



Monitoring of Xenophobia and Extremism in Ukraine May 2015

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Introduction

The intensity of the Russian - Ukrainian war in Donbas began to grow again, civilian and military casualties continued to grow.

Russia's army is massing troops and hundreds of pieces of weaponry including mobile rocket launchers, tanks and artillery at a makeshift base near the border with Ukraine, as per Reuters reporter. Many of the vehicles have number plates and identifying marks removed while many of the servicemen had taken insignia off their fatigues. As such, they match the appearance of some of the forces spotted in eastern Ukraine, which Kiev and its Western allies allege are covert Russian detachments. The scene at the base on the Kuzminsky firing range, around 50 km from the border, offers some of the clearest evidence to date of what appeared to be a concerted Russian military build-up in the area.

Earlier this month, NATO military commander General Philip Breedlove said he believed the separatists were taking advantage of a ceasefire that came into force in February to re-arm and prepare for a new offensive. However, he gave no specifics.

Russia denies that its military is involved in the conflict in Ukraine's east, where Moscow-backed separatists have been fighting forces loyal to the pro-Western government in Kiev.

Visa free regime was not obtained by Ukraine in Riga though it was quite predictable.

On May 30 Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has introduced former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili ბაქრაძე had become a Ukrainian citizen, as head of Odesa Regional Administration. This appointment provoked vivid discussion within the society and as a result quite a lot of xenophobic statements appeared in social networks.

Prognosis and polls

Aliyah numbers up 41 percent so far in 2015, 07.05.2015

Immigration to Israel under its Law of Return increased in the first quarter of 2015 by 41 percent over the corresponding period last year.

Approximately a third of the 6,499 newcomers were from Ukraine, and more than half were from the former Soviet Union, according to an interim report released recently by the Jewish Agency for Israel. Jewish immigration, or aliyah, to Israel from Ukraine consisted of 1,971 individuals in the first quarter of 2015 compared with 625 in the first three months of 2014 — a 215 percent leap. Ukraine's economy has suffered huge losses and monetary depreciation as a result of a revolution that swept its former president, Viktor Yanukovich, from power and triggered an armed conflict with Russian-backed insurgents, with devastating effects to the country's industrial heart in the east. Aliyah from Russia also increased significantly, from 1,016 to 1,515. Plummeting oil prices have triggered a financial crisis exacerbated by Western sanctions over the government's annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula last year.

<http://www.jweekly.com/article/full/74643/aliyah-numbers-up-41-percent-so-far-in-2015>

Poll: Third of Russians believe Russia would win war against NATO, 12.05.2015

According to the survey, another fear that has been actualized among the Russian population in recent years is the possibility of U.S. military intervention.

Despite the rise of xenophobia against the Western countries, half of the respondents don't want there to be war between Russia and NATO, as "no one will win in such a war."

However, one in three Russian believes that Russia would be able to defeat NATO. The majority of Russians believe that the "militarization" of Russian society is forced and defensive in nature, and 42% believe that Russia's political leadership is unlikely to use nuclear weapons.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1077002-poll-third-of-russians-believe-russia-would-win-war-against-nato.html>

Ukrainians getting more dissatisfied with performance of government – poll, 25.05.2015

In particular, 31% of Ukrainians consider the actions of Ukrainian authorities to stabilize the situation in the country as completely dissatisfactory, while 28% of respondents believe that the government, in general, is not fulfilling its duties and responsibilities, and 37% of respondents agree that the government is not working at its full potential.

Only 1% fully support the activities of the government. Also the findings indicate that in the period from November 2014 to April 2015 the government performance index dropped by half. In April, only 8% of Ukrainians expressed satisfaction with the activities of the government, against 68% being unsatisfied with it. According to experts, such results result from the unpopular laws that are related to the tariff policy in the country.

At the same time, 51% of Ukrainians do not support or are rather dissatisfied with the activities of the president, with 17% of respondents giving a positive evaluation of his activities, while from July 2014 to April 2015 the president's performance index dropped by 12 points, remaining below its average level.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1081771-ukrainians-getting-more-dissatisfied-with-performance-of-government-poll.html>

Putin's Approval Rating Remains at 86% Unfazed by Economic Crisis, Ukraine Conflict, 28.05.2015

President Vladimir Putin continues to enjoy the approval of a staggering 86% of the Russian public, a poll revealed Thursday, indicating levels of support that many Western leaders could only dream of. Putin's approval rating, announced by independent Moscow-based pollster the Levada Center, sat at the same level last month, when a similarly worded poll was conducted. By comparison, the most recent Gallup Poll data shows that U.S. President Barack Obama enjoys the approval of a mere 46% of Americans. German Chancellor Angela Merkel currently has the approval of 70% of her compatriots, Reuters reported in early May. Meanwhile, 63% of the public voiced approval of the actions of Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, a decrease of three percentage points from a similar Levada poll conducted in April.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putins-approval-rating-remains-at-86-unfazed-by-economic-crisis-ukraine-conflict/522551.html>

Statements of officials

Russia may be readying for new Ukraine offensive - NATO commander, 01.05.2015

Russia's military may be taking advantage of a recent lull in fighting in eastern Ukraine to lay the groundwork for a new military offensive, NATO's top commander told the U.S. Congress.

U.S. Air Force General Philip Breedlove, the NATO supreme allied commander, said Russian forces had been seeking to "reset and reposition" while protecting battlefield gains, despite a fragile ceasefire agreed in February. "Many of their actions are consistent with preparations for another offensive," Breedlove said. Pressed during the hearing, Breedlove acknowledged he could not predict Moscow's next move but characterized its ongoing actions as "preparing, training and equipping to have the capacity to again take an offensive."

"In the past they have not wasted their effort," Breedlove told the Senate Armed Services Committee. Breedlove said Russia was seeking to tighten its grip over separatist fighters, bolstering its command and control "because there was disunity in some of the earlier attacks." "We do see a very distinct Russian set of command and control in the eastern part of Ukraine," he said on Thursday.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/04/30/uk-usa-defense-europe-idUKKBN0NL2EF20150430>

Kremlin denies Putin consented to peacekeepers in Donbas, 01.05.2015

The President of Russia Vladimir Putin during a conversation with leaders «channel four» disagreed with the possibility of placing peacekeepers in the Donbass. About it the President's press Secretary Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

According to him, the theme of the peacekeeping force «really rose», and «the idea of a peacekeeping contingent of the Russian side never challenged». However, while Russia is opposed to this decision for two reasons. First, this question cannot be «subject to discuss <...> without the point of view of the parties to the conflict,» secondly, it is necessary first of all to implement the Minsk agreements.

«Before I made the Minsk agreements, to raise issues of particular property is absolutely impossible. This is the situation, what was discussed,» Peskov told the conversation content.

<http://xn--80ajqarobcee6b3h.xn--p1ai/finansyi-eng/the-kremlin-has-denied-putins-consent-to-the-deployment-of-peacekeepers-in-donbass/>

Russians training 50,000-strong militant army in Donbas - Ukraine's presidential spokesman, 01.05.2015

"According to information we have, on the uncontrolled territories there is a contingent of almost 50,000 armed men, which is being formed into military units and trained by Russian specialists," Taranov said.

Asked whether Ukraine has the resources to defend itself against such an army, Taranov said that the Armed Forces of Ukraine, quantitatively, and technically, were able to "meet all the challenges." "All four waves of mobilization, and the fifth is going on now, ensure the country's defense. A large percentage of those who have served in the war for a year on a voluntary basis are still ready to serve. First of all these are the troops of the 25th and the 95th airborne brigades. They are specialists who have combat experience."

He added that the Ukrainian army "will not allow the enemy Grad multiple rocket launcher units come close enough to threaten civilians," and that Ukraine's defense is based on its artillery.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/russians-training-50-000-strong-militant-army-in-donbas-ukraine-s-presidential-spokesman-424855.html>

Kremlin Says Western Leader See Progress in Ukraine Cease-Fire, 01.05.2015

Russia's President Vladimir Putin, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko noted "certain progress" in a cease-fire in eastern Ukraine during a telephone conversation, the Kremlin said.

The leaders of four countries also noted progress in the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the region, the Kremlin said in a statement on Thursday.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/kremlin-says-western-leader-see-progress-in-ukraine-cease-fire/520105.html>

Russia continues to undermine the Minsk agreement implementation plan - U.S. State Department, 01.05.2015

Russia continues to undermine the implementation plan of the Minsk agreements through ongoing support of the militants, Spokesperson for the U.S. State Department Marie Harf said. She stressed that Russia and militants cannot choose which items of the Minsk agreement they will perform and which not- they signed these agreements and they need to respect them. The press-secretary of the U.S. State Department stressed that Ukraine continued to demonstrate progress in the implementation of the Minsk agreements unlike Russia and the militants it supports. In addition, she noted that the presence of U.S. military instructors in Ukraine does not violate the agreements that were reached in Minsk. The U.S.- Ukrainian exercises are held in the western part of the country, not in the east, and these exercises have been carried out for the past 20 years.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/334863/russia_continues_to_undermine_the_minsk_agreement_implementation_plan_us_state_department

Merkel explains goal of her visit to Moscow on May 10, 02.05.2015

"One can't draw the line on history," Merkel said.

"We Germans do have a special responsibility to deal in an aware, sensitive and knowledgeable way with what we perpetrated under Nazism," she said.

While there are "deep differences of opinion" with Russia, she said "it's important" for her to visit Moscow on May 10 to join the honoring of soldiers who died in World War II.

