by Ukraine and guarantees of compliance with these requirements will make it possible to start direct negotiations and end the conflict.

Interests in the conflict region. Pasechnik is a former colonel of the Security Service of Ukraine. He retired from service in early 2014. Before that, he had spent more than 20 years in the service at the SSU. In fact, he immediately joined the beginning protests in Luhansk. Since October 2014 until the appointment of the "acting head" of the so called "LPR", he invariably held the post of the "minister of state security", which speaks of his good relations with the special services of the FSB of the RF.

Activity regarding the conflict.

From the moment he was appointed to the post of "head of the MSS", Leonid Pasechnik had a constant conflict with the former head Igor Plotnitsky. Leonid Pasechnik represented the group of "power forces", which was under the auspices of the FSB, while Igor Plotnitsky led the so-called group of "politicians", which worked with the Administration of President of the RF and the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defence. As a result of this confrontation, the members of the

warring parties (including commanders of militarized units and heads of various departments of the so called "LPR") were systematically eliminated through arrests, attempted murders of opponents. In 2017, after the attempt on the former head of the so called "LPR" Igor Plotnitsky, Leonid Pasechnik announced his resignation due to poor health and appointed himself the acting head of the so called "LPR" (he was subsequently elected to the post by the results of the "elections"). Leonid Pasechnik is called the architect of the current vertical of power. With his coming to the post, the remnants of dissenting field commanders were eliminated or hid in the territory of the RF, as former heads of the so called "LPR" Bolotov and Plotnitsky.

2.5. "People's council" of the so called "LPR" – "head of the people's council" Denis Miroshnichenko

People's Council of the so called "LPR" is the "Parliament" of the so called "LPR", the sole representative legislative body consisting of 50 MPs. There are two fractions in the "people's council of the so called "LPR": "Peace for Luhansk region" and "Luhansk economic union". The head of the "people's council" of the so called "LPR" Denis Miroshnichenko represents the fraction "Peace for Luhansk region".

The main legislative work was done by the "parliament" at the very beginning of its existence, when a normative field was created in the so called "LPR", which for the most part was constituted by the normative legal acts of Ukraine in the old wording.

2.5.1. "Peace for Luhansk region" ("Mir Luhanshchine") faction (37 representatives)

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The first civic movement created in the so called "LPR" in 2014. It is considered the largest movement in the so called "LPR" with more than 100 thousand members, mainly due to the forced inclusion of public sector employees in its composition. The organization acts and positions itself as the movement for reconciliation with Ukraine, advocating the peaceful building of an independent democratic so called "LPR" being a rule-of-law state in which citizens are protected from discrimination on ethnic, linguistic, religious, social and other grounds, have free access to quality education and health care, can exercise all their rights and opportunities. Territorial bodies of the movement are available in each municipality (city and rayon) of the so called "LPR".

Interests in the conflict region.

The "Peace for Luhansk region" is the ruling faction in the "people's council" of the so called "LPR", its chairman is invariably the "head" of the so called "LPR". Before the resignation, Igor Plotnitsky was the chairman, now it is the current "head" of the so called "LPR" Leonid Pasechnik.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Forced inclusion of such a large number of people in members of the organization is no coincidence. It was the creation of a "monoparty" based on the communist principle with its inherent ideology and attributes. As a result, "Peace for Luhansk

region" implements a large number of projects aimed at restoring historical ties with the USSR. In addition, such an expanded structure made it possible to become the main distributor of humanitarian aid received from the RF. Abuses with the distribution of humanitarian aid were among the main accusations against the former head of the so called "LPR" Plotnitsky.

2.5.2. "Luhansk economic union" faction (13 representatives)

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The "Luhansk economic union" was created in October 2014 as a conditional second political force in the so called "LPR". The organization was created from those who, for various reasons, did not find a place in the party "Peace for Luhansk region". The main emphasis was placed on members of labour union organizations. Although the "Luhansk economic union" is a nominal "competitor" to the "Peace for Luhansk region", the movement does not hide its fictitious role of the second force. Thus, at the last "congress", it was announced that the "Luhansk economic union" supported the building of the so called "LPR" under the leadership of Leonid Pasechnik. Therefore, there is no need to talk about any political struggle within the so called "LPR".

Interests in the conflict region.

The "Luhansk economic union" went to elections mainly with the economic program, namely with the theses on "creation of a strong economic model in an independent so called "LPR" and "reviving its industrial and agricultural potential after the end of the "civil war", in which there are neither losers nor winners, because it is a fratricidal war".

Activity regarding the conflict.

The "Luhansk economic union" does not conduct active political activity. Since it includes local entrepreneurs, the party is trying to influence economic issues in the so called "LPR". There are practically no participants of the armed confrontation in the party, the "Luhansk economic union" is not involved in the militaristic policy of the so called "LPR".

2.6. "Government" and "ministries" of the so called "LPR"

2.6.1. "Head of the government" of the so called "LPR" – "prime minister" Sergey Kozlov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Sergey Kozlov was appointed to the post of the "head of government" of the so called "LPR" in 2015 and became the fifth "prime minister" of the so called "LPR". Kozlov has been a member of the team of the former "head" of the so called "LPR" Igor Plotnitsky from the time when the latter headed the "ministry of defence" of the so called "LPR". He was appointed in result of the dismissal of the person of Leonid Pasechnik – Gennady Tsipkalov (after 9 months, he was detained upon order of Plotnitsky, and died in the cell of the "prosecutor's office" of so called "LPR" from strangulation).

Interests in the conflict region.

All the largest enterprises and mines of the so called "LPR" were transferred to the management of "Vneshtorgservice", a subsidiary of the eponymous company registered in South Ossetia but having roots in Moscow. Sergey Gorokhov (a former MP from the "Party of Regions") headed the Luhansk structure of "Vneshtorgservice". Despite the fact that all large enterprises are withdrawn from Kozlov's zone of influence, he deals with the socio-economic issues remaining in the region. He managed to organize work to ensure the priority problems of residents in a short time.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Sergei Kozlov was a military officer. He was retired before the events in Donbas in 2014, but with the outbreak of hostilities, he joined one of the militarized units of "defence ministry" of the so called "LPR", where he held senior positions. Despite the removal from office of Igor Plotnitsky, Kozlov was reassigned to the post of "prime minister" of the so called "LPR".

2.6.2. "Ministry of internal affairs" of the so called "LPR" – "minister" Igor Kornet

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Igor Kornet is a former employee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. After the outbreak of the conflict, he switched to the so called "LPR" side. He is considered one of the most influential people in the so called "LPR". The former "head" of the so called "LPR" Igor Plotnitsky was removed and hid in the RF after a conflict with him.

Interests in the conflict region. Igor Kornet created his own mini-army on the basis of the "MIA" of the so called "LPR", expanding its personnel from 200 to 3 000. Thanks to so many armed people, Kornet was able to build an illegal business on the smuggling of goods across the border of the RF. There are also illegal mines under the control of Kornet. He provides coal to Zuyivska TPP located on the territory of the so called "DPR". He delivered coal to the territory of Ukraine before the start of the trade blockade.

Activity regarding the conflict.

He has been taking part in the conflict from its beginning. He managed to acquire significant prestige in the so called "LPR" and make a fortune during this time. Kornet's influence increased so much that he got out of control of the head of the so called "LPR" Pasechnik. In this connection, conflicts began to arise between them more often and there were even rumours about Pasechnik's attempt to remove Kornet from his post. In the near future, further development of this conflict is expected.

2.6.3. "Ministry of state security" of the so called "LPR" – "minister" Anatoliy Antonov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Anatoliy Antonov is a fictitious name. According to some data, in fact, the "minister of SS" of the so called "LPR" is the citizen of the RF Rashid Sadikov.

Interests in the conflict region.

The "MSS" of the so called "LPR" actually leads the entire power block with the exception of the military vertical. It deals with inspections of all former employees of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies for cooperation with Ukraine. There were cases of arrests and detentions of former employees of the Ukrainian Security Service by the "MSS", despite the fact that they had immunity of international organizations, needed for presence of such organizations on the territory of the so called "LPR".

Activity regarding the conflict.

There is every reason to consider the "MSS" of the so called "LPR" a branch of the Federal Security Service of the RF. It deals with issues of identifying and detaining citizens who cooperate with the Ukrainian authorities, the so-called "spies and saboteurs". It makes decisions on including persons in exchange lists upon coordination with the RF. It exercises control over the activities of criminals, raiding, kidnapping, and seizing the property of citizens (vehicles, real estate).

2.6.4. "People's militia" of the so called "LPR" – Sergey Ignatov, codename "Tambov"

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

It is believed that the name "Sergey Ignatov" is fictitious, and the persons who occupy the post of head of the "people's militia" of the so called "LPR" under this cover are constantly changing. There is a version that the current commander in chief of the "people's militia" of the so called "LPR" is a Russian personnel officer, Major General of the AF of the RF Yevgeny Nikiforov. The "people's militia" is under the full control of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defence of the RF.

Interests in the conflict region.

The "people's militia" of the so called "LPR" controls all the existing combat units. It carries out planning and management of military operations along the entire line of contact between the so called "LPR" and Ukraine. These structures manage all supplies for military purposes from the RF. "Militia" carries out control over personnel (citizens of Ukraine and from foreign countries).

