29 October–4 November, 2021

PERSONNEL RESHUFFLES IN THE UKRAINIAN GOVERNMENT

On November 3, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine supported the dismissal of five ministers, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Reintegration Oleksiy Reznikov and Defense Minister Andriy Taran. Earlier, on November 1, it became known that Oleksiy Reznikov wrote a letter of resignation, and on November 2, the website of the Ministry of Reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine published a statement on the results of a year and a half of Oleksiy Reznikov's work as a minister.
On November 4, a plenary session of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine took place, at which Oleksiy Reznikov was appointed Minister of Defense, his candidacy was proposed by President Vladimir Zelenskiy, who was attending the parliamentary session.
Iryna Vereshchuk was elected Deputy Prime Minister - Minister for the Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories. Before the vote, Iryna Vereshchuk voiced the main directions of the ministry's work in case of her appointment - the creation of the Ukrainian National Center for Peace Development, provision of education and employment to young people from the temporarily occupied territories, implementation of humanitarian and infrastructure projects. Speaking about the information policy, Iryna Vereshchuk stressed that the state must talk to people under occupation "in the language of return and reunification, in the language of support and help. She also noted that she did not consider it possible to implement

the "Steinmeier formula" in the Ukrainian legislation until the security issues in the conflict zone in Donbas are resolved.

RUSSIAN TROOP MOVEMENTS NEAR THE UKRAINIAN BORDER: A REAL THREAT OR A PRESSURE TOOL?

The Washington Post has published information about the renewed movement of Russian troops near the Ukrainian border. European and U.S. officials, who shared the information with journalists on condition of anonymity, stated that troop movements toward Ukraine had been observed for the past few weeks. This is confirmed by the observations of the Russian group of independent bloggers and investigators from the Conflict Intelligence Team (CIT), but, in their opinion, there is still not enough data to say with certainty about the purpose of these maneuvers. Satellite photos confirming the information about the concentration of Russian troops in the border regions were published by Politico.

The Ukrainian Defense Ministry denied information about the increase of the Russian military contingent near the borders and the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Alexei Danilov did not confirm it either. Russian presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov and Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also stated that such reports do not match the reality.

According to experts, the Russian media use such reports as a propaganda tool. Radio Liberty offers an analysis of the situation and the options for its development.

INVESTIGATION CONFIRMS RUSSIAN ARMS DELIVERIES TO DONBAS

The New York Times published an article about Russian arms and ammunition deliveries to Donbas, confirming Russia's systematic fomenting of the conflict.The publication is based on the study "Weapons of the War in Ukraine," conducted by Conflict Armament Research, a British company funded by the EU and the German government. The experts, who analyzed mostly small arms, found that certain types of weapons had never been used by the Ukrainian army and, therefore, could only have come to Donbas from Russian military depots. They also managed to trace a large number of actual weapons, produced in Russia and seized during the conflict, but neither the producers nor the Russian government responded to the researchers' inquiries. The publication adds that recent satellite images and videos on social networks showing the presence of Russian tanks and other armored vehicles near the Ukrainian border have raised concerns about a possible escalation in the Donbas.

UKRAINE IMPOSES NEW SANCTIONS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has imposed sanctions of the National Security and Defense Council on individuals involved in the Russian elections in the occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea, as well as representatives of security agencies controlled by Russia. The four signed decrees, No. 556, 557, 558, and 559, are published on the President's website. The sanctions, which provide for the blocking of assets in Ukraine and a three-year entry ban, were imposed on 141 individuals and 49 legal entities.

According to Yulia Kazdobina, chairwoman of the Ukrainian Security Studios Foundation, Ukraine lacks a systematic approach to the conduct of sanctions policy.

The analytical report "Ukrainian Sanctions: Effective Tool or Political Declaration?", prepared for the Ukrainian human rights organization Media Initiative for Human Rights, notes that the procedure for determining the defendants in the preparation of some decisions is not transparent, and the system of monitoring compliance with the sanctions is not well developed. A definitely positive step on the part of Ukraine is the introduction of a unified electronic database of individuals and legal entities under sanctions.

BILLS TO OVERCOME THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR: HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS CALL FOR FASTER CONSIDERATION

A coalition of Ukrainian human rights organizations working to protect the rights of victims of the armed conflict in Ukraine published an appeal to the head of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, calling on him to speed up the adoption of bills aimed at overcoming the consequences of the war. Experts developed a roadmap with an analysis of the draft laws under consideration by the parliament. Its individual parts are devoted to normative documents that need revision, as well as to those that carry significant risks and should be rejected.