Like many western leaders, Merkel will not be attending Russian Victory Day celebrations being held one day earlier. However, Merkel said she intends to lay a wreath at a memorial to victims of World War II, along with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

<http://www.unian.info/world/1074189-merkel-explains-goal-of-her-visit-to-moscow-on-may-10.html>

"Our position remains consistent: Crimea is part of Ukraine, that is why we continue to put pressure on Russia" - U.S. State Department, 03.05.2015

Press secretary of the U.S. Department of State Marie Harf commented on recent statements of former President Jimmy Carter after his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who called the Russian annexation of Crimea inevitable, citing the Soviet-Russian roots in the region and, in his opinion, what the people of Crimea wanted.

"I'm not going to get into the mind of President Putin about why he made decisions about what to do in terms of Crimea, annexing part of Ukraine, part of another country," Harf said.

"We have remained consistent that Crimea is a part of Ukraine, that's why we've put sanctions on, that's why we continue to put pressure on. Obviously, there are enormous challenges here," Harf stressed.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335032/our_position_remains_consistent_crimea_is_part_of_ukraine_that_is_why_we_continue_to_put_pressure_on

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office concerned about ceasefire violations in Donbas, 04.05.2015

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Serbia's Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic has condemned violations of the ceasefire along the contact line in eastern Ukraine that occurred during the last few days. Dacic is particularly concerned about the use of the proscribed heavy weapons as well as the increased fighting in the area of Donetsk and Shyrokyne, the report reads.

He once again called on the parties to the conflict to fully and unconditionally respect the ceasefire, to cease hostilities and comply with all provisions of the Minsk Agreements, including the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

"At this moment, it is essential for the political process to gain momentum, and I call all sides to invest all possible efforts towards that end," Dacic said.

He also stressed that it is very important to ensure the security of the OSCE SMM observers, who have come under shelling in the east of Ukraine several times on May 1-2.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/osce_chairperson_in_office_concerned_about_ceasefire_violations_in_donbas_331087

Russia asks to postpone EU-Ukraine free trade, 05.05.2015

Russia's EU ambassador, Vladimir Chizhov, said in Brussels that Russia has asked the EU to postpone for one more year (until January 2017) the entry into life of the EU free trade treaty with Ukraine. He said the "idea was floated" in EU-Russia-Ukraine talks, at expert level, in April.

<https://euobserver.com/tickers/128586>

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335219/russia_demands_to_postpone_the_euukraine_association_agreement_implementation_until_2017

ITALY FROZE ASSETS OF PUTIN'S FRIEND AND AZAROV'S SON, 05.05.2015

Italian financial police seized the accounts and real estate of Putin's ally Arkadiy Rotenberg and property of Oleksiy Azarov, purchased through the front company. This was announced in an interview with the "European truth" by Ukraine's Ambassador to Italy Yevhen Perelygin.

He stressed on the ambiguity of the Italian policy towards Ukraine and Russia. Despite the obvious pro-Russian mood, Italy was the only European country that seized and froze assets and other real estate of Putin's friend Rotenberg, the ambassador said. He also noted that in the autumn of 2014 the land plots and real estate of Oleksiy Azarov were arrested, although this fact has not received significant publicity. As it is known, his property is under the EU sanctions since March last year. Oleksiy Azarov is accused of embezzling public funds and bringing them abroad. However, in the Rotenberg case, Ukraine is involved in litigation as a third party.

<http://utr.tv/en/news/politics/item/27480-italy-froze-assets-of-putin-s-friend-and-azarov-s-son.html>

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/italy_arrests_assets_owned_by_former_pm_azarovs_son_ukraines_ambassador_331115

Russia: EU Does Not Want Ukraine Truce To Hold, 05.05.2015

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has accused "someone in the European Union" of trying to ensure that a cease-fire in eastern Ukraine fails and of turning a blind eye to attacks which have killed civilians in rebel-held areas. He also described what he called increased military activity by Ukrainian forces in recent weeks as an attempt to tear up the cease-fire accord.

"Judging by certain signs, someone in the European Union wants the EU to allow the Ukrainian government not to implement the Minsk agreements," he said after talks with Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz.

The EU did not immediately respond to Lavrov's remarks.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-ukraine-osce-minsk-accords-cess-fire-violations/26996059.html>

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/05/05/uk-ukraine-crisis-idUKKBN0NQ1RB20150505>

President: Ukraine persistently requires full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all the parties, 06.05.2015

The Head of State has emphasized that the new stage of the Trilateral Working Group's functioning had begun. The President has informed on his decision to delegate experienced Ukrainian politicians to the work of the subgroups. "We must begin topical practical consultations on specific directions of the Minsk agreements' implementation," the President noted. Coordination in all subgroups is carried out by the representatives of the OSCE and other international organizations, as stated by Petro Poroshenko.

"Any rotation, format transformation or retreat from the Minsk agreements is inadmissible," the President said. Petro Poroshenko has noted that the structure of the working subgroups should meet the structure of the TCG. "Neither Ukraine, nor our international partners accept the revision of the Minsk agreements. We persistently demand signatories to the Minsk agreements, first of all Russia, to make every effort for the agreements to be fully implemented," the Head of State emphasized.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32794.html>

Some 1,460 people missing in Donbas, about 400 held captive – Kuchma, 06.05.2015

Ukraine's representative in the Contact Group on Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, has said that 1,460 people have gone missing during the military conflict in Donbas and nearly 400 are held captive. "You probably know, and today this figure was announced: 1,460 missing persons. And that is against the backdrop of thousands of those killed. Three hundred ninety-nine are held captive," Kuchma told reporters in Minsk on Wednesday after a meeting of the Contact Group.

"The good news is that today we decided to tackle this problem more thoroughly," Kuchma said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264223.html>

NATO not obliged to guarantee Ukraine's security — Latvia's NATO envoy, 06.05.2015

"I must draw the line between NATO member-countries and any other country which is not a NATO member. For example, Ukraine. There's no doubt that what is happening in Ukraine is a tragedy, since soldiers and civilians are dying. People often don't understand why NATO doesn't provide military assistance to Ukraine. It's worth recalling that NATO's basic task is to protect the security of residents on the territory of the Alliance members. Ukraine is a close partner of NATO, but, no matter how cynical this may sound, guaranteeing Ukraine's security is not NATO's duty. NATO is not a global policeman, and it has no intention of acting outside the territories of its member-countries," - said Maris Riekstins, Latvia's Ambassador to the Alliance who is mentioned as one of the republic's potential presidential candidates.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/793191>

Moscow names its representatives in Ukraine settlement subgroups, 06.05.2015

Members of the Russian Armed Forces' General Staff, the Emergencies Ministry and the Ministry of Economic Development will represent Russia in the working subgroups of the Contact Group on Ukraine, Russia's representative in the Group Azamat Kulmukhametov said on Wednesday.

"Representative of the Russian General Staff Yaroslav Moskalev will be a delegate from the country in the working subgroup for security, while Deputy Emergencies Minister Vladimir Stepanov will represent Russia in the subgroup for humanitarian issues," Kulmukhametov said. "Maksim Polyakov will become a member of the working subgroup for political issues, while Deputy Economic Development Minister Sergey Nazarov - of the working subgroup for economic affairs," he said.

<http://tass.ru/en/russia/793317>

EU's top diplomat says destabilized Russia in nobody's interest, 06.05.2015

A destabilized and isolated Russia is in nobody's interests, and sanctions are only being kept in place because a truce agreement in the conflict in Ukraine is not being fully implemented, the European Union's foreign policy chief said on Wednesday.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused "someone in the European Union" on Tuesday of trying to ensure a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine does not hold.

Pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian government agreed the truce in the Belarussian capital Minsk on Feb. 12, but it has failed to end all fighting and the Lithuanian president told Reuters it was now all but dead.

Speaking to students during a visit to Beijing, the EU's top diplomat Federica Mogherini said that while she did not see Russia as an "actor" of instability or insecurity, violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty were a matter of universal concern.

<http://news.yahoo.com/eus-top-diplomat-says-destabilized-russia-nobodys-interest-095222586--business.html>

President: There will be no more monopolism in the supply of energy in Ukraine, 06.05.2015

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has noted that in the interests of energy security, the share of any energy supplier should not exceed 30%.

"Our strategy provides for the exclusion of the situation when the share of an energy supplier exceeds 30%," the President said at the NSDC meeting.

According to the Head of State, Ukraine has achieved significant progress in securing gas supply. "Winter has passed without potbelly stoves and nightlights. We have won the winter battle against Gazprom. However, it is too early to speak of the complete victory in this war. We have finally put an end to the monopoly of this political-energy structure in supplying gas to Ukraine. In the first quarter of 2015, the share of Gazprom in the import of gas to Ukraine equals 37%. The rest is related to the supplies from our European partners. By the way, they are deeply diversified: more than 10 companies are involved in the reverse gas supply," Petro Poroshenko noted.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32801.html>

Poroshenko Warns Of Worsening Conflict, 06.05.2015

Poroshenko told a security and defense council meeting in Kyiv that "the threat of large-scale military action from Russian terrorist groups not only remains but is growing."

Poroshenko said there were more than 40,000 pro-Moscow fighters in the rebel-controlled territories and a further 50,000 Russian troops across the border.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-poroshenko-warning-worsening-conflict/26998400.html>

Separatists poised for offensive in Ukraine: US, 06.05.2015

The Pentagon chief also said that sanctions imposed by European countries and a decline in oil prices were the most effective way to exert pressure on Russia over its role in the conflict.

"It does appear that clearly, Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine are preparing for another round of military action that would be inconsistent with the Minsk agreement," Carter told the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee.

A shaky truce agreed in Minsk in February has dampened the violence overall but clashes continue to erupt in pivotal flashpoints.