Activity regarding the conflict.

Units of the "people's militia" of the so called "LPR" took part in all military confrontations. Successful confrontation with the Armed forces of Ukraine was made

possible thanks to materiel and technical, as well as personnel support from the Ministry of Defence of the RF. This may explain how it was possible to build such an effective structure of the "armed forces" in such a short period of existence. In addition, thanks to certain units of the Armed Forces of the RF, it was possible to forcefully take control of the "ministries" or disband a huge number of "battalions" being in fact armed gangs that appeared on the territory of the so called "LPR" during 2014. Thanks to the placement of experienced military personnel from the RF on key leadership posts, the "people's militia" of the so called "LPR" has a well-coordinated system with the armed units of the so called "DPR".

2.6.5. "Ministry of foreign affairs" of the so called "LPR" – "minister" Vladislav Dainego

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Synchronously with representatives of the RF, Dainego takes a categorical position on the events in Donbas, accusing official Kyiv of disrupting the peace process. He calls on Ukraine to ensure that the preconditions for preparation of elections are met, before making plans for holding elections on the territory of the SADLR: to form a complete special status of Donbas in the Ukrainian legislative field; amend the Constitution and consolidate its permanent nature upon agreement with representatives of Donbas in the Trilateral Contact Group; adopt new laws and regulations to implement special status and repeal/amend those that contradict it. Only after these steps, Dainego sees it possible to proceed to a discussion of compromises on the organization and conduct of elections in the so called "LPR".

Interests in the conflict region.

He has been a participant in the negotiation process within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk for a long time. At the negotiations in Minsk and on the public plane, he voices a position that is synchronous with the one of the RF representatives.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Prior to the events in Donbas, Dainego was an entrepreneur and a regional politician. Since 2014, he has been an authorized representative of the "LPR" at the negotiations in the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk for resolving the conflict in Donbas. In September 2017, he was appointed the "acting minister of foreign affairs" of the so called "LPR". At the end of 2018, he was approved as "minister".

2.7. Relations of the so called "DPR" and "LPR" with other unrecognized states: South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistrian Moldavian Republic

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

"Transnistrian Moldavian Republic" and Abkhazia did not recognize the so called "DPR"; there are no ties established at the "official" level. South Ossetia recognized the existence of the so called "DPR" and signed a number of agreements on cooperation in various fields.

South Ossetia is the main tool used by the RF to carry out its economic activities on the territory of the so called "DPR".

Interests in the conflict region.

Russian business operates in the so called "DPR", controlling industry and trade operations with the help of companies registered in South Ossetia. The South Ossetian Bank operates in the so called "DPR" to process non-cash transactions. Citizens of South Ossetia have a wide representation in the so called "DPR" paramilitary groups.

Activity regarding the conflict.

South Ossetia, unlike Abkhazia and "Transnistrian Moldavian Republic", recognized of the so called "DPR" and maintains active "interstate" relations with the so called "DPR" and "LPR": "official" visits are carried out, "interstate" cooperation agreements are signed, etc.

2.8. Mercenaries

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Despite numerous official statements about the non-participation of the RF in the armed conflict in Donbas, Russian citizens are participating in hostilities. Some of them arrived on the territory of the SADLR of their own free will, in the form of mercenaries. In addition to citizens of the RF, citizens of other countries, including EU countries, take part in the armed conflict. Foreigners joined illegal armed groups through recruitment centres or military commissariats (they recruit retirees for narrowly specialized military specialties) and civic organizations located in many cities of the RF for assistance to Donbas. The largest mercenary recruiting centre is located in Rostov-on-Don. Many mercenaries go to this centre on their own, undergo the necessary training, receive equipment and distribution to the so called "DPR" units.

Interests in the conflict region.

Mercenaries come to the SADLR for two reasons. The first is the ideology associated with the protection of Russians in Donbas from Ukrainian fascists. Most mercenaries arrived in the territory of Donbas during the spring of 2014 – mid-2015. The Russian representation among the mercenaries was formed in most of the people who succumbed to propaganda, including former military personnel and (to a lesser extent) representatives of radical movements. At the same time, almost all representatives of European countries among mercenaries were members of all kinds of marginal groups. An interesting fact in this regard, is that in order to "protect the inhabitants of Donbas", representatives of right-wing radical groups from Serbia, the Czech Republic, Russia, Greece and other countries and left-radical groups from Italy, Spain and France and other countries became mercenaries. They often fought in one international unit. While the left-wing radicals fought against the Ukrainian fascists (as they believed), the right-wing radicals took part in solidarity with the Russian people who were close to them in spirit and faith.

The second reason is money. Sources of income were salaries and proceeds of criminal activity. In the period from 2014 to 2015, wages were not actually paid, so some mercenaries were involved in crimes (extortion, robbery, racketeering, kidnapping for ransom). The mercenaries who arrived in the SADLR for this reason included a large number of citizens of unrecognized states and former republics of the Soviet Union ("South Ossetia", "Transnistrian Moldavian Republic", Belarus, Moldova).

In mid-2015, after the formation of the bodies responsible for conducting hostilities and the beginning of strict control over the criminal offenses, the mercenaries were forced to either come under the control of the Ministry of Defence or return to their countries, which did most of them.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Free mercenaries and their huge number, became one of the keys to such a successful confrontation between unrecognized republics and the regular Ukrainian army. For the most part, people with experience of serving in the army of the RF or even combat experience, went to self-sacrifice being wound by propaganda. Many of them later, recalling this experience, said that "they felt like heroes who opposed the Nazis, like their grandfathers during the Second World War". It can be argued that in the case of a smaller number of mercenaries, the Russian Federation would have been forced to more often and clearly use its armed forces not only for control and management in the rear, but also directly at the front line.

Chapter III. Russian actors

3.1. President of the RF – Vladimir Putin

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Russian President Vladimir Putin calls the conflict in Donbas a "civil war that was unleashed by Ukrainian radicals after the coup in February 2014". Putin denies Russia's involvement in fuelling the conflict, as does deny the very presence of Russian forces in the SADLR. Putin called the main factors of the conflict in Donbas, namely, the infringement of the rights of Russian-speaking people and the Russian language in Ukraine by the Maidan authorities, and the ideological unwillingness of residents of the South-East of Ukraine and Crimea to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures and the EU. In his official statements, Putin emphasized that the conflict in Donbas is taking place with the active support of the Western NATO countries that finance, train and supply the Ukrainian army. In addition, according to Putin, private armies and volunteer battalions of Ukrainian oligarchs fuelled the war in Donbas. Putin constantly claims that Russia is not a party to the conflict, but only a mediator in the negotiation process and a guarantor of protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Donbas.

Vladimir Putin believes that it will be possible for the Ukrainian authorities to end the conflict in Donbas only after the full implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements. At the Normandy Four summit in Paris in December 2019, Putin said that "it is impossible to open, rewrite or change the sequence of implementation of items in the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements because they are interconnected". Putin's position is that Donbas should be granted a permanent special political and economic constitutional status, which should be discussed through direct political dialogue with the leadership of the SADLR. The President of Russia does not support the idea of transferring control of the border to the Ukrainian authorities before the election. According to Putin's position, the Kyiv authorities will begin to regain control of the border with the RF the day after the elections in Donbas, and will gain a full control after the completion of all political procedures provided for by the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

Interests in the conflict region.

Vladimir Putin is interested in resolving the conflict in Donbas at the expense of Ukrainian interests in order to remove Western sanctions from the Kremlin and gain access to Western loans and technology. The President of Russia wants to achieve several strategic interests with the help of the conflict in Donbas. Firstly, the integration of the SADLR will turn Ukraine into a federal state with a neutral status, which will play the role of a buffer zone between the EU, NATO and Russia. Secondly, Putin is interested in the fact that the new Ukraine within the post-Crimean borders does not claim and does not dispute the status of the occupied peninsula of Crimea in the future. Thirdly, Putin is interested in gaining political control in Ukraine in order to stop Kyiv's desire for the EU and NATO, as well as establish trade and economic relations with Kyiv. If Vladimir Putin fails to integrate the SADLR as a separate entity

in Ukraine on his own terms, then the conflict will continue. Russia will help the SADLR by military and financial means, integrate these territories and production into its economic space, distribute Russian passports, test new weapons in Donbas and train its military personnel there. Putin will use the help of a constant conflict to exhaust Ukraine financially and economically, slow down its development and try to leave Ukraine in the zone of its exclusive political influence.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The President of Russia is the main player in the conflict in Donbas who personally makes decisions, determines the strategy, directs and shapes state policy on this issue. For example, Putin coordinated and approved the issue of passportization of residents of the SADLR, simplification of trade and economic activity with the SADLR, legalization of workers from the SADLR, simplification of education in Russian universities for students from the SADLR, and so on. Vladimir Putin regularly took part in official meetings of the Normandy Four as the leader of Russia. Putin regularly speaks in the media and gives interviews in which he outlines his position on the conflict and comments on current issues. In addition, Putin and Zelenskyi hold telephone conversations in which they discuss bilateral issues of Russian-Ukrainian interaction.

