

## HIGHLIGHTS

# PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



5–11 November, 2021

### EX-HEAD OF ISOLATION DETAINED – ILLEGAL PRISON IN THE "DPR"

On November 9, it became known that Denis Kulikovsky, a supporter of the so-called "DPR," was [detained](#) in Kyiv. Until February 2018, he headed the illegal prison "Izolyatsia" in Donetsk, which was temporarily not under the control of the Ukrainian government. There he organized and participated in the murders and torture of people held in Isolation. Criminal proceedings were opened against him under four articles of the Criminal Code of Ukraine: human trafficking, creation of a terrorist group or terrorist organization, creation of paramilitary or armed formations not provided for by law, and violation of laws and customs of war. During the court hearing on the selection of a constraint measure, Denis Kulikovsky [pleaded guilty](#). The court journalism portal "Graty" [tells](#) about the course of the hearings.

[According to Ukrainian experts](#), Denis Kulikovsky could face up to 15 years or life in prison if his involvement in premeditated murders is proven. They also do not rule out the option of exchanging him for people illegally detained by the so-called 'L/DPR' and Russia.

Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Denis Monastyrski [noted](#) that so far they have managed to identify 45 people involved in torture and cruel treatment in the prison "Izolyatsia".

Gunduz Mamedov, former Deputy Prosecutor General of Ukraine, [offers](#) an analysis of the situation with illegal places of detention - at the moment at least 160 such prisons are known to exist, and the total number of people illegally detained there has reached 4,000. He notes that the practice of illegal detention and torture of

people is an instrument of maintaining power over people by the so-called "L/DPR" in the territories temporarily outside of Ukrainian control.

## RUSSIAN ARMY ACTIVITY NEAR THE UKRAINIAN BORDER: INTERNATIONAL REACTION

CIA Director Bill Burns visited Russia and met with representatives of Russian security agencies. During the talks, he voiced U.S. concerns over the continued concentration of Russian troops near Ukraine. [According to CNN](#), the visit was part of U.S. President Joe Biden's program to de-escalate growing tensions between Moscow and Kyiv. However, U.S. comments began to appear only after the end of the visit. [According to John Herbst, head of the Atlantic Council's Center for Eurasian Studies](#), the fact that Bill Burns' visit to Moscow was closed signals that the administration is still figuring out how to behave toward Russia - even as it seeks to improve relations even as Russia continues its policy of provocation.

Representatives of the Pentagon also said that they continue to monitor the activity of the Russian military on the border with Ukraine.

On November 10, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba held talks in Washington, D.C., during which a new version of the Ukraine-U.S. Strategic Partnership [Charter](#) was signed. This charter defines the main directions of bilateral relations in key areas. In a joint signing briefing, Anthony Blinken [noted](#) that the U.S. does not have a clear understanding of Russia's intentions, stressing that the U.S. continues to support de-escalation in the region and resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine through diplomatic efforts.

[According to Bloomberg](#), the U.S. also warned its European partners about the existing threat of an invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

Citing the Janes analytical company, Bloomberg suggests that such actions by the Kremlin are aimed not at intimidation but at creating an active threat. According to a source close to the Kremlin, the goal of Russia's maneuvers is to demonstrate its readiness to use force.

In the EU, reports about the Russian military build-up are [called alarming](#).

Meanwhile, Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov [responded](#) to U.S. statements about a possible threat, calling them "baseless escalation of tension".

On November 11, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) in a video statement that Ukraine had full information about the situation on the border with Russia and was ready to fight back if necessary. He called the recent movement of Russian troops along the border with Ukraine psychological pressure and said that the Ukrainian side was also in contact with Western partners.

TCG MEETING: PARTIAL OPENING OF "STANITSA LUGANSKAYA", DETERIORATION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN DONBAS

On November 10, a regular consultation of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) [was held](#), and Andrey Kostin, head of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Legal Policy, became [first deputy head of the Ukrainian delegation](#). Oleksiy Reznikov, who had previously held this position, was removed from the group due to his appointment as Minister of Defense.

In a [press release](#) following the TCG meeting, Ambassador Mikko Kinnunen, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in Ukraine and in the TCG, noted a significant deterioration in the security situation in Donbas. During the last week of October, OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) observers recorded the highest number of ceasefire violations since July 2020. The number of restrictions faced by the OSCE mission in Donbas has also increased. He also stressed that the use of banned weapons systems raised concerns due to the risk of further escalation.

The humanitarian part [discussed](#) the partial lifting of restrictions by the so-called "LPR" on travel to Ukrainian government-controlled territory through the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint, the only one operating in the Luhansk region.

In addition, the Ukrainian side reported on the possibility of extending the validity of bank cards for pensioners residing in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, emphasizing the importance of eliminating additional requirements from the so-called "L/DPR" to cross the contact line.

In the course of work it was also possible to coordinate a visit of IAEA inspectors to nuclear facilities in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in order to check the conditions of nuclear material storage.

## HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS CALL FOR EASIER ACCESS TO UKRAINIAN EDUCATION FOR RESIDENTS OF THE "L/DPR"

The coalition of Ukrainian organizations dealing with the protection of the rights of victims of the armed conflict [published](#) an appeal to the Minister for Reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk with an urgent call to simplify access to Ukrainian education for residents of the temporarily uncontrolled parts of Donbas. It is noted that at the moment there is no mechanism of certification for the recognition of qualifications and results of higher education for residents of the non-government-controlled parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Human rights activists emphasize that these people should be able to continue their education or find employment in the territories under the control of the Ukrainian government, and this requires the introduction of a mechanism for confirming educational competencies.

Minister for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk [noted](#) that there are plans to audit the programs of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine concerning internally displaced persons and children living in the temporarily uncontrolled parts of Donbas and Crimea. In addition, the possibility of transferring such programs to the competence of the Ministry of Reintegration is being considered.

## DONBAS MEDIA FORUM: DISCUSSIONS ON DONBAS AND JOURNALISM

The Donbas Media Forum [was held](#) in Kyiv. Since 2015, it annually gathers journalists living in Donbas and those forced to leave, as well as representatives of the media industry working on Donbas. The forum allows for discussion of the problems of the profession in the region and for establishing communication.

Special discussions were devoted to the work of the media on the [elections in Donbas](#) - both the impossibility of holding them in a number of local communities and the illegal holding of elections to the Russian State Duma, changes in [the media landscape of the region and the independent media](#) operating there, as well as the [polarization in society](#) and the possibility of the media to counteract it.

In addition, the organizing committee of the Donbas Media Forum published an [appeal](#) to the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine Denis Monastyrsky and the Chairman of the Security Service of Ukraine Ivan Bakanov demanding to pay more attention to the problem of journalists facing persecution in the territories temporarily not under the control of the Ukrainian government. The statement calls on the law enforcement bodies of Ukraine to respond to all facts of criminal actions against journalists both in Crimea and in Donbas, to provide a clear assessment of such events, and to develop mechanisms to stop impunity for crimes committed against journalists.