Ukrainian government forces and analysts have warned that pro-Moscow rebels are readying for a push to extend their control to the key seaport of Mariupol, the largest remaining Ukrainian-controlled city in the conflict zone.

<http://news.yahoo.com/separatists-poised-offensive-ukraine-us-224220427.html>

Ukraine has to rely on its own resources in military equipment production – NSDC official, 06.05.2015

"Today, while renewing the military potential of the country, we have to rely solely on our own forces. The military and industrial complex is the driving force of our economy, and the organization of the operation of all defense industry enterprises currently provides our armed forces and the National Guard with the needed weapons and equipment," the official website of the NSDC quoted Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov as saying to the journalists after visiting Zhytomyr Armor Repair Plant.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264188.html>

Tymoshenko asks to eliminate shock policy, 06.05.2015

Leader of Ukrainian Batkivshchyna [Fatherland] party Yulia Tymoshenko thinks "shock" social and economic policy in Ukraine is faulty and calls for its eliminating.

"We should immediately eliminate it, moreover, it should be changed into a radically opposite direction," Tymoshenko said on air of Ukrainian Pershe Natsionalne Radio, the website of the party reported. According to her, maintaining shock therapy "will lead to the complete downfall of the economy, as the best investor in Ukraine's economy is not a foreign investor, not Ukrainian entrepreneurs, but Ukrainian citizens who invest their money by buying clothes, food, paying for services. Here is the investor!" she said.

Yulia Tymoshenko is confident that, if all the money of this investor is taken away, the economy "will fall in a matter of months." She cited the findings of Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, according to which, it is recommended "to stop the shock therapy, impose fair market values and not inflated prices, index pensions and salaries."

"We should talk not about populism, but about extremely unprofessional work in the economic and social fields, which is carried out today," Tymoshenko added.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/tymoshenko_asks_to_eliminate_shock_policy_331167

Poland to send its policemen to Ukraine, 06.05.2015

The corresponding decision was taken by the Cabinet of Ministers of Poland on Tuesday. The group will involve ten people, dw reports.

"The Polish law enforcement officers are to help their Ukrainian colleagues to implement the police reforms. During their stay in Ukraine, the Polish officers will not carry arms and will obey the leadership of the EU mission," press office of the Polish government informs, quoted by dpa as saying.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/poland_to_send_its_policemen_to_ukraine_331139

Participants of Minsk meeting reach consensus, 07.05.2015

Participants of the Trilateral Contact Group have reached a consensus in Minsk.

"In all groups, the parties have reached a consensus and agreed to continue working," Darka Olifer, spokeswoman of representative of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma wrote on Facebook page.

According to Russian representative Azamat Kulmuhametov, the subgroup on policy has agreed to consider the issues on elections in Donbas. According to him, a specific attention in the framework of working groups is paid to the process of political settlement.

In turn, OSCE special representative Heidi Tagliavini states that the subgroup on economy may hold its next meeting on May 16.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/participants_of_minsk_meeting_reach_consensus_331180

Trilateral Contact Group to send observers to ATO area, 07.05.2015

In Minsk, representatives of the Trilateral Contact Group agreed to send observers from each subgroup to the contact line in Donbas. Representative of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma said this after today's meeting: "They will observe in these areas," Kuchma said, adding that representatives of the working sub group on security reached appropriate arrangements.

According to the Ukrainian representative, the main things in the current situation are a ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and their verification by the OSCE.

"The relevant documents have been prepared, now it is time to work for groups and military experts," he added.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/trilateral_contact_group_to_send_observers_to_ato_area_331184

Switzerland to double grant aid to Ukraine to about \$100 mln in 2015-2018 – ambassador, 07.05.2015

Such data were voiced by Ambassador of Switzerland to Ukraine Christian Schoenenberger in Kyiv, when signing a memorandum of understanding on technical and financial assistance for energy efficiency projects in Zhytomyr between the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of the Swiss Confederation, Ukraine's Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Utilities Services, Zhytomyr City Council, and municipal enterprise Zhytomyrteplokomunenergo. "Switzerland decided to double its technical aid in 2015-2018, the budget will be about \$100 million," he said.

At the same time, Schoenenberger noted that the matter concerns cooperation with Ukraine in implementing joint projects in such priority areas for Switzerland as stable energy use and urban development, as well as local self-governance, construction, health care, and resolving issues in the humanitarian area.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/264386.html>

Poroshenko - over 90,000 Russian-backed militants, regular troops in Donbas, 07.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko claims that the threat of a large-scale offensive from the side of Russian-backed militants has been growing, and the strength of the enemy's troops is estimated at 40,000 men, while another 50,000 servicemen are deployed along the border with Ukraine.

<http://ukrnews.co/unian-poroshenko-says-over-90000-russian-backed-militants-regular-troops-in-donbas/>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1075302-poroshenko-over-90000-russian-backed-militants-regular-troops-in-donbas.html>

An estimated 6,243 people had been killed and 15,615 injured in the conflict in eastern Ukraine since April 2014, 07.05.2015

According to OHCHR spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani, the number of casualties is based on official data collected by the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the World Health Organization. Shamdasani stressed, though, that the real number could be much higher. Ukraine has been mired in a violent internal conflict since mid-April, when the Ukrainian government launched a military operation against independence supporters in the southeastern regions of the country after they refused to recognize the coup-imposed Kiev authorities.

<http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150507/1021833232.html>

A New War in the Donbas, or the Old Ukraine Fights Back, 07.05.2015

The recent uptick in fighting in the Donbas sends a clear warning sign that the conflict in Ukraine is anything but frozen. Although large-scale fighting stopped with the Ukrainian army's retreat from the town of Debaltseve in February, sporadic shelling and exchanges of gunfire have continued to jeopardize the Minsk agreements. Reports of an imminent Russian-backed separatist offensive have been circulating for weeks.

U.S. State Department, and NATO officials continue to accuse Moscow and the separatists of violating the cease-fire and deploying troops and equipment for an upcoming assault. For its part the Russian government claims, erroneously, that U.S. military personnel have been deployed to the conflict zone.

<http://camegie.ru/eurasiaoutlook/?fa=60010>

EU allocates over EUR 2 mln to improve accommodations for refugees from ATO zone in Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, 07.05.2015

Over EUR 2 million allocated by the EU will be sent to Sloviansk and Kramatorsk to improve the accommodation for refugees from the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) zone, the press service of Donetsk military-civilian administration reported with reference to region's department on investment-innovation development and foreign relations.

This money is planned to be used to remodel five hostels, where temporary displaced persons will live. Particularly, the relevant department noted that Sloviansk City Council had made a grant agreement with the EU Delegation to Ukraine for EUR 721,000 to realize "Home for Refugees" project foreseeing improvement of two hostels. The total value of the project equals EUR 801,000. However, local authorities are to provide a part of the project's funding worth EUR 80,000. "Similar project will be realized in Kramatorsk as well. Three hostels will be repaired here, as well as water supply systems and the sewerage pump station. The total value of the project is EUR 1.8 million," reads the statement.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264277.html>

U.S. Ambassador To Ukraine Says 'Russia Has To Change Its Approach', 07.05.2015

Pyatt said that Russia is supplying pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions with weapons, including "many of their tanks and missiles and anti-aircraft systems." Pyatt called the military conflict between Ukrainian armed forces and what the U.S. State Department considers combined Russian-separatist forces "a manufactured war."

"The people of Donbas," he said of the eastern Ukrainian region that is at the center of the fighting, "have been a target of an aggressive campaign of propaganda and misinformation."

"Russia's information war is very effective," Pyatt said, addressing reports by Russian state-run media that the U.S. and Kyiv are hindering the implementation of peace agreements. "The United States is not providing weapons to Ukraine. Of course, we support the peace process and the cease-fire."

<http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-us-ambassador-pyatt-russian-approach/26999887.html>

EU trade chief says Ukraine deal to start in 2016, 07.05.2015

European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said on Thursday that a planned EU-Ukraine trade deal would be implemented from the start of 2016 despite Russian calls for further delay and threats of retaliation.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned that Moscow will curtail Ukraine's access to vital Russian markets if Kiev implements any part of a trade deal with the European Union.

"It is not for Russia to decide," Malmstrom told reporters on arrival for a meeting with EU trade ministers. "There has been a very clear statement by the European Union, by member states, by the Ukrainians ... that the first of January 2016 is the date."

The start of 2016 is already a year later than planned as Russia seeks to oppose European efforts to integrate Ukraine and move it out of Moscow's sphere of influence. Russia had been pushing for the deal to be postponed by at least one more year.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/07/us-ukraine-crisis-eu-idUSKBNONS0LI20150507>

Italy wants Ukraine to decide on status of Donbas, 07.05.2015

Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni said this during a joint press conference with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin in Kyiv on Wednesday, an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

"Of course, the decision should be taken only by Ukraine, not by the European Union or Italy concerning the issue on status of Donbas region," he stressed.

According to him, Italy also supports the introduction of the European Union sanctions against Russia, despite losses of the Italian economy.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/italy_wants_ukraine_to_decide_on_status_of_donbas_331141

Joint statement of the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Trade, 07.05.2015

On 7 May 2015 the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in close cooperation with the Commission organized the first Eastern Partnership Ministerial Meeting on Trade. The meeting was co-chaired by Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Edgars Rinkēvičs, and European Commissioner for Trade Ms Cecilia Malmström.

The EU Trade Ministers and their Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarus, Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian counterparts met in the afternoon of 7 May to discuss the achievements of the Eastern Partnership in the area of trade, as well as the opportunities and challenges to the further development of a successful trade dimension of the Eastern Partnership.