3.2. "Towers of influence" in the Kremlin

3.2.1. Influence group of Dmitry Kozak

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration Dmitry Kozak is considered the main negotiating channel from the side of Russian authorities, who has direct communication with its Ukrainian counterpart Andrii Yermak and President Zelenskyi. Dmitry Kozak is a very experienced negotiator who went through almost the entire career ladder in the Kremlin. Kozak holds Putin's general line regarding the interpretation of the conflict in Donbas and, according to many experts, is a more dangerous and cunning player than Vladislav Surkov. In expert circles, Dmitry Kozak is called the negotiator who is ready to make minor compromises regarding the modification of the Minsk agreements. Moreover, Kozak understands the Ukrainian case well and has experience in resolving crises in Transnistria and the Caucasus. In the process of negotiating, Dmitry Kozak prefers backstage meetings, a minimum of media and public discussions. Kozak is called the author of the idea of creating an Advisory Council with the SADLR, which was planned for inclusion in the TCG political subgroup. In general, Kozak uses his experience gained while resolving the conflict in Transnistria – in Donbas. In terms of apparatus, Dmitry Kozak is supported by the head of the AP Anton Vaino.

Interests in the conflict region.

The successful resolution of the conflict in Donbas in the interests of the Kremlin is Kozak's main political goal. Dmitry Kozak has already shown his effectiveness in a dialogue with Yermak regarding the exchange of prisoners of war and detainees, the return of Ukrainian ships and the Paris Summit in December 2019. Putin placed

his trust in Kozak and gave him a mandate to negotiate Donbas. Therefore, Kozak won the apparatus confrontation and replaced the stubborn Surkov in the Ukrainian direction in the Presidential Administration.

Activity regarding the conflict.

According to open sources, during 2019 – 2020, Kozak held at least 5 personal meetings with Andrii Yermak and many telephone conversations. Deep communication between Yermak and Kozak gave tactical results. Now, Yermak and Kozak are working on a new exchange of prisoners and approval of lists, disengagement of forces and assets, the opening of new checkpoints, as well as the launch of the Advisory Council on Donbas, which was approved at the meeting of Yermak and Kozak in Minsk on March 11, 2020. According to various media and experts, the Advisory Council on Donbas will have to develop proposals for amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine regarding the special status of the SADLR.

3.2.2. Influence group of security forces "Shoigu-Bortnikov-Naryshkin"

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Ministry of Defence (Sergey Shoigu), the Federal Security Service (Alexander Bortnikov) and the Foreign Intelligence Service (Sergey Naryshkin) enjoy Putin's highest personal confidence, and the President of Russia listens to the views of security officials and their reports. The leaders of the power structures of the MD, FSS and FIS represent a group of political hawks in respect of Donbas. They believe that Russia should not make any concessions in Donbas for Ukraine. Secondly, the group of influence of the security forces is aimed at increasing tension not only in Donbas, but also in other hotbeds of tension.

Interests in the conflict region.

The group of Russian security forces has a number of pragmatic interests in continuing the conflict in Donbas. Conflict means new defence orders, increased military budgets, expanded mandates of action for security forces in the SADLR and other new opportunities. Firstly, the Russian army in Donbas got the opportunity to study, gain real combat experience, and try new types of weapons and equipment. Secondly, in conditions of the current armed conflicts, special and intelligence services have the opportunity to increase their budgets and expand their opportunities for political influence in the Kremlin and the domestic political struggle in Russia. Thirdly, there are a lot of different Russian security forces and special services officers in the SADLR, who control smuggling, shadow business, the counterfeit alcohol and cigarette market, prostitution, the arms market, and others. Any armed conflict for the Russian security and armed forces is a chance to show their effectiveness for Putin and the need for the regime.

Activity regarding the conflict.

In the conflict in Donbas, Russian special services perform various functions of collecting intelligence information, carry out sabotage, organize contract killings,

control local quasi-state institutions of authority, the local population and so on. The structures of the Ministry of Defence of the RF supply military equipment, ammunition and instructors to the local armed groups of the so called "DPR" and "LPR", and often take direct part in military operations and provocations against the AFU. The power structures of the MD, FSS and FIS, in particular, control the so called "DPR" and "LPR" border so that the counterfeit goods and weapons do not enter Russia.

3.2.3. Influence group of Sergey Lavrov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The so-called diplomatic group of influence in the Kremlin is represented by permanent Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF echoes Putin's position on the "internal Ukrainian conflict", the "civil war", in which Ukrainians are fighting Ukrainians, and Russia acts only as an intermediary and guarantor of protecting the rights of the Russian-speaking population of Donbas. The Russian Foreign Ministry under the leadership of Lavrov has repeatedly called the conflict in Donbas part of the geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the collective West, where Ukraine plays the role of a battering ram against Moscow. As for the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, Lavrov's position is identical to that of the Russian President. The MFA of the RF advocates for the special status of the SADLR, which should be enshrined in the Constitution on an ongoing basis. The MFA of the RF also opposes the provision of control over the border until the elections in Donbas. Now, the MFA of the RF is making statements about the need for an amnesty, a direct dialogue between Kyiv and the so-called "DPR" and "LPR" regarding amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine.

Interests in the conflict region.

The main objective of Russian diplomacy is the lifting or easing of Western sanctions that were introduced after the aggression in Donbas in 2014. The second objective of Russian diplomacy is to mitigate the possible political consequences for Russia in connection with the international tribunal in The Hague on the MH-17 Boeing downed in Donbas in 2014. Russian diplomacy is making efforts to shift the blame for the downed civilian plane to Ukraine or the SADLR, but not to the Russian armed forces. A parallel track of Russian diplomacy on the Ukrainian issue also consists in minimizing damage to Russia in connection with the annexation of Crimea and the accompanying lawsuits of Ukraine against Russia.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Sergey Lavrov and the diplomatic service of the RF actively promote the Kremlin narratives on Donbas and the Ukrainian case at international sites, among international organizations, among large business and with the help of lobbying structures. The MFA of the RF is taking an important technical part in the preparations for the meetings of the Normandy Four, as well as the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk.

3.2.4. Influence group of Vladislav Surkov

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Former assistant to Vladimir Putin Vladislav Surkov over the past 7 years was considered the main curator in the Ukrainian direction. Vladislav Surkov held the position of a "hawk" on the conflict in Donbas. In his farewell interview, Surkov expressed several harsh theses regarding Ukraine and cast doubt on its statehood. Surkov promoted the idea of the impossibility of any slightest concessions even for Zelenskyi's new authorities, until Kyiv begins implementing the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements in the sequence and modalities in which they were written and drawn up in February 2015. Despite the official dismissal of Surkov from the Ukrainian direction, he remains close to Putin and continues developing certain recommendations for the peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbas. In his interview after the dismissal from the post of Assistant to the President, Vladislav Surkov said that the Kremlin's approach to resolving the conflict in Donbas has changed dramatically. After the change of authorities in Ukraine, Surkov was unable to establish a dialogue with Zelenskyi's team in many respects due to Surkov's friendship with Medvedchuk who was not accepted well by the new Ukrainian President.

Interests in the conflict region.

Vladislav Surkov is one of the ideologists of the "Novorossiya" project, according to which the Ukrainian state should have ceased to exist after 2014 and shrunk in size to several regions. Surkov actively promoted and advocated the annexation of Crimea, and then the start of the military campaign in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Surkov is also one of the Russian co-authors of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, which was supposed to draw up a federal structure in Ukraine in the post-Crimean borders.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Now, due to the dismissal from office, Surkov's influence on political processes regarding the SADLR has come to naught. Throughout 2014–2019, Vladislav Surkov tried to build a dialogue and launch a number of political projects in Ukraine and the SADLR with the help of Viktor Medvedchuk, as well as fugitive Ukrainian authorities from the time of Yanukovich. In particular, Surkov promoted the idea of returning political emigrants Mykola Azarov, Oleksandr Klymenko, Oleksandr Zakharchenko and even Serhii Arbutov to leading positions in the SADLR. However, these ideas did not find support in other political influence groups in the Presidential Administration and personally with President Putin who considered Ukrainian fugitives unreliable people. Surkov also built a close dialogue with Viktor Yanukovich's wallet – oligarch Sergey Kurchenko who finances Surkov's activities and forums in Luhansk and partially Donetsk. It is worth noting that Surkov was still unable to gain a foothold in the so called "DPR", where the policy was directed and formed by the power tower of Kremlin, Ministry of Defence of the RF and the FSS. As for the "LPR", the political influence of Surkov was unconditional there. Surkov is also credited with the idea of mass passportization of residents of the SADLR, as well as unsuccessful attempts to organize local elections in the SADLR in 2016 and 2017. To this end, Surkov's people

even began to politically motivate foreign observers from a number of countries friendly to the Kremlin. Surkov also tried to provide all kinds of political support to Viktor Medvedchuk who during the presidency of Petro Poroshenko was made the main negotiator with the Kremlin and the main coordinator of exchanges of prisoners of war. Surkov organized personal meetings for Medvedchuk with President Putin, Chairman of the Federation Council Valentina Matvienko and Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin.

According to experts, Vladislav Surkov did not fall out of Putin's cage in the Kremlin and, as the political situation changes, Surkov may return to the political game in Donbas.