In light of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga and the ongoing European Neighbourhood Policy review, Trade Ministers exchanged views on current trade relations between the EU and the Eastern Partners. The Ministers also discussed the possibilities of further cooperation, taking into account the diverse interests of the Eastern Partners with regards to their trade relations with the EU.

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/joint-statement-eastern-partnership-07-05-2015/>

No possibility of increasing budget social payments now – finance minister, 08.05.2015

Growth of revenue of the national budget in the past months is mainly linked to the hryvnia devaluation which entails the relevant increase in budget expenses, and there are no funds to increase social payments now, Finance Minister of Ukraine Natalie Jaresko has said.

"We don't have the opportunity [of increasing budget social payments] if we have it I'm ready [to do this]," she said on the sidelines of the roundtable organized by the U.S.-Ukraine Business Council (USUBC) in Kyiv on Thursday.

Commenting on the surplus of the national budget in the first quarter of 2015, Jaresko said that this is a temporary phenomenon caused by devaluation, and not by economic growth. On the contrary, the economy fell by 15% over the period, and one cannot make conclusions on the basis of figures for only one quarter. She said that the level of revenues that would allow securing social expenses next year should be reached.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264475.html>

US pledges tough response to any new Russian aggression against Ukraine, 08.05.2015

The U.S. State Department's Coordinator for Sanctions Policy Daniel Fried has said:

"Any movement of Russian troops will see a strong response," "We should be ready to increase pressure if Russia resorts to aggressive actions on a larger scale," he said. Fried also said that any failure by Russia to fulfill the Minsk agreements by the end of this year would lead to a strengthening of the sanctions that have already been imposed, and said there was agreement with the European Union regarding this issue.

"Europe, fortunately, is more united and more focused than one might have thought. Europe has introduced and is maintaining the sanctions," Fried said.

He also said he thought it would be premature to talk about lifting sanctions against Russia.

"I would like to see a situation whereas Russia fulfills the Minsk agreement and [we] begin to lift sanctions. [But] we are not yet at this stage."

<http://www.charter97.org/en/news/2015/5/8/150707/>

Petro Poroshenko said that since the beginning of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, 1,675 Ukrainian military servicemen have been killed, 08.05.2015

"In all, 1,675 Ukrainian soldiers gave their lives for our victory," Poroshenko said during a ceremonial session in the country's parliament dedicated to the 70th anniversary to the end of World War II and victory over the Nazis in Europe.

<http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150508/1021867311.html>

Ukraine, EU, Russia to hold FTA talks on May 18, 08.05.2015

"We expect the implementation of a deep and comprehensive free trade area with Ukraine to start on January 1, 2016. We will continue consultations to facilitate this process. The tripartite political consultations at the level of ministers of Ukraine and Russia to find practical solutions to some concerns on the part of Russia will be held on May 18," European Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmstrom said.

Malmstrom noted that the Ukrainian party would be represented at the political consultations by Foreign Minister of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraine_eu_russia_to_hold_fta_talks_on_may_18_331227

EU Says No Visa Liberalization For Ukraine And Georgia, 08.05.2015

Speaking in Brussels on May 8 after the EU Commission published its annual visa report on both countries, the spokeswoman for home affairs, Natasha Bertaud, said the commission was "aware" Georgia and Ukraine had expressed a desire for visa-free status at the summit, but this was "very ambitious in terms of timing."

She said the commission was willing to move forward the next report to the end of 2015 provided progress is made.

The report stated both Ukraine and Georgia need to do more to implement legislation in areas like anticorruption and human-trafficking.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/eu-visa-liberalization-ukraine-georgia/27002254.html>

Poroshenko: International boycott of Moscow parade demonstrates support of Ukraine, 09.05.2015

The international boycott of the military parade on Moscow's Red Square has demonstrated the support by the world of Ukraine.

This was announced by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko at the ceremony of the military oath by recruits of the separate presidential regiment and the 101st separate brigade of the Armed Forces' General Staff guards at the National Museum of Great Patriotic War History.

The entire world supports Ukraine in its struggle for independence, the president said.

"The broad international boycott of today's parade on Red Square in Moscow has become one of the manifestations of the support," he said.

The Ukrainian people well deserve to have become a member of the anti-Hitler coalition, and Ukraine a United Nations member, the president added.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1076291-poroshenko-international-boycott-of-moscow-parade-demonstrates-support-of-ukraine.html>

Merkel in Moscow says Russian-backed militants ignore Minsk accords, 10.05.2015

German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced this prior to her meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Sunday.

In her words, the recent talks in Minsk were "very tough," but their implementation is protracted. Merkel said that OSCE gave a rather clear picture of what had been happening in Donbas, and many questions to separatists appeared after monitors reported.

"We expected that there will be a ceasefire in a certain period of time after Minsk. But the fighting continued, in particular, near Debaltseve, which was later occupied by separatists. We still have no ceasefire," Merkel said. "One cannot say that one side adheres by the agreement by 100%, and the other doesn't at all. But we've got much information that there are many violations of the truce by separatists," the Chancellor added.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1076493-merkel-in-moscow-says-russian-backed-militants-ignore-minsk-accords.html>

Ukraine's integrity and sovereignty should be restored, Merkel says to Putin, 11.05.2015

"We need to seek a peaceful solution. The implementation of measures envisaged by the Minsk agreements played an important role in our conversation. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine should be restored," she said.

"The Minsk package of measures is our foundation. We do not have another one. We must continue working in this direction."

According to the Chancellor, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its military actions in Ukraine caused a "severe setback" to cooperation between Russia and Germany and was "a violation of the basis of the common peaceful order of Europe."

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraines_integrity_and_sovereignty_should_be_restored_merkel_says_to_putin_331271

Scores of Russian soldiers killed in east Ukraine: opposition report, 12.05.2015

At least 220 Russian soldiers have been killed in east Ukraine, opposition activists said on Tuesday in a report offering what they called "ample evidence" to rebut President Vladimir Putin's denial his troops are fighting there.

The report, the last project of murdered Kremlin critic Boris Nemtsov, also said Russia had spent more than 53 billion rubles (\$1.04 billion) in 10 months to fund the conflict and deprived people of 2.75 trillion rubles of money lost to inflation.

"The war with Ukraine is an undeclared war, a vile cynical war which amounts to a crime against all of the Russian nation. Putin will go down in history as the president who made Russians and Ukrainians foes," said Ilya Yashin, an aide to Nemtsov.

"The main conclusion of our report is that we have collected and systematized (information) which we think provides ample evidence of the presence of Russian soldiers in Ukraine," he told a news conference to unveil the report called "Putin. War".

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/12/us-ukraine-crisis-russia-report-idUSKBNONX0WA20150512>

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/vladimir-putin-has-up-to-10000-troops-in-ukraine-russian-opposition-report-claims-20150512-gh04zi.html>

Ready For War: NATO chief warns that Russia poised to launch new offensive, 12.05.2015

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary-General: "There has been a Russian build-up, both along the borders between Russia and Ukraine, but also inside eastern Ukraine, with a steady flow of heavy equipment, tanks, artillery, ammunition, air defence systems, and a lot of training."

Russia still denies Western and Ukrainian accusations that it is orchestrating the conflict which erupted after Moscow annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/wall-street-journal-russia-has-violated-ukraine-ceasefire-nato-chief-says-426562.html>

U.S. insists on full ceasefire in Shyrokyne – Kerry, 13.05.2015

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry called for fully observing a ceasefire in Shyrokyne among the steps that the conflicting parties in Ukraine should take urgently.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Sochi on Tuesday, Kerry said Lavrov and President Vladimir Putin agreed that it was important for a true ceasefire to be observed in Shyrokyne.

Kerry said he aired his concerns about the continued fighting in Shyrokyne and at the Donetsk airport. He also claimed that assistance was still being provided to the separatists in terms of management and control.

What is also important is demilitarization, the withdrawal of heavy weapons, and OSCE monitoring, he said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/265191.html>

Joint efforts of government, parliament, president needed to implement Association Agreement – Tombinski, 13.05.2015

At an international conference entitled "Ukraine-EU: A Year after the Signing of the Association Agreement," which was held in Kyiv, he said the government, parliament, president, and everybody interested in this process must become united.

Tombinski said that the successful implementation of the agreement depends on three elements, the first of which is that all state officials believing that the integration process is

necessary not just for the European Union, but for Ukraine itself.

He said the second element is constant dialogue with society as the reforms being carried out in Ukraine require dialogue that will help ease social problems caused by the reforms.

He went on to say that the third element is the support of Ukraine-EU integration by all EU 28 member states.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/265241.html>

Kerry: Now is 'Critical Moment' for Ukraine Conflict, 13.05.2015

Kerry's comments follow meetings Tuesday with Russia's President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in the Russian resort city of Sochi. Kerry in Russia said there is "no substitute" for direct talks with key decision makers on complex global issues such as the conflicts in Ukraine and in Syria.

Kerry's trip came at a time when relations between Washington and Moscow have plummeted to post-Cold War lows amid the disagreements over Ukraine and Syria, and the trip appeared designed as much to maintain contact as anything else.

<http://www.voanews.com/content/kerry-now-is-critical-moment-for-ukraine-conflict/2765581.html>

<http://news.yahoo.com/kerry-says-critical-moment-russia-fulfil-ukraine-truce-071649990.html>

Poroshenko: We reject Soviet-style parading of military might, 13.05.2015

This year, we want to begin to tell the world the true story of the people of Ukraine who found themselves caught between Stalin and Hitler.

Back in 1945, Ukraine got special recognition for its war efforts - as one of the founding members of the UN - in respect of the millions of Ukrainians who gave their lives fighting the Nazis.

As a nation with one of the highest death tolls in the Second World War, we will honour the victims of Nazism and the heroes who died so that we could enjoy the blessings of freedom today. This year, we rejected a Soviet-style parading of military might.

Victory in Europe Day is meant to remind the living the sorrows war causes, not to consolidate society against some imagined external enemy.

Ukraine was at the centre of the Eastern Front. My homeland was entirely occupied by the Nazis. The war affected each and every family in Ukraine.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1077491-poroshenko-we-reject-soviet-style-parading-of-military-might.html>

Saakashvili: Our goal is to help Ukraine in reforms, 14.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has approved eight members of the International Advisory Council on Reforms chaired by former President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili.

"The goal is to help Ukraine in reforms with useful advice and proactive position in its support in the international arena. The world and, most importantly, the public of Ukraine, require radical changes. And we will do our best to make these improvements a reality," Saakashvili wrote on FB.

According to Saakashvili, President Poroshenko signed the decree on the composition of the Advisory International Council of Reforms for the President of Ukraine. It includes prominent politicians, such as the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament Elmar Brok, and active member of the European Parliament Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Carl Bildt, the famous author of the Slovak reforms Mykolas Dzurinda, well-known economist Anders Aslund, Andrius Kubilius, who twice served as the Prime Minister of Lithuania. This is just the initial composition of the Council, will expand and grow. A great friend of Ukraine, the former President of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski expressed his desire to join the Council.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1078121-saakashvili-our-goal-is-to-help-ukraine-in-reforms.html>

Kerry: It's critical to get OSCE into areas of Donbas conflict, 15.05.2015

An OSCE mission should get into areas of the Donbas conflict, including the village of Shyrokyne in Donetsk region, and end the fierce fighting between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed militants. This was announced by US Secretary of State John Kerry.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/kerry-it-s-critical-to-get-osce-into-areas-of-donbas-conflict-427367.html>

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/gPqXWdvxQtFatny1FoXIIa>

Schulz: Crisis in Ukraine is a war on Europe's doorstep, 15.05.2015

"Our response to the crisis in Ukraine - this war is on our doorstep – is that the last few months we have reached an unprecedented degree of cooperation in our foreign policy," Schulz said. National governments have put their individual interests aside and agreed on a common European approach, he said.

"So far, no member state had violated this general approach. It is a success. If everyone pursues their own interests, we are weak. If we are united - we are strong," he said.

Schulz also said that Ukrainians had defended European values during the Revolution of Dignity on mass public protests that overthrew former President Viktor Yanukovich.

"The Ukrainians kept our European flag in their hands. For people all over the world, Europe [stands for] the protection of human dignity. Europe is the hope for a better future," Schulz said.

<http://www.unian.info/world/1078234-schulz-crisis-in-ukraine-is-a-war-on-europes-doorstep.html>

Justice Task Force Presents Its First Proposed Constitutional Amendments, 15.05.2015

Presidential Administration Deputy Head Oleksiy Filatov, who chairs the Working Group on Justice within the Constitutional Commission, reported on the Group's first proposed amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine after the Commission meeting on Friday. According to Filatov, the task force worked on the contents and structure of the Constitution's "Justice" section, qualifying requirements for judges (such as age, educational background, professional experience, etc.), and appointment, transfer and dismissal of judges as well as guarantees of their activities.

It was suggested that the legal guarantees of observing the principle of independence of judges would include their appointment with no fixed term of office, functional immunity, appointment exclusively based on a competition, and calling them to account exclusively by a body in which judges account for majority and which is elected by judges.

The Working Group recommends that the appointment and dismissal of judges would be struck off the powers of the Verkhovna Rada, Filatov said and mentioned that the Venice Commission emphasized the necessity of this change more than once. As for the powers of the President, he or she would appoint judges, with no fixed term of office, based on a decision by relevant authority (the High Council of Justice).

<http://radaprogram.org/en/content/justice-task-force-presents-its-first-proposed-constitutional-amendments>

Poroshenko: Ukraine undergoes reform to become "true European state", 16.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko raised the Flag of Europe near the Presidential Administration on the occasion of the Day of Europe on Saturday, May 16.

The Ukrainian President stressed that Ukrainians deserved to be a part of the united Europe. "In November 2013, Ukraine firmly declared its European choice with millions of people who came to the European Maidan," he said.

Poroshenko reminded that Ukrainian students had paid their blood for upholding the European values when they were beaten on the Maidan. Later, the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred sacrificed their lives for these values.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1078719-poroshenko-ukraine-undergoes-reform-to-become-true-european-state.html>

Pushkov: Russia can offer to the West more than Ukraine, 18.05.2015

"Time is playing against Ukraine. She has nothing to offer the West, besides the confrontation with Russia. Russia can offer much greater," wrote Pushkov V.

Relations between Russia and the West, and among them the U.S. have deteriorated in connection with the situation in Ukraine. In July of last year the EU and the US from point penalties against private individuals and organizations have moved to the measures against entire sectors of Russia's economy. In response, Russia restricted imports of food items from countries that have entered against her punishment.

<http://news.rin.ru/eng/news///109739/1/>

Victoria Nuland Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 18.05.2015

Today, with the government, I had chance to meet with Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov, who is responsible for relations in our bilateral channels, and with Deputy Foreign Minister Karasin, who is Russia's point person on Ukraine.

Today's consultations were very detailed, they were very pragmatic. In both meetings, we were talking about how we build on the conversation in Sochi, on all of the issues that were discussed between President Putin and Secretary Kerry. But we particularly dug in on how the United States might be able to support the process of Minsk implementation, support the parties – Ukraine, the OSCE and Russia – as they try to take forward the work of the Trilateral Contact Group and as the four working groups – on security, on political issues, on economics and on humanitarian aspects of the Minsk Agreement – get going.

We had very detailed discussions on all of the issues that I spoke about in Kyiv, from securing a true cease-fire on the line, starting with getting the OSCE into Shyrokyne, to the political working group and setting the conditions for free and fair elections under the Ukrainian Constitution in correspondence with OSCE standards, to improving humanitarian conditions on the ground for the people of Donbas, allowing humanitarian assistance in not only from the Russian side but also from the Ukrainian side, to ensuring that the OSCE can be present all along the border as Minsk requires, to the inspection of convoys coming from the Russian side. The United States' goal here, as I said in Kyiv, is to support the full implementation of Minsk. We are doing this in lockstep with the Normandy powers, with our colleagues in the EU, with Germany and France. I will be debriefing them and Ukraine on the consultations that I had here. Let me also take this opportunity with regard to the most recent news regarding the capture in Shchastya of Russian Captain Yerofeev and Russian Sergeant Alexandrov.

<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2015/may/242589.htm>

NATO says not clear if Russia serious about Ukraine peace deal, 18.05.2015

A senior NATO official said on Monday it was still unclear whether Russia was prepared to take steps to support the Minsk agreement to ease the conflict in Ukraine, adding that Moscow would face more sanctions and isolation if the deal collapsed.

"It is still not clear despite Russia's words, whether in its actual deeds Russia intends to support the implementation of Minsk," Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow told NATO's parliamentary assembly in Budapest.

"Russia is trying to pretend that it's not a party to the conflict and that Ukraine should deal directly with the separatists," he added.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/05/18/us-nato-ukraine-idUSKBN0030PF20150518>

New laws in Ukraine potential threat to free expression and free media, OSCE Representative says, 18.05.2015

Following the Supreme Rada's adoption on 9 April of the law "On condemnation of the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes in Ukraine and banning of propaganda of their symbols," OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović on 15 April wrote to the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, asking for his careful consideration of the law before approving it. The law was signed by the President on 15 May.

"It is discouraging for freedom of expression and media freedom advocates that the law has gone into effect, despite various calls to safeguard these basic rights," Mijatović said.

The law criminalizes public denial of the activities of these regimes and bans all related symbols, except for restricted educational or scientific purposes. Violation of the law carries a penalty of potential termination of activities of media and prison sentences for five to ten years.

"While I fully respect the often sensitive and painful nature of historical debate and its effect on society, broadly and vaguely defined language that restricts individuals from expressing views on past events and people, could easily lead to suppression of political, provocative and critical speech, especially in the media," Mijatović wrote.

<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=d9932e155e&e=6b2886dd4c>

Ukraine creditor group sticks to "no-haircut" proposal to Kiev in debt talks, 18.05.2015

Ukraine's ad-hoc creditor committee said on Monday it was pleased Kiev wished to accelerate debt restructuring talks, but repeated objections to any writedown on the principal owed.

"As previously announced, the Committee has provided the Ministry with a detailed proposal that the Committee believes meets the objectives of the Ministry without any principal debt reductions," it said in an emailed statement.

The group, whose exact membership had until now not been disclosed, said it consisted of funds managed or advised by BTG Pactual Europe, Franklin Advisers., TCW Investment Management Company and T. Rowe Price Associates, who hold approximately \$8.9 billion of Ukrainian debt.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3086471/Ukraine-creditor-group-sticks-no-haircut-proposal-Kiev-debt-talks.html>

Yatseniuk: We need to unite coalition in order to adopt laws, 18.05.2015

Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatseniuk said this during the presentation of the Plan of legislative provision of reforms in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Monday, May 18, the press service of the Cabinet of Ministers reported.

"It is important to have actual coalition but not formal. Who does not want to work in the European coalition, you can leave the room. I took responsibility and I will continue to carry it. This is what we must do today for the state," Yatseniuk said.