3.3. Chairperson of the Government of the RF – Mikhail Mishustin

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The new Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin supports the general line of the Russian authorities regarding the war in Donbas and the role of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements in resolving the crisis.

Interests in the conflict region.

Mishustin is a supporter of the total savings of public funds and the budget of the RF. In particular, according to many Russian experts, Mishustin is actively lobbying for a reduction in federal spending on Donbas, Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Therefore, with a high probability, with the advent of the global financial crisis, the deepening economic consequences of the coronavirus and the fall in oil prices, the Russian government will cut back on financing of the SADLR. In addition, Mishustin supports the idea of transferring quasi-states to their own provision, mobilization of domestic resources and reserves, resumption of their own industry and deepening of trade with the RF. Mishustin has repeatedly stated that Russian producers need new markets for their products, new labour resources and loans. It is possible that in the foreseeable future, the Russian government will develop a new model of economic relations with the SADLR taking into account the international financial crisis.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Direct political actions, statements or government decisions of Prime Minister Mishustin regarding the SADLR are not identified.

3.4. Federal Assembly of the RF

The Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation consists of two chambers: the lower house of the State Duma (Chairperson of the State Duma is Vyacheslav Volodin) and the upper house of the Federation Council (Chairperson of the Federation Council is Valentina Matvienko).

3.4.1. Chairperson of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Chairperson of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the RF, Vyacheslav Volodin, considers the conflict in Donbas a "civil war", which can be resolved by implementing the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and granting special status to Donbas. Volodin, like Putin, believes that the conflict in Donbas began because of the oppression of rights of Russian-speaking Ukrainians. At the end of 2019, Volodin made a statement saying that several regions with national minorities and small peoples could leave Ukraine.

Interests in the conflict region.

Due to the high political competition around the "Ukrainian case" Volodin tried not to provoke excessive political confrontation with Surkov and the power bloc (primarily with Shoigu and Bortnikov). Volodin did not climb into the conflict in Donbas, because he was afraid to spoil relations with Putin's team and, accordingly, lose the opportunity for political growth.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Since 2016, Vyacheslav Volodin heads the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the RF. Vyacheslav Volodin is a top politician in the surrounding of Vladimir Putin, who also formed the agenda around the SADLR. First of all, Volodin advised Putin and helped Surkov on issues of domestic politics and building quasi-state institutions of authority in the so called "DPR" and "LPR". In addition, Volodin took an active part in the development of the state decision regarding passportization of the SADLR. In the comments to the media, Volodin called it a forced step caused by severe economic problems in Donbas and humanitarian considerations.

The State Duma actually performs technical functions and is under the full control of the Presidential Administration. As a political institution, it does not fulfil independent functions of parliamentarism. Analysis of the political statements by representatives of the "United Russia" indicates that their statements and visions regarding the conflict in Donbas and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements fully coincide with the position of Vladimir Putin.

The Communist Party of the RF supports the idea of including Donbas in the Russian Federation, as was done with Crimea. The party leader Gennady Zyuganov believes that the SADLR should be included in Russia, or officially recognized as an independent state like Abkhazia, "because the Russians live there". The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy) generally supports the idea of accession of the whole of Ukraine to Russia, in addition to the SADLR.

3.4.2. Chairperson of the Federation Council Valentina Matvienko

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Statements by Valentina Matvienko regarding the conflict in Donbas and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements are completely identical and conform to the political positions of Vladimir Putin.

Interests in the conflict region.

Valentina Matvienko has neither political interests nor objectives around the conflict in Donbas.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Matvienko commented in the Russian media on the necessity and usefulness of passportization of the SADLR; ceasefire by Ukraine; the need for amnesty and direct constitutional dialogue with militants.

There are two institutions in the Federation Council that are directly related to the conflict in Donbas. First of all, we are talking about the Committee on Foreign Affairs, which is actively fighting for the lift of sanctions. Senator Alexander Babakov who is also the special envoy of the President of the RF, is actively working with European parliamentarians, in particular in France.

In addition, in June 2014, the Committee for Public Support for Residents of the South-East of Ukraine was created, headed by Vice-Speaker of the Upper House Yuriy Vorobyov. The Committee holds systematic meetings of the leaders of the so called "DPR" and "LPR" with the heads of Russian departments, regional leaders at the site of the Federation Council.

3.5. Investigative Committee of the RF – Head Alexander Bastrykin

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

There are no positions of the Investigative Committee (IC) regarding the interpretation of the conflict in Donbas and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements. In its official criminal proceedings, the IC uses the term "non-international armed conflict in Donbas". Although, at the same time, Russian military instructors and officers at least exercise effective control over the armed groups of the SADLR, which, according to lawyers, is the evidence of Russia's participation in the conflict in the east of Ukraine.

Interests in the conflict region.

The IC exercises powers in the field of criminal proceedings and other powers in accordance with the legislation of Russia. The purpose of the Investigative Committee is "to record and investigate war crimes against humanity and against the population in Donbas from the side of the AFU, volunteer battalions and other combatants".

Activity regarding the conflict.

Over the 5 years of hostilities in Donbas, the IC has opened more than 400 cases on war crimes in Donbass (the vast majority are against the Ukrainian military personnel). For the most part, records occur during artillery and mortar shelling of civilian objects. According to the IC, the majority of investigations, like court sentences, are conducted in absentia, due to the physical inability to bring to justice Ukrainian commanders or perpetrators of crimes. The IC often passes information

about war crimes to "Interpol". The Ukrainian side has repeatedly accused the Russian side – the IC of intentionally politicizing affairs and using "Interpol" tools to politically persecute Ukrainian participants in hostilities abroad.

3.6. Ombudsman of the RF – Tatyana Moskalkova

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Commissioner for Human Rights in the RF in her comments in the media calls the war in Donbas an "armed conflict". Tatyana Moskalkova refrains from political assessments regarding the conflict and the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

Interests in the conflict region.

In the conflict in Donbas, the Ombudsman of the RF takes the necessary measures to protect human rights on her own initiative if she has received information about massive or gross violations of the rights and freedoms of citizens, or in cases of special public importance or related to the need to protect the interests of individuals who are not able to independently use legal remedies.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Tatyana Moskalkova took an active part in two exchanges of political prisoners and detainees that took place in 2019. According to the Russian press, Moskalkova is actively mediating in the third exchange, which is being prepared at the end of March 2020.

3.7. Russian mercenaries PMC "Wagner", "Kadyrovtsy", "Cossacks"

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Russian mercenaries took an active part in the conflict in Donbas in 2014 – 2017. Starting in 2018, the so called "DPR" and "LPR" armed groups began to form a clear vertical line under the leadership and supervision of Russian officers. Motley mercenaries began to sign contracts, and various battalions and formations disbanded. Mercenaries called the conflict in the Donbass a "civil war", a "war of Russia with NATO", a "war against the Nazis" and so on.

Interests in the conflict region.

Mercenaries went to fight against Ukraine in Donbas on mercantile (PMC "Wagner"), political ("Kadyrovtsy") and, less often, ideological reasons ("Cossacks" as the embodiment and symbol of the "Russian world").

Activity regarding the conflict.

Actions of foreign mercenaries in 2020 as part of the PMC "Wagner", "Kadyrovtsy", "Cossacks" and other groups were not recorded. It is noteworthy that back in 2014, a legal framework was created in Russia that allowed prosecuting for gratuitous participation in battles in the territory of another state.

In October 2014, the Investigative Committee of the RF opened a criminal case under part 3 of Article 359 of the CC of the RF for "participation of a mercenary in an armed conflict" against the Russian citizen Roman Zheleznov who fought on the side of Ukraine. In March 2018, Roman Zheleznov who had already received Ukrainian citizenship, was sentenced in absentia to 4 years in prison. According to the fifth President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, for 5 years of the conflict in Donbas, at least 50 thousand Russian citizens participated in it as mercenaries.

Chapter IV. International actors

4.1. UN

4.1.1. General Assembly

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is the main deliberative body and the only international platform where all countries of the world can discuss any issues of security, human rights, economic cooperation, etc. The UNGA resolution on any international issue reflects the position of the international community as a whole. Throughout 2014 – 2020 the UNGA adopted six resolutions, which confirmed the territorial integrity of Ukraine, condemned violation of human rights in the occupied Crimea by Russia, the militarization of the captured peninsula, and urge Russia to respect international humanitarian law as an occupying state. At the same time, the UNGA has not developed its position regarding the conflict in Donbas.

Interests in the conflict region.

The UNGA is authorized to make recommendations regarding any international issue, taking into account the position of all 193 UN member states. Votes for resolutions of the UNGA on Crimea showed that only 65–70 countries of the world (mainly the countries of Europe, North America, Japan, Australia) supported the withdrawal of Russian troops and respect for human rights in the occupied peninsula. At the same time, more than 20 countries regularly support Russia in the UNGA (Belarus, Armenia, Syria, Venezuela, North Korea). Most of the states of the world do not show interest in the situation around Crimea.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The UNGA adopts resolutions by a two-thirds majority of the states present and voting. Each state has one vote. Unlike the UN Security Council, not a single member of the UNGA has a veto. In March 2014, the UNGA adopted resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Then, at regular sessions of 2016–2019 the UNGA adopted four resolutions on the human rights situation in Crimea, as well as the resolution on the militarization of Crimea and coastal waters. The UNGA resolutions on Crimea are advisory in nature. However, failure to comply with them is a good reason for various countries to impose sanctions against Russia.

4.1.2. Security Council

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

In accordance with Art. 24 of the Charter of the UN, the UN Security Council (UNSC) bears "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security". However, the UNSC was unable to take significant action to resolve the Ukrainian-Russian conflict due to disagreements between Russia and most of its members. The UNSC supported the Package of Measures for the Implementation

of the Minsk Agreements, signed in February 2015, making this document binding. Thus, the UNSC resolution 2202 (2015), as well as the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, defines the conflict in Donbas as the non-international armed conflict between the Ukrainian armed forces and the military units of the SADLR. In addition, the UNSC called on all states to cooperate in the investigation of the downing of the Malaysian Boeing MH17 in Donbas.

Interests in the conflict region.

The UNSC is authorized to resolve any situation that could constitute a threat to international peace and security, and to authorize the actions of the international community necessary to end hostilities. However, the conflict in Donbas, like many other conflicts, showed that the UNSC could not react to crisis situations cohesively because of the right to veto of permanent members. Currently, the UNSC consists of 15 members, 5 of which are permanent members and have veto rights (USA, UK, France, Russia, China). The remaining 10 non-permanent members proportionally represent various regional groups: Western Europe (Germany, Belgium), Eastern Europe (Estonia), Asia (Indonesia, Vietnam), Africa (South Africa, Tunisia, Niger), Latin America (Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). Thus, there are states with veto right in the UNSC that take diametrically opposed positions regarding the conflict in Donbas: the USA, Great Britain and France believe that the main obstacle to resolving the conflict is Russia's unwillingness to withdraw troops and military equipment from the SADLR while the Kremlin accuses Ukraine of reluctance to make political concessions.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The efforts of the UNSC to resolve the Ukrainian-Russian conflict have been ineffective due to the veto right of Russia as a permanent member. The UNSC is convened periodically to discuss the situation in Donbas, however, during 2014-2020, only two resolutions were adopted: resolution 2166 (2014) on international cooperation in the investigation of the crash of MH17 and resolution 2202 (2015), which approved the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements. In July 2015, the UNSC attempted to create an international criminal tribunal to prosecute those responsible for the MH17 plane crash, but Russia vetoed it. In addition, the UNSC was unable to respond to the annexation of Crimea – in March 2014. Russia vetoed resolution on invalidation of "referendum" on peninsula.

4.1.3. International Court of Justice

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The UN International Court of Justice (UNICJ) is the main judicial body in the UN system. The UNICJ is authorized to resolve legal disputes between states in those situations where the parties to a dispute have agreed to its jurisdiction. Currently, the UNICJ is considering the case "Ukraine v. Russia" regarding the application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (ICFT) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). In November 2019, the UNICJ recognized its jurisdiction to consider Ukraine's lawsuit against Russia regarding possible violations of two conventions.

Interests in the conflict region.

The UNICJ seeks to peacefully resolve the dispute between Ukraine and Russia on those international conventions where it has jurisdiction. In accordance with Art. 2 of the Statute of the ICJ, the Court consists of 15 judges elected from among persons of high moral character, who possess the qualifications required in their respective countries for appointment to the highest judicial offices, or are jurisconsults of recognized competence in international law. No two judges may be nationals of the same state. In addition, when electing judges, attention is paid to the representation of various legal systems of the world. Judges do not represent the authorities of their states and act independently and impartially. Ukraine seeks to use the UNICJ to hold Russia liable for events in Donbas and Crimea that fall within the scope of the ICFT and CERD. At the same time, Russia is trying to challenge the jurisdiction of the UNICJ on the application of these two conventions, claiming that Kyiv did not try to resolve disputes with Moscow through negotiations or arbitration.

Activity regarding the conflict.

In January 2017, Ukraine filed a lawsuit against Russia, alleging that Moscow had violated the ICFT and CERD. The UNICJ considers the situation in Donbas, which is subject to possible violations of the ICFT by Russia (the supply of weapons to the so called "DPR" and "LPR", connivance to financing these groups, and avoiding cooperation with Ukraine in investigating terrorist attacks). The Court also considers the situation in occupied Crimea, which may concern possible violations by Russia of the CERD (ban on the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, prosecution of Crimean Tatar leaders, oppression of Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian media, restriction of cultural rights of ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars). In April 2017, the UNICJ satisfied Ukraine's request for provisional measures against Russia regarding the CERD, obliging the Kremlin to resume the activities of the Mejlis and other representative bodies of the Crimean Tatar people, as well as provide Crimeans with access to Ukrainian-language education. However, the UNICJ refused to introduce provisional measures on the ICFT. Recognizing jurisdiction over the application of both conventions, the UNICJ has begun to examine the merits of the case. In a few years, the UNICJ will finally make a decision that could convict Russia of violating the CERD and the ICFT.

4.1.4. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Ukraine (UNHCR) is a leading global institution that provides protection and humanitarian aid to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons. Since 2014, the focus of UNHCR activities in Ukraine has been aimed at protecting IDPs (their number was 1.44 million people in February 2020). They left their homes due to hostilities in Donbas and persecution by the so called "DPR", "LPR" and the Russian occupation authorities in Crimea. UNHCR is committed to finding durable solutions to problems of IDPs and mobilizing resources from governments, donors and civic organizations.

Interests in the conflict region.

The main interest of UNHCR is the proper protection of IDPs and other mandated categories of persons. To this end, UNHCR seeks to increase the ability of the central and local authorities of Ukraine to provide assistance and protection to IDPs. In addition, UNHCR is interested in mobilizing the national and international resources necessary to improve the lives of IDPs in Ukraine.

Activity regarding the conflict.

UNHCR provides diverse assistance to IDPs in Ukraine. In particular, UNHCR provides material and legal assistance to IDPs, monitors problems faced by IDPs, promotes the integration of IDPs in local communities and promotes amendments to Ukrainian legislation to improve legal and social protection of vulnerable groups. At the same time, UNHCR provides assistance to Ukrainian refugees who fled abroad due to military operations (about 100 thousand people).

4.1.5. UNICEF

Official position / functions regarding the conflict. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the leading global player that advocates for the rights and needs of children. Since the onset of the conflict in Donbas, UNICEF have been trying to meet the needs of children in difficult situations. UNICEF advocates removing barriers (armed violence, natural disasters, poverty, discrimination) that prevent children from reaching their full potential.

Interests in the conflict region.

UNICEF seeks to cover the vital needs of children living in the conflict zone in Donbas: access to education, psychological and social assistance, water and sanitary needs, as well as knowledge about mine safety and maternal and child health.

Activity regarding the conflict.

UNICEF provides assistance to children in Ukraine, guided by the program for 2018 – 2022. In particular, UNICEF provides psychosocial support to children, carries out cleaning and repair of water supply systems in Donbas to meet the children's needs in water, sanitation and hygiene. In addition, UNICEF provides material assistance to schools and kindergartens, educates children and parents about mine safety and other life skills.

4.1.6. UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) was sent by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in March 2014. Mandate of the HRMMU includes monitoring of the human rights situation in Ukraine, with particular attention to Crimea, eastern and southern regions. The HRMMU is called upon to promote universal respect and observance of human rights in Ukraine.

Interests in the conflict region. Acting on behalf of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights, the HRMMU seeks to ensure that all parties to the conflict – Ukraine, Russia, the self-proclaimed republics – respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The HRMMU operates on the basis of agreement between Ukraine and OHCHR. The HRMMU monitors the situation with human rights in the occupied Crimea, Donbas and throughout Ukraine as a whole, establishes new facts and circumstances related to human rights violations, prepares quarterly reports, makes recommendations to the state authorities of Ukraine, the self-proclaimed "DPR" and "LPR" and the Russian occupation authorities to improve respect for human rights. At the same time, the HRMMU has limited access to the territory of the SADLR (in particular, the militants do not allow it to places of detention), and Russia does not let it into Crimea.

4.2. OSCE

4.2.1. OSCE Permanent Council

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The OSCE Permanent Council is the OSCE decision-making body that holds political consultations once a week and carries out the operational work of the organization between meetings of the OSCE Ministerial Council (held once a year at the level of foreign ministers). The Permanent Council consists of delegates from 57 OSCE participating States. The OSCE Permanent Council fulfils the tasks set at the highest levels – at meetings of the Councils of Ministers and summits. Decisions of the OSCE Permanent Council are taken by consensus and reflect the consolidated position of the entire OSCE region (all countries of Europe, Central Asia, the USA and Canada). As a result, the OSCE Permanent Council rarely succeeds in taking decisive action in response to crisis situations, including the Ukrainian-Russian conflict.

Interests in the conflict region.

The OSCE Permanent Council is trying to develop common solutions aimed at implementing the three dimensions of the OSCE: military-political, economic-environmental and human. However, in order to effectively fulfil these tasks, the OSCE Permanent Council has to seek consensus among all 57 countries, each of which may block a decision that does not meet its interests. For example, resolving the conflict in Donbas and resolving the situation in Crimea requires a compromise between players who have opposing interests on many issues (Ukraine, Russia, the USA, Germany, France).

Activity regarding the conflict.