He also reminded that all necessary reforms for the country were covered in the coalition agreement that was approved by the Parliament of Ukraine.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/yatseniuk_we_need_to_unite_coalition_in_order_to_adopt_laws_331453

President at the evening-requiem on the occasion of the 71st anniversary of deportation of the Crimean Tatars: Ukraine will never agree with the occupation of Crimea, 18.05.2015

"Ukraine will never agree with the occupation of Crimea and will never give one of the indigenous people of our Homeland to the wolves. We will struggle for the rights, national and political freedoms of the Crimean Tatars. Crimea is not a military base, not a "pride of Russian sailors". It is an integral part of Ukraine. It is a unique region, a jewel of world civilization, a cradle of the Crimean Tatars. It is their legal and globally recognized Homeland," Petro Poroshenko said.

According to the President, we must think over the past events taking into account our new experience and honoring the memory of the victims of deportation. "We must honestly evaluate our mistakes. Ukraine made a lot, yet not everything, to return and accomodate the Crimean Tatars in their Homeland," the President said and urged to think about the future, when the occupied peninsula will be returned to Ukraine.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32887.html>

Over 10,000 Crimean Tatars flee Crimean after occupation – Chubarov, 19.05.2015

The actual number of Crimean Tatars that have left Crimea since its occupation by Russia exceeds the official figure of 10,000 people, head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People Refat Chubarov has said.

"I won't say the exact number, as the numbers stated by the official executive agencies are already outdated. It's believed that 20,000 people have left the Crimean peninsula, about half of them are Crimean Tatars. But our research says that this number is higher," he said at a briefing in Kyiv on Monday.

During the briefing, Chief of the Security Service of Ukraine Valentyn Nalyvaichenko officially presented the materials of archive cases on the torture of Crimean Tatars by the NKVD to Mejlis representatives. According to Chubarov, work to create a detailed account of the people who have left Crimea, including Crimean Tatars, is underway.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266403.html>

Georgia's Leader Warns of Russian Expansion, 19.05.2015

Georgia's president said Tuesday that Russia is poised to use its armed forces to expand further into former Soviet states and called on the West never to accept any Russian aggression.

"They are the fastest and the first to bring in their tanks," he said, speaking near-fluent English.

"So that's why we can say that half of the Eurasian continent is living under constant threat. If they have some kind of unstable environment in their country, their sovereign country, the neighbor will be quick to solve the problem through Kalashnikov[s]."

Margvelashvili said Georgia still feels the military threat from Russia after losing 20 percent of its territory to Russian-supported separatists after the 2008 war. Russia has border guards and troops stationed in the breakaway territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Just like Russia did in Georgia in 2008, Margvelashvili said Russia exploited instability in Ukraine following the ouster of a Russia-friendly president to seize Crimea in March 2014 and foment an armed rebellion in Ukraine's Russian-speaking east. The president warned if there were not a stronger condemnation from the West, the pattern could be repeated in other countries along Russia's border.

"What we are hoping to see is a more stronger, principled message that this is unacceptable — and this will stay unacceptable even after the cease-fire [in east Ukraine]," Margvelashvili said.

Georgia also sees a threat across Europe from the vast Kremlin propaganda machine as Russia conducts what the EU sees as a disinformation campaign to change perceptions of Russia's involvement in Ukraine.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/georgias-leader-warns-of-russian-expansion/521766.html>

Donetsk, Luhansk self-proclaimed republics should remain part of Ukraine, 19.05.2015

The self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's republics (DPR and LPR) should remain part of Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview.

"At all levels - by means of statements on the part of the Russian president, in other formats - we have been saying that we are for them to become part of Ukraine," Lavrov said.

"They have now submitted their draft of the constitution. In it, they are talking about the status envisioned by the Minsk agreements: the republics will be part of Ukraine, and then there will be a constitutional reform to secure that status on a permanent basis," he said.

Lavrov said the commitment was paraphed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Francois Hollande.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/795615>

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/lavrov-donetsk-and-luhansk-breakaway-republics-should-remain-part-of-ukraine-428400.html>

Russia deploys nuclear fleet in Crimea – Turchynov, 20.05.2015

Russia continues to deploy additional offensive weapon systems in the occupied Crimea and to prepare the infrastructure to station nuclear weapons and means for their delivery on the peninsula.

Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Oleksandr Turchynov has said this in an interview with Ukrinform.

"Russia is taking specific steps to provide the full-fledged operation of the units of the 12th Main Directorate of the Defense Ministry of the Russian Federation on the peninsula. This directorate is tasked to prepare the operation and supplies of nuclear munitions to the combat units of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation," Turchynov said.

According to him, Russia plans to deploy in Crimea a regiment of Tu-22M3 attack aircraft, equipped to carry nuclear warhead missiles. In addition, the unit will include three divisions of Iskander-K and Iskander-M Tactical Ballistic Missile System, including some equipped with nuclear warhead missiles.

Turchynov added that Russia also intended to complete the deployment of a powerful submarine fleet base in Crimea.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/russia_deploys_nuclear_fleet_in_crimea_turchynov_331529

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266669.html>

Poroshenko: Russia is preparing summer offensive, 20.05.2015

Ukraine's president Petro Poroshenko says the country is now in a "real war" with Russia, and Ukrainians should prepare for a Russian offensive.

President Poroshenko told the BBC's Fergal Keane he did not trust his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. He said, however, that he had no option but to negotiate with Mr. Putin.

Russia denies Western accusations that it has sent regular troops and armor to help the rebels in eastern Ukraine. The United Nations says at least 6,000 people have been killed since fighting started in eastern Ukraine in April 2014.

Pro-Russian rebels made significant gains in the region, including, most recently, the rail hub of Debaltseve. They, and Russia, have denied they are receiving Moscow's support.

But Russia's role has again come into question, after the capture on Saturday of two men Ukraine said were elite Russian soldiers working in eastern Ukraine.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/336805/poroshenko_russia_is_preparing_summer_offensive

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32805555>

Modern Russia worse than under Stalin – Grybauskaite, 20.05.2015

In an interview with Latvian TV Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite said that modern Russia is behaving worse than under the regime of former Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

"In fact, Russia is worse than in the days of Stalin, and is waging the first non-convention war using cyber-attacks, as well as information and propaganda attacks," the Lithuanian president said. In addition, according to her, the aim of the Russian president is to destabilize the situation in Ukraine, but he would not likely do more.

"Europe is not such a weak point that he could put pressure on it," Grybauskaite said.

She also called for the extension of sanctions against Russia, as the Minsk agreements are not being implemented by Moscow and "the war continues" [in Ukraine].

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/modern_russia_worse_than_under_stalin_grybauskaite_331534

Number of Russia troops deployed in Ukraine sometimes reaches 14,000 – Poroshenko, 20.05.2015

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has said that presence of the Russian troops in Ukraine has been proven, and at different times the number of Russian troops varies from between 4,000 to 14,000.

"The fact of the presence of Russian soldiers in our territory was proven many times, and in various times there are from 4,000 to up to 14,000 Russia regular troops in the territory of Ukraine," he said at a joint conference with Slovak President Andrej Kiska in Kyiv on Wednesday. "This is not just Ukrainian information, this is the data of NATO intelligence and other sources, we have the facts of [Russian soldiers] crossing of our border, which was registered by satellite," Poroshenko said. He said this concerns not just the number of Russian troops, but also a significant number of modern weapons, "including missiles and anti-aircraft complexes."

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266908.html>

US provides Ukraine with equipment, training but not weapons, 20.05.2015

Currently the United States is not ready to give Ukraine weapons. However, it continues providing the Ukrainian party with equipment and training of soldiers.

"The US policy remains the same, it will continue help Ukraine with equipment and training. And I think this policy will last until I hear something new from our government," Commander of the US army in Europe Ben Hodges stressed at a briefing in Kyiv on Tuesday.

According to him, in response to Russia's actions, the NATO allies also increase their activities, in particular, at least 25 multinational military exercises will be held this year.

At the same time, according to him, the NATO member countries still believe that the Minsk agreements have to be implemented.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/us_provides_ukraine_with_equipment_training_but_not_weapons_331526

Novorossiia's Parliament is dead, 20.05.2015

Oleg Tsarev, who heads the so-called Parliament of Novorossiia, says the group has ceased all activities, "insofar as it was not written into the peace plan signed by the Normandy Four" in Minsk earlier last February. A spokesman for the Donetsk People's Republic has also said efforts to develop a union between Donetsk and Luhansk have been suspended indefinitely, blaming Kiev for suppressing pro-Russian sentiment in the areas around and between Ukraine's two separatist enclaves. Tsarev has said Novorossiia includes several areas: both the rebel-held areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, as well as regions still under Ukrainian control, like Kharkov and Dnipropetrovsk. Russians, meanwhile, lack a strong common understanding of Novorossiia. According to a recent poll by the Levada Center, fewer than half of Russians say it is a "historically developed" region in southern Russia. Another 25 percent say Novorossiia is merely a "historical term that lacks any meaning today," and 8 percent say it is a "new myth invented by Moscow."

<https://meduza.io/en/news/2015/05/20/novorossiia-s-parliament-is-dead>

Russia rotates troops along border between Crimea and Kherson region, 20.05.2015

The Russian Federation is rotating its troops along the administrative border between Crimea and Kherson region now.

"At the administrative border, the Russian military come and go. Based on the intelligence data, today there is a redeployment of the Russian forces along the border," said Regional chief official of Kherson administration Andriy Putilov.

However, the governor noted that there was no increase in the total number of Russian troops in Crimea near the administrative border with Kherson region.

"The situation is under control at the administrative border," noted the official.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/russia_rotates_troops_along_border_between_crimea_and_kherson_region_331545

Almost 60% of mines in Donetsk region area uncontrolled by Ukraine flooded, impossible to restore them – official, 20.05.2015

"Almost 60% of mines in the territory uncontrolled by Ukraine are unfit for work, they are flooded. And it is almost impossible to restore their operation," Kikhtenko said.