Given the veto right, the OSCE Permanent Council was not able to be proactive in resolving the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. The main results of the work of the OSCE Permanent Council were the deployment of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (OSCE SMM) in March 2014 (decision #1117) and observers at two checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian border in July 2014 (decision #1130).

4.2.2. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office plays the leading role in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction in the OSCE region. Each year, one participating State chairs the OSCE under the leadership of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of that State (in 2020, the Chairperson-in-Office is the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania, Edi Rama). As a result of his visit to Donbas in January 2020, Edi Rama said that the OSCE's primary task was to establish a "full and sustainable ceasefire". Rama also voiced intentions to improve the security situation, make life easier for people in the conflict zone, and provide safe access to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (OSCE SMM) throughout Ukraine.

Interests in the conflict region.

The current OSCE Chairperson-in-Office seeks to support the peaceful efforts of the parties to the conflict and mediators. The OSCE Chairmanship gives the respective state a unique opportunity to show its peacekeeping efforts in the international arena. In the program of the Albanian chairmanship in the OSCE, the "crisis in and around Ukraine" was called the most acute challenge to European security. In accordance with the priorities of the Albanian Chairmanship of the OSCE, Edi Rama will support the efforts of the Normandy Four, the Trilateral Contact Group and the OSCE SMM, as well as contribute to the full implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The current OSCE Chairperson-in-Office contacts all parties and mediators in order to resolve the conflict. In January 2020, Edi Rama made his first overseas visit as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office to Ukraine and discussed issues of a peaceful settlement with President Volodymyr Zelenskyi and OSCE SMM Head Yaşar Halit Çevik. In the first three months of 2020, Rama also visited Moscow, Berlin, Washington and NATO headquarters in Brussels, where he sought support from key players in the implementation of the program of the Albanian chairmanship in the OSCE.

4.2.3. Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Trilateral Contact Group on peaceful settlement of the situation in the East of Ukraine (TCG) was formed in June 2014 with the participation of representatives of Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE (at the moment – Leonid Kuchma, Boris Gryzlov and Heidi Grau). The TCG consists of four working groups: political, humanitarian, economic and security. TCG is a platform for resolving operational issues between the warring parties in Donbas.

Interests in the conflict region.

The TCG is intended to achieve compromises between the parties to the conflict regarding the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation

of the Minsk Agreements. In order to continue the peace process, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and the TCG, Heidi Grau, seeks to convince the conflicting parties to mutual concessions, but Kyiv and Moscow take diametrically opposed positions on the implementation of the political points of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the resolution of security issues.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Within the framework of the TCG, regular meetings take place between representatives of Ukraine and Russia, involving representatives of self-proclaimed republics. In particular, at the meetings of the TCG, the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements was signed (February 2015), an agreement on the disengagement of forces and hardware (September 2016), the "Steinmeier Formula" was agreed, and agreements were reached on the exchange of prisoners (the last – in December 2019). Recently, the TCG discussed the following issues on the meetings: exchanges of prisoners; new sections of the disengagement of forces; the opening of new checkpoints; conditions for lifting the trade blockade with the SADLR; conclusion of a seasonal ceasefire; modalities of special status and other issues of the implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements.

4.2.4. OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (OSCE SMM) is an unarmed civilian mission deployed at the request of Ukraine and upon decision by Permanent Council #1117 dated March 2014. As of February 2020, the OSCE SMM includes 757 observers from 45 participating States (including 41 Russian citizens). The initial mandate of the OSCE SMM included establishing facts related to violations of OSCE principles and commitments, monitoring respect for human rights, and facilitating dialogue at the grassroots level. The Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, confirmed by the UN Security Council resolution, also instructed the OSCE SMM to monitor and verify the ceasefire and the removal of heavy weapons. The OSCE SMM has positioned itself as a neutral mission, which impartially reports on the daily situation in the conflict zone in Donbas.

Interests in the conflict region.

OSCE SMM aims to reduce tension in Ukraine, increase stability and security, as well as local dialogue.

Activity regarding the conflict.

OSCE SMM observers take a series of stabilization actions. Based on the monitoring results, the OSCE SMM makes daily reports on ceasefire violations, the disengagement of forces in the areas of Stanytsia Luhanska, Zolote and Petrivske, the withdrawal of heavy equipment from the demarcation line. Observers also contribute to the restoration of vital civilian infrastructure along the demarcation line (water pipes, power lines). The OSCE SMM operates both in the territories

controlled by the Ukrainian authorities and in the SADLR. However, observers have limited access to uncontrolled territory. The mission is also not always able to record shelling at night because of the threat to life for observers and the lack of necessary equipment. In addition, the OSCE SMM is absent in Crimea due to Russia's principled position.

4.2.5. OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints "Gukovo" and "Donetsk"

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The OSCE Observer Mission at the "Gukovo" and "Donetsk" checkpoints was deployed at request of Russia and upon decision of Permanent Council #1130 in July 2014. The Observer Mission was deployed during the period of the conflict, when the Ukrainian forces did not control two checkpoints "Izvarino" and "Krasnopartizansk", located opposite the Russian "Gukovo" and "Donetsk". However, in August 2014, Ukraine lost control of more than 400 km of the state border, while observers continued to monitor only two checkpoints. The mission consists of 20 civilian observers from OSCE States. The Observer Mission operates on the basis of the principles of impartiality and transparency, however, the geography of their monitoring is limited to a 40 m section at two checkpoints on the Russian side of the state border.

Interests in the conflict region.

The Observer Mission is intended to strengthen security in the areas of the "Gukovo" and "Donetsk" checkpoints on the Russian side of the interstate border.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The Observer Mission monitors the situation at the Russian checkpoints "Gukovo" and "Donetsk" and reports on movements through this section of the Russian-Ukrainian border. In addition to limited geography, observers do not have the right to inspect trucks, buses, cars and other vehicles that cross the border. Ukraine, the USA, Canada and other countries have several times raised the issue of expanding the mandate of the Observer Mission to the entire stretch of the uncontrolled border, but Russia is blocking this proposal.

4.3. EU and EU countries

4.3.1. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The High Representative is also the Vice-President of the European Commission. He represents the EU on the world stage, coordinates the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), promotes consensus among the EU states, etc. Josep Borrell (holds the post of High Representative since December 1, 2019) says that the EU should continue sanctions against Russia until "tectonic changes" occur. At the same

time, Borrell, like his predecessor Federica Mogherini, does not call the actions of Russia in Donbas "aggression", confining to the phrase "destabilization".

Interests in the conflict region.

Josep Borrell coordinates the EU CFSP, which represents the various interests of groups of countries. The EU member states that play the main role in the development of the EU CFSP. The EU leaders (Germany and France) are in favour of a quick settlement of the conflict in Donbas by implementing the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements in such a way that the "Ukrainian issue" does not impede their cooperation with Russia. Italy, Greece, Austria and Hungary see even greater opportunities for partnership with the Kremlin, and therefore advocate the lift of sanctions. Poland, the Baltic countries and Romania favour a hard-line approach to Russia. As a result, in order to develop a common EU position on the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, the High Representative has to balance between the diverging interests of groups of countries.

Activity regarding the conflict.

2014 was a turning point for relations between the EU and Ukraine. Since 2014, relations between Kyiv and Brussels have been built on the basis of the Association Agreement – the largest agreement the EU has ever concluded with a state that is not part of the integration block. The Association Agreement includes the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (FTA), which has been in force since January 1, 2016. Together with the European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Policy, the High Representative coordinates the assistance to Ukraine in carrying out reforms (the EU allocated a loan of EUR 13 billion), humanitarian aid (EUR 400 million) and economic stabilization in the controlled territories of Donbas and area near the Azov sea (EUR 60 million).

The annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbas have led to a decrease in the EU cooperation with Russia. In particular, Moscow and Brussels stopped holding summits. The EU imposed sanctions against 68 Russian legal entities and suspended the visa liberalization dialogue. However, the EU did not curtail mutually beneficial cooperation with Russia. The High Representative takes action based on 5 guidelines of the EU policy towards Russia: full implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements; strengthening relations with the countries of the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia; increasing the EU resilience to hybrid threats and energy challenges; selective interaction with Russia on international issues (Iran, the situation in the Middle East, North Korea, migration, the fight against terrorism, climate change); support for Russian civil society and interpersonal contacts.

4.3.2. Germany

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Germany has long been considered the key mediator between Ukraine and Russia in resolving the conflict in Donbas. Chancellor Angela Merkel was the co-author of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and considers them as a non-alternative framework for resolving the conflict. Germany supports

Ukraine's position regarding the sequence of implementation of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (first security, then the implementation of political provisions), but believes that both Moscow and Kyiv should make mutual concessions. Berlin is in favour of maintaining sanctions against Russia in connection with the conflict in Donbas, but does not want to introduce new ones due to passportization of the SADLR and other actions of the Russian leadership.

Interests in the conflict region.

Germany is looking for ways to change Russia's aggressive policy towards its neighbours and the EU countries. Germany, as the EU leading country, plays a very important mediator role in the conflict in Donbas. On the one hand, Germany cannot sharply oppose Moscow and criticize Russia; on the other hand, Germany is trying to find a compromise solution to the conflict in Donbas with minimal damage to the interests and political system of Ukraine.

Germany recognizes its responsibility for the security of the EU and the region as a whole. However, the German government is not monolithic and has a heterogeneous position regarding cooperation with Russia, and the parameters for maintaining sanctions pressure on the aggressor state.

In this context, it is also worth noting the interests of German business, which is pragmatically interested in trade and the restoration of productive cooperation with Russia, which existed before the annexation of Crimea and the war in Donbas.

Therefore, Berlin is interested in resolving the situation in Donbas as soon as possible in order to remove the most sensitive sanctions that impede the entry of German business into the Russian market and remove the conflict around Ukraine from the European agenda. Germany also seeks to cooperate with Russia in areas of common interest, in particular in the energy sector (construction of Nord Stream-2) and other issues of international security (conflicts in Syria and Libya, Iran's nuclear program).

Activity regarding the conflict.

Germany pursues a balanced policy in respect of Ukraine and Russia. Berlin regularly votes on the extension of the EU sanctions against Russia and convinces those countries that support their lift (Italy, Greece, Hungary) in such a decision. In parallel, Germany exerts pressure on Ukraine to make Kyiv start implementing the "Steinmeier Formula". Angela Merkel and Foreign Minister Heiko Maas are in negotiations with the leadership of Ukraine and Russia to step up the peace process. However, sanctions against Russia do not prevent Germany from participating in the construction of Nord Stream-2 bypassing the territory of Ukraine, and discuss the resolution of other conflicts at the highest level. Germany was also among the initiators of the return of the Russian delegation to PACE, which was deprived of the right to vote after the annexation of Crimea. At the same time, Germany helped preserve the transit of Russian gas through the territory of Ukraine. In addition, since 2014, Germany has been the largest donor of Ukraine among the EU countries, allocating aid in amount of EUR 1.2 billion, which included humanitarian aid, reform support and development assistance.

4.3.3. France

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Position of France regarding the Ukrainian-Russian conflict largely coincides with approach of Germany. France considers the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements to be uncontested, supports sanctions against Russia, requires the Kremlin to cease hostilities, and Kyiv – to implement the "Steinmeier Formula". In 2019, there have been changes in foreign policy of France in favour of rapprochement with Russia in the fight against international terrorism, arms control and conflict resolution. President Emmanuel Macron said that Russia is no longer an enemy of NATO and it needs to be given a "strategic chance".

Interests in the conflict region.

France does not see Russia's actions in Eastern Europe as a threat to national security. However, competing with Germany for the EU leadership, France pays attention to respect for international law and European values in Europe. France's desire to strengthen its role in world politics causes friction with the United States, with which Paris disagrees on many issues (climate change, NATO, energy security, Iran's nuclear program). As a counterbalance to the influence of the USA and China, France is interested in rapprochement with Russia. Paris primarily sees Moscow as a player that can help resolve conflicts in the Mediterranean region (Libya, Syria). France also seeks to quickly resolve the conflict in Donbas, which is hampering confidence-building between Paris and Moscow.

Activity regarding the conflict.

France has long been a secondary intermediary in the Normandy format. However, after Volodymyr Zelenskyi came to power, Paris started seeking to seize leadership from Berlin in the Normandy format. Like Germany, France regularly extends sanctions against Russia, but does not want to strengthen them. The mediation of Paris facilitated exchanges of detainees between Ukraine and Russia (September 2019) and between Kyiv and the SADLR (December 2019). Since 2014, France has provided assistance to Ukraine in the amount of more than EUR 60 million, which includes humanitarian supplies to the conflict zone and development assistance. Paris also provided a long-term loan for the construction of a factory for the production of drinking water in Mariupol. At the same time, France along with Germany initiated the return of the Russian delegation to PACE in June 2019. In addition, in September 2019, the first meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence of France and Russia took place after the annexation of Crimea, where the main problems of international security were discussed.

4.3.4. Poland, Baltic countries, Romania

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Romania are notable for the significant support of Ukraine and consider Russia as the main threat to European security. They advocate tougher sanctions against Russia, citing the fact that the Kremlin's behaviour towards Ukraine has not changed. Leaders of the EU "flanking" states

criticize France, Germany and other countries for striving to normalize relations with Russia. These countries are lobbyists for Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO, and advocate an increase in the number of the US troops on the eastern borders of the Alliance.

Interests in the conflict region.

The position of these states is mainly determined by geopolitical factors. Taking into account historical experience and geographical proximity, Poland, the Baltic states and Romania are interested in the maximum containment of Russia and deepening of military-political cooperation between themselves and the USA. These states also seek to diversify energy supply routes to reduce energy dependence on Russia. In addition, these countries believe that Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO can increase Europe's security against a possible Russian invasion.

Activity regarding the conflict.

These EU states are the most friendly to Ukraine. Since the beginning of the conflict, they have not hesitated about sanctions against the Kremlin, despite the fact that some of them have close economic ties with Russia (Russia's share in exports of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2017 was 7.3%, 14% and 15%). After the annexation of Crimea and the beginning of the conflict in Donbas, the countries of the eastern flank of NATO increased defence spendings, reaching 2% of GDP. Poland and the Baltic countries are trying to oppose Nord Stream-2 at the EU level and were among the few countries whose representatives voted against the return of the Russian delegation to PACE. These countries are also deepening cooperation with Ukraine, one of the results of which was the creation in 2014 of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian brigade (LITPOLUKRBRIG). In parallel, these countries provide military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, as well as finance infrastructure projects in the area near the Azov sea.

Poland is particularly active in striving to become the leader of Central and Eastern Europe. Poland ranks third among the EU countries in terms of assistance to Ukraine (EUR 118 million). In 2015, Warsaw tried to join the Normandy format of negotiations, but received refusal from Paris and Berlin. In 2019, after the victory of V. Zelenskyi, Warsaw repeatedly proposed Kyiv to expand the Normandy format of negotiations, however, the Ukrainian side was not interested in the Polish proposal.

Over the past 5 years, the nationalist government of Poland has been overly focused on resolving contentious issues of historical memory with Ukraine. In turn, the promotion of acute foreign policy issues in the region (Eastern Partnership; Ukraine's cooperation with NATO; assistance to Ukraine in economic integration into the EU) receded into the background.

4.3.5. Italy, Greece, Austria, Hungary

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Unlike most EU countries, these states avoid open support for Ukraine. They nominally recognize the territorial integrity of Ukraine, however, representatives of the governments of these countries have repeatedly called for the lift of sanctions against Russia and increased cooperation with the Kremlin.

Interests in the conflict region.

Like France, these states do not see Russia's policy towards Ukraine as a threat to national security. With the exception of Hungary, these countries do not have permanent interests in Ukraine, but they have many common areas of cooperation with Russia. Hungary and Greece at one time regarded Russia as a creditor, an alternative to the EU, as well as a counterweight to Germany's influence on EU policies. Italy and Greece want to cooperate with Russia to resolve the conflict in Libya, because of which there is a flow of refugees to these countries. In addition, part of the Italian and Austrian political elites have close ties with the Kremlin. All four countries (Italy, Greece, Austria and Hungary) also need Russian gas, which is planned to be delivered to Europe through the "Turkish" Stream. The lift of sanctions will untie their hands for a broad partnership with Russia.

Of these countries, only Hungary has a marked interest in Ukraine. In particular, Budapest is concerned about the Hungarian minority in Zakarpattia. Hungary is interested in Ukraine's European integration mainly for reasons of improving the welfare of its national minority.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The leaders of Italy, Greece, Austria and Hungary are distinguished by frequent contacts with Vladimir Putin. These states reluctantly vote for the extension of sanctions against Russia in order to preserve the EU unity. At the same time, deputies from these countries voted for the return of the Russian delegation to PACE.

As a neighbour of Ukraine, Hungary shows the most activity. Budapest blocked the meeting of the Ukraine-NATO Commission, demanding to amend the law of Ukraine "On Education", which narrowed the education in Hungarian. In addition, Hungary finances many infrastructure projects in Zakarpattia. Budapest also provides reverse gas supplies to Ukraine, which help to avoid direct purchases from Russia.

4.4. The USA

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The United States supports Ukraine and blame Russia for the ongoing conflict. Among all the heavyweights of the world politics, the USA demonstrates the most loyal position towards Ukraine. In particular, Washington believes that the implementation of the political part of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (holding local elections in the SADLR, granting special status to these areas, an amnesty) should be preceded by the establishment of the effective ceasefire, the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine and the restoration of law and order in the territories controlled by the so called "DPR" and "LPR". The USA also accuses Russia of regular ceasefire violations in Donbas. In addition, the USA advocates restoring the territorial integrity of Ukraine within internationally recognized borders, fixing the policy of non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea in the Crimean declaration of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in July 2018.

Interests in the conflict region.