He said there is no reason to block coal supplies from areas in the region which are controlled by separatist militants.

"The fact is that today we are working to receive coal and I see no reason for such work. Today coal is required for the development of metallurgy, without it steelmakers will not be able to produce goods, there won't be jobs. We are not preventing the supply of goods to our territory, I, on the contrary, welcome this," he said in Kramatorsk, according to the OstroV online portal.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/266632.html>

Poroshenko: Ukraine not to go into default, 20.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that there will be no default in Ukraine.

He said this at a joint press conference with Slovak President Andrej Kiska, an Ukrinform correspondent reported.

"When you talk about the threat or the possibility of bankruptcy - you won't see it," Poroshenko said. Thus, according to the President, Ukraine will effectively implement its cooperation with the IMF and with the EU. In particular, tomorrow Ukraine will be provided with macro-financial assistance worth EUR 1.8 billion during the summit of Eastern Partnership.

"And I am sure that the restructuring of the Ukrainian debts will be held by the Ukrainian government with the support of our partners," he said.

Poroshenko assured that economic growth will start in Ukraine in 2016, but peace is the main thing needed for this. "I am confident that we will reach the economic growth in 2016. The only thing we need is peace, and that is why we will fight for this peace," Poroshenko said.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/poroshenko_ukraine_not_to_go_into_default_331543

Russia says Ukraine debt repayment law amounts to default, 20.05.2015

Russia on Wednesday demanded the timely repayment of all debts owed to it by Ukraine and accused Kiev of effectively preparing the way for default with a new law.

It threatened to take the issue to international courts if necessary.

The law, approved by Ukraine's parliament on Tuesday, gives the government the right to miss payments to its international creditors as it wrangles over the terms for restructuring \$23 billion worth of foreign debt.

Russia holds a \$3 billion Ukrainian Eurobond whose full repayment is due by the end of the year. Moscow, whose relations with Kiev have been wrecked by a year-long conflict in eastern Ukraine, has declined to join the debt restructuring talks.

President Vladimir Putin, speaking at a meeting with government ministers, said he found the new law "strange". "To effectively announce an impending default shows a poor level of professional responsibility, all things considered," said Putin, noting that the International Monetary Fund does not lend to countries in default.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-3089503/Russia-says-Ukraine-debt-repayment-law-amounts-default.html>

Poroshenko: We've got full evidence of Russian army's presence in Donbas, 21.05.2015

"We have the full evidence of the presence of the Russian army, the regular troops [in Donbas]. Today, as you probably know, the OSCE and the International [Committee of the] Red Cross (ICRC) have made an official statement that the soldiers who are now in our hospital, receiving the proper treatment, are the real soldiers of the Russian troops," the Ukrainian president said prior to the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga on Thursday, according to BBC Ukraine.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1080763-poroshenko-weve-got-full-evidence-of-russian-armys-presence-in-donbas.html>

Russia Has Deployed Nuclear Systems: NATO Commander, 21.05.2015

The U.S. Air Force General Philip Breedlove said that there was no direct evidence of Moscow having deployed nuclear arms. But that does not mean it may not have happened, he added.

Earlier Wednesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov had warned that Moscow would take retaliatory measures if NATO deployed its ballistic missile systems in Ukraine. Russia was rattled when the United States sent its troops to train Ukrainian forces last month. Peskov said the deployment of NATO missile systems in Ukraine would be a major threat to Russia's security. Russia has also opposed the U.S. missile defense program in Eastern Europe.

<http://www.valuewalk.com/2015/05/russia-nuclear-systems-nato/>

EU to unlock €2 billion worth of investment for small businesses in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, 21.05.2015

At the Eastern Partnership Business Forum in Riga today, the European Commission launched the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) Facility for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The Facility will provide some €200 million worth of grants from the EU budget over the next 10 years. This contribution is expected to unlock new investments worth at least €2 billion for the SMEs in the three DCFTA countries: Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The financial means for the investments will be largely coming from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

"The European Commission promised concrete steps to boost trade and the exchange between the Union and our Eastern partners. Today we are delivering. The Association Agreements and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas work. They are the right avenue for bringing the economies of Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine closer to the EU and to our internal market. The €2 billion are an investment to make these economies more competitive and an investment into local companies that will create more jobs for the population. They are a sign of the EU's strong commitment to further deepen our cooperation with our Eastern partners", said the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5012_en.htm?locale=en

Ukraine crisis makes EU eastern partnership more important: Merkel, 21.05.2015

The crisis in Ukraine makes the European Union's partnership with the bloc's eastern neighbors more important than ever, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Thursday, insisting that the initiative is not directed against Russia.

Speaking in parliament before joining a summit in Riga with six of the EU's ex-Soviet neighbors, Merkel said Europe's peaceful order had been shaken in the last 18 months by Russia's "illegal annexation" of Crimea and fighting in eastern Ukraine.

"Not least under these circumstances, the eastern partnership is more important than ever," Merkel told the Bundestag. "We will further support our eastern neighbors on their path to a society based on democracy and the rule of law," added Merkel, who grew up behind the Iron Curtain in Communist East Germany.

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN00612O20150521?sp=true>

EU Seeks To Keep Eastern Partnership On Track, 21.05.2015

The European Union on May 21 reassured its six Eastern European partners that the 28-nation bloc "is as committed as ever" to building closer relations with them.

Speaking at the opening of a two-day summit in Riga, EU President Donald Tusk said, "I am absolutely sure that the Eastern Partnership is our shared priority."

Tusk said the summit was not directed against Moscow.

"The Eastern Partnership isn't a beauty contest between Russia and the EU," Tusk said, adding, "But let me be frank, beauty does count."

Tusk added, "If Russia was a bit softer, more charming, more attractive, perhaps it would not have to compensate its shortcomings by destructive, aggressive, and bullying tactics against its neighbors." German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that unlike Russia, "We accept that the different Eastern Partnership nations can go their own way and we accept these different ways."

<http://www.rferl.org/content/eu-to-keep-eastern-partnership-on-track/27029659.html>

Putin orders his ministers to talk with Ukraine on its debt operation, 21.05.2015

Russian President Putin asked his finance and economy ministers to hold consultations and find out what are the intentions of the Ukrainian government with respect to its sovereign debt, according to a May 20 report on the Cabinet meeting on the Kremlin's official website. He also asked PM Dmitry Medvedev to "take it under control in order for the government to understand what is going on there." Putin criticized the position of the Ukrainian government, which in his view preannounced a sovereign default, which he deemed "unprofessional."

<http://concorde.ua/en/research/daily/putin-orders-his-ministers-to-talk-ukraine-on-its-operation-14085/>

Kikhtenko: Work of Donetsk administration called unsatisfactory. President will decide whether I will remain in this post, 21.05.2015

The audit of the work of the Head of the Donetsk Regional Civil Military Administration of Oleksandr Kikhtenko initiated by the leadership of the Cabinet of Ministers, called the work of this administration unsatisfactory.

This was stated by Oleksandr Kikhtenko at a press conference in Kramatorsk.

He noted that a decision on his further stay in office of the head of the region depends solely on President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko.

"Will I work in this position is the President's decision. And I will abide by his decision," the head of administration said.

Kikhtenko stressed that in today's conditions the Donetsk region authorities "is working very hard, and is performing its tasks", but not all issues can be resolved at the local level, without the government's assistance.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337010/kikhtenko_work_of_donetsk_administration_called_unsatisfactory_president_will_decide_whether_i_will

Most technical requirements to introduce EU visa-free regime fulfilled in full or almost in full- Poroshenko, 21.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on Wednesday held a meeting on the fulfillment of requirements for the introduction of the visa-free regime with the EU, the presidential press service has reported.

The participants of the meeting noted that the majority of technical requirements drawn up by European experts had been fulfilled completely or almost completely.

"The criterion yet to be fulfilled is the security of the system for primary identification of citizens, which provides for biometric passports and introduction of single identity card of a citizen," reads the report.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267005.html>

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267422.html>

No plans to place anti-ballistic missile systems in Ukraine – U.S. Department of State, 21.05.2015

Washington doesn't plan to place anti-ballistic missile systems in Ukraine, U.S. Department of State Spokeswoman Marie Harf said.

"Well, there's no offer or plan to place U.S. or NATO ballistic missile defenses systems in Ukraine and I don't think we're exactly sure what they're [Ukrainian officials] referring to," she said when being asked by the journalist to comment on the recent statements of the Ukrainians authorities. Besides, Harf said NATO missile defense was not directed against Russia.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266956.html>

Belarus refuses to recognize annexation of Crimea, 22.05.2015

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko confirmed that Belarus refused to recognize the annexation of Crimea during the harmonization of the final declaration of the Eastern Partnership in Riga.

"The situation with the annexation of Crimea is recognized by the whole world. And if Belarus worked out its position, and if it is quite hesitant, I think it is a problem of Belarus but not of the European Union," Poroshenko said.

As reported, Belarus and Armenia refused to support the provision of the joint declaration of the Riga summit on rigid condemnation of the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/belarus_refuses_to_recognize_annexation_of_crimea_331601

Hollande Says Russia, Rebels Must Be Pressured to Respect Ceasefire, 22.05.2015

French President Francois Hollande said on Friday that pressure needed to be applied on Russia and pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine to respect a ceasefire he helped broker in February. "What is clear is that the ceasefire is not entirely respected," Hollande told reporters during an Eastern Partnership summit in Riga.

The French leader said the situation was still very worrying in certain Ukrainian towns.