The USA sees Russia's actions as a threat to the security of the NATO allies in

Central and Eastern Europe. The USA seeks to prevent Ukraine from returning to the pro-Russian sphere of influence. The USA wants European countries to take more responsibility for European security issues, including the resolution of the conflict in Donbas. In addition, the strengthening of Russia's role in the EU energy market through the construction of gas pipelines bypassing Ukraine is contrary to interests of the USA.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Since 2014, the USA has taken a number of steps in response to Russian aggression against Ukraine. The USA introduced several sanctions packages in connection with the annexation of Crimea, the conflict in Donbas, the attack on Ukrainian ships in the Kerch Strait, interference in the 2016 presidential election, the poisoning of Serhii and Yuliia Skripal, the construction of Nord Stream-2, which together covered 469 Russian legal entities. In parallel, the USA is the largest donor state, which allocated aid for the sum of more than USD 2 billion. This figure covers military aid to Ukraine (at the beginning of 2019 it reached USD 1.3 billion), providing for military equipment, vehicles, and the supply of lethal weapons (sniper rifles, hand grenade launchers, anti-tank and anti-ship missiles), approved by Donald Trump in December 2017. At the same time, the USA does not participate in the Normandy negotiation format, however, it is involved in peace negotiations through "shuttle diplomacy" (in 2017–2019, this role was played by the US State Department Special Representative for Ukraine Kurt Walker).

4.5. International non-governmental actors

4.5.1. International Committee of the Red Cross

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a leading international non-governmental humanitarian organization that provides assistance to victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence around the world. The ICRC is guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality. The ICRC takes the position of international humanitarian law (IHL), according to which all parties to the conflict (Ukraine, Russia, self-proclaimed republics) must equally adhere to the principles and obligations of IHL, regardless of who started the conflict.

Interests in the conflict region.

The ICRC is called upon to prevent the suffering of people who have been drawn into the armed conflict in Donbas and to promote compliance with IHL standards and the principles of humanity by all parties to the conflict.

Activity regarding the conflict.

The ICRC works both in Ukraine-controlled territory and in the SADLR. The ICRC employees deliver food, drinking water and hygiene products to civilians along the demarcation line, provide material assistance to schools, kindergartens and medical facilities, search for missing persons, visit persons detained as a result of the conflict, identify mined areas, conduct trainings for Ukrainian military personnel, police and

prison staff on the observance of IHL and human rights, and teach to provide first aid.

4.5.2. People in Need

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

People in Need (PIN) is an international non-governmental humanitarian organization founded in the Czech Republic that provides direct assistance to people affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters. Since May 2014, PIN has provided humanitarian assistance to 3.8 million people on both sides of the demarcation line. PIN in its activities is guided by the principles of humanism, freedom, equality and solidarity.

Interests in the conflict region.

PIN seeks to help people in need who are below the poverty line and have lost the means for a normal existence as a result of hostilities in Donbas.

Activity regarding the conflict.

PIN provides humanitarian assistance to both residents of Ukraine-controlled territory and uncontrolled areas of the Luhansk region. In 2014 – 2016, PIN also worked in uncontrolled areas of the Donetsk region, however, in November 2016, the so called "DPR" authorities refused to renew its accreditation. PIN provides for the supplies of drinking water, food and hygiene products for the local population, provision of water to infrastructure facilities, repair of houses damaged by hostilities, psychological assistance to people with post-traumatic syndrome, grants to small and medium-sized agricultural businesses.

4.5.3. Première Urgence Internationale

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Première Urgence Internationale (PUI) is an international non-governmental organization founded in France that provides medical services to people affected by conflicts, natural disasters and economic crises. Since 2015, PUI has been operating in the Donetsk region, providing assistance to the population on both sides of the demarcation line and to IDPs. PUI is guided by the principles of neutrality and justice.

Interests in the conflict region.

PUI seeks to provide medical care to the affected population in Donbas and to improve the quality of medical services provided by local medical institutions.

Activity regarding the conflict.

PUI employees provide various assistance to vulnerable groups and medical facilities in both parts of the Donetsk region. In particular, PUI provides first aid to those in need, provides free medicines on a voucher basis, provides hospitals with medical equipment, medical products and fresh food.

4.5.4. Médecins Sans Frontières

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international non-governmental organization that provides medical assistance to people affected by armed conflict, natural disasters and epidemics. MSF operates in the controlled part of the Donetsk region, where it provides vital medical care to about 3 thousand patients. MSF is guided by universal medical ethics and the principles of neutrality and impartiality.

Interests in the conflict region.

MSF's priority is to help people with chronic illnesses who live in the conflict zone and do not have full access to appropriate health services.

Activity regarding the conflict.

MSF works with patients and employees of healthcare facilities. MSF employees provide medical care to patients in Donbas, take care of patients with chronic diseases (diabetes, hypertension, heart problems) in specially organized mobile clinics and conduct individual psychological consultations. In addition, MSF provides stress and burnout trainings for employees of healthcare facilities.

4.5.5. Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Danish Refugee Council – Danish Demining Group (DRC/DDG) is an international non-governmental humanitarian organization that provides assistance to refugees, IDPs and population affected by armed conflict. Since November 2014, the DRC/DDG has been dealing with the needs of IDPs in Ukraine in government-controlled areas. In its activities, the organization adheres to humanitarian principles, the principles of neutrality and respect for human rights and human dignity.

Interests in the conflict region.

DRC/DDG is aimed at long-term solutions to the problems of IDPs, people affected by the conflict in Donbas, and host communities.

Activity regarding the conflict.

DRC/DDG works in Ukraine in six areas: legal assistance (provides legal advice, helps to draw up documents); housing (repairs damaged houses or builds new ones); assistance in employment issues (organizes trainings on business management, professional trainings and life skills, provides grants for small and medium-sized businesses); assistance to children (provides psychological assistance to children, supports local youth initiatives, conducts trainings for Ukrainian military personnel on child protection); strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry for the Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories and civil society; mine clearance (cleans territories from mines, prepares mine clearance specialists and conducts trainings on mine safety).

4.5.6. Norwegian Refugee Council

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is another international non-governmental humanitarian organization that deals with problems of refugees and IDPs. The NRC began work in the controlled territories of Donbas at the end of 2014 to meet the basic needs of IDPs. Like other humanitarian organizations, the NRC adheres to the principles of humanity, independence, neutrality and impartiality in its work.

Interests in the conflict region.

Like the Danish Refugee Council, the NRC seeks to find durable solutions to the problems of IDPs and the conflict-affected population and host communities in Ukraine.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Now, the NRC implements three programs in Ukraine. Within the framework of the "Information, Consulting and Legal Assistance" program, the NRC provides legal advice to IDPs, provides assistance in court cases, organizes visits by mobile teams of lawyers to assist elderly people and people with disabilities, and conducts trainings for local authorities on protection of rights of IDPs. The "Food Security and Livelihoods" program provides assistance to IDPs for the purchase of agricultural products, provides financial assistance to the most vulnerable families for the purchase of basic foodstuffs, conducts professional training and provides grants for small businesses. The third program of the NRC "Housing and household items" provides for material and financial assistance in the repair of damaged houses, heating and the delivery of hygiene kits for non-mobile family members.

4.5.7. Caritas Internationalis

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Caritas Internationalis is a confederation of Catholic charitable organizations that help victims of armed conflicts, natural disasters, famines, epidemics and other vulnerable groups. Caritas Internationalis consists of about 160 national organizations that help groups in need in almost all countries of the world. Caritas Internationalis has many years of experience in Ukraine, where, in addition to helping victims of the conflict in Donbas, it provides support to vulnerable children and families, people with disabilities, HIV-infected people, victims of emergency situations, etc. The activities of Caritas Internationalis are based on Christian moral and ethical values, aimed at helping the poor and destitute throughout the world, regardless of nationality or religion.

Interests in the conflict region.

The activities of Caritas Ukraine are aimed at helping the most vulnerable groups affected by the armed conflict in Donbas.

Activity regarding the conflict.

Caritas helps several groups of people. In particular, Caritas promotes peacebuilding and social integration of IDPs into local communities by organizing trainings on non-violent communication and mediation, conducting psychosocial consultations for individuals, organizing visits of families from eastern regions of Ukraine to western ones, etc. In controlled towns and villages along the demarcation line, Caritas conducts trainings for children, parents and social workers on psychosocial stability and behaviour in crisis situations. In addition, Caritas provides various support (legal, medical, psychological, social) in the rehabilitation and resocialization of ATO/OJF veterans. In 2018–2019 Caritas also carried out projects that included assisting IDPs in the purchase of basic foodstuffs, hygiene products and medicines.

4.5.8. Save the Children

Official position / functions regarding the conflict.

Save the Children is an international non-governmental organization protecting the rights of children around the world. Save the Children provides assistance to children in difficulty due to armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies. Since 2014, the organization has been working to ensure the basic needs of children living in the conflict zone in Donbas. The organization builds its activities on the basis of the need to respect all the rights of children and protect them from violence and other threats.

Interests in the conflict region.

Save the Children is committed to ensuring full respect for the rights of children in the conflict zone in Donbas. In particular, the organization is aimed at protecting children from violence, preventing child mortality and providing children with access to quality education.

Activity regarding the conflict. S

Save the Children is mainly engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to children and creating a safe educational environment in Donbas. The organization provides the most vulnerable children and their families with food, housing, clothing and medicine. Save the Children also carries out repairs of schools and classrooms, conducts trainings for teachers on conflict sensitivity and psychological assistance. In parallel, the organization holds educational activities for children on mine safety and life skills. Save the Children facilitated Ukraine's accession to the Safe Schools Declaration in November 2019.