"And that is why we must act and continue to put pressure and particularly on the east of Ukraine and on Russia so that they fully respect the Minsk accord," he said.

Russia denies it is providing troops or arms to pro-Russian rebels who launched a separatist uprising in April of last year. It accuses Kiev of breaching the February Minsk ceasefire agreement.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/hollande-says-russia-rebels-must-be-pressured-to-respect-ceasefire/522058.html>

Embassy gets no permission to visit two Russians detained in eastern Ukraine — diplomat, 22.05.2015

The Russian Embassy to Ukraine has got no permission from the Ukrainian side for its diplomats to visit two Russian citizens detained in the troubled Luhansk region, embassy's public relations officer Oleg Grishin has told Tass.

"Despite all embassy's efforts, as of 15:00 Moscow time on May 22, the Ukrainian side gave no permission for the Russian consul to visit Alexander Alexandrov and Yevgeny Yerofeyev, detained in the Luhansk region," Grishin said.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/796282>

EU membership of eastern partners not considered in Riga, while process ongoing – Juncker, 22.05.2015

President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker notes that the issue of EU membership prospects of the Eastern partnership states is not considered at Riga summit, however “the process is ongoing.”

Juncker stated this on the sidelines of the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga on May 21, an Ukrinform correspondent reports. "It is not the meeting to consider the issues of the EU membership. We should clearly point out that there is a European prospect for any of these countries [Eastern Partnership countries]. They are not ready, we are not ready, but the process is ongoing" the President of the European Commission said.

President of the European Commission noted that the Riga summit did not deal with the issue of the EU membership of the eastern partners.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/eu_membership_of_eastern_partners_not_considered_in_riga_while_process_ongoing_juncker_331615

EU and Ukraine sign Memorandum of Understanding for €1.8 billion in financial assistance, 22.05.2015

Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, said: "Helping Ukraine to achieve peace and transform the country into a modern, stable and prosperous economy is one of the most important tasks Europe faces today. Implementing structural reforms can be difficult, even during good times. I have been encouraged by the commitment and determination of the Ukrainian Government to reform the country, despite the very complicated geopolitical and security context. The EU continues to support Ukraine in its reform efforts. We aim to disburse a first tranche of €600 million as soon as the Memorandum enters into force, following its ratification by the Ukrainian Parliament."

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5024_en.htm

Russia might deploy nuclear weapons delivery systems – Breedlove, 22.05.2015

Russia has deployed systems which may be used to deliver nuclear weapons in eastern Ukraine. "Majority of nuclear weapons delivery systems, used by Russia, is dual-use equipment: for conventional and nuclear weapons. Some of them have already been placed," NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe General Philip Breedlove said.

The General said that NATO called irresponsible signals from Russia about the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of the annexed Crimea.

"We believe the media reports on deployment in Crimea and possibility of use of nuclear weapons to be irresponsible on part of Russia being the nuclear state. At the same time, we actually have not seen any direct changes, but that does not mean they can not happen," Breedlove emphasized. He also said that NATO did not know anything about the plans for deployment of missile defense systems in Ukraine.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/russia_might_deploy_nuclear_weapons_delivery_systems_breedlove_331596

Cabinet staff reshuffle expected in autumn, some ministers could be replaced earlier – Lutsenko, 23.05.2015

Significant personnel changes in the Cabinet of Ministers will take place in autumn, while some ministers could be replaced at the current session of the Verkhovna Rada, Head of the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko parliamentary faction Yuriy Lutsenko forecasts.

"Talking about the government reshuffle has a reason. I emphasize: not the change of the government but changes in the government," he said in an exclusive interview with Interfax-Ukraine. According to the politician, MPs have claims to some of the ministers in connection with the insufficient level of reform implementation.

"I think we'll have this kind of reformatting. There will be major staff reshuffle in autumn, I feel this. But I do not rule out that there could be individual personnel decisions by the end of this session, several ministers could be replaced," Lutsenko said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267538.html>

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267503.html>

Russia vows 'tough' action if Ukraine defaults on debt, 23.05.2015

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said Saturday that his government will adopt a "tough stance" if Ukraine defaults on its debt, which includes a \$3 billion loan from Moscow.

Speaking in an interview with state channel Rossiya, Medvedev said Ukraine's failure to repay its debt or a decision to freeze payments could prompt Russia to oppose new IMF loans to the country. The conflict with pro-Russia separatists in Ukraine's industrial east -- which Kiev blames on Moscow -- has greatly exacerbated economic difficulties in the former Soviet republic. Medvedev said recent steps by Kiev toward freezing debt payments are "looking like the denial by Bolsheviks to pay the debt of the tsarist government."

"If indeed it will be done this way, that is undoubtedly a default by Ukraine," Medvedev said of the potential debt freeze.

<https://en-maktoob.news.yahoo.com/russia-vows-tough-action-ukraine-defaults-debt-134740968--business.html>

Granting visa-free regime with the EU agreed in Riga – Presidential Administration, 24.05.2015

Ukrainian delegation at the Eastern Partnership summit was able to solve the political issue of granting Ukraine a visa-free regime with the EU.

"In fact, it is not a technological issue. It is important for Ukraine to comply with the technical aspects, but there also is a political issue. It is about the annexation of the territory of Ukraine and control over a specific database, which could have been captured, particularly, in Donetsk and Luhansk. There is a new situation when the European Union said that it cannot now monitor if these moments are not used to enter the European Union illegally," Chalyi said.

According to him, the problem was that the European partners have changed the conditions.

"Our position was the following: sorry, but the repeating introduction of new conditions and the war as an explanation of the impossibility of Ukrainians to travel do not suit us. We defended our position and now we have a very clear knowledge that review of the implementation of Ukrainian obligations should take place until the end of 2015. Immediately after that the decision on visa-free regime for Ukrainians should be granted," he stressed.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337349/granting_visafree_regime_with_the_eu_agreed_in_riga_presidential_administration

NATO Secretary General explained why the Alliance did not supply weapons to Ukraine, 26.05.2015

NATO provides political supports and helps Ukraine reform its army. The Alliance, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, cannot decide on supplying weapons to Ukraine, for this is not within the competence of the Alliance member countries' governments.

According to Secretary General, if Ukraine applies for NATO membership, the application will be considered just like any other one. The decision on whether Georgia and Ukraine should be granted membership will be made by 28 NATO countries, Stoltenberg said.

According to him, no country outside the Alliance should be able to veto or prevent an independent country from accession to NATO. Stoltenberg also said it was unacceptable that a country like Russia annexed part of Ukraine and continues to destabilize its eastern part.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337549/nato_secretary_general_explained_why_the_alliance_did_not_supply_weapons_to_ukraine

Moscow unveils note sent to Kiev due to detention of Russians in Donbas, 26.05.2015

The ministry said Moscow hopes that Kiev will stop manipulating the public opinion and in the near future will allow access to Yevgeny Yerofeyev and Alexander Alexandrov, who were captured in mid-May near Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine.

"Since the first day of the detention of Russian citizens Alexandrov and Yerofeyev on Ukraine's territory, the Russian diplomats both in Kiev and in Moscow have been taking active steps for the Russian consul to meet with them," the statement reads.

"There has been no result yet. The Ukrainian side is not only allowing access to the detained persons, but is also politicizing this issue, using mass media to that end," the ministry said.

<http://tass.ru/en/russia/796758>

Russian diplomat visits two captive Russian soldiers in Kyiv hospital on Tuesday, 27.05.2015

The diplomat left the hospital through the back door, trying to avoid meeting with journalists. He answered all the questions in the same way, noting that it was necessary to wait until the Russian Embassy issues an official comment, a TSN correspondent reported.

"They are alive and relatively healthy, which is good. We have met, and this is what matters now," Gruby said. He also answered a question about whether it is possible to exchange the two Russian soldiers for captive Ukrainian citizens, namely Nadiya Savchenko, who is now in prison in Russia. According to Gruby, the exchange is out of the question until the investigation is underway.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1082449-russian-diplomat-attends-two-captive-russian-soldiers-in-kyiv-hospital-on-tuesday.html?>

Sweden prepared for possible aggression from Russia, 27.05.2015

Sweden's defence forces have demonstrated their readiness and have a plan for action in the case of possible Russian aggression, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Leuven said when asked to comment on his country's participation in the Arctic Challenge Exercise of air defenses.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/unian-sweden-prepared-for-possible-aggression-from-russia-389597.html?>

United States announces \$18 million in additional humanitarian assistance for Ukraine crisis, 27.05.2015

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration Simon Henshaw announced May 23 in Kyiv that the United States is providing \$18 million in additional U.S. humanitarian assistance to help those affected by Russian aggression in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. With this new funding, total U.S. humanitarian assistance since the start of the crisis will reach more than \$61 million.

The United States remains concerned by the growing humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine, particularly in areas occupied by combined Russian-separatist forces, and the limits on assistance agencies' response due to the underfunding of humanitarian appeals. More than five million people in Ukraine are in need of aid, according to the UN, including 1.2 million internally displaced persons. Single-headed households, the disabled, and the elderly are particularly vulnerable.

<http://ukraine.usembassy.gov/statements/assistance-05222015.html>

Lavrov: real chance exists for peaceful settlement in Ukraine, 28.05.2015

"Today there is indeed a chance for peaceful settlement based on the Minsk agreements. The provisions fixed in the February 12 Package of measures should be implemented fully and consistently," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told the participants of the World Coordination Board of Russian compatriots. "The key condition is to establish a direct dialogue of the Ukrainian authorities with Luhansk and Donetsk," Lavrov stressed. The Russian foreign minister also expressed concerns about the humanitarian situation in Donbas and namely the harmful economic blockade of the war-torn region.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/797198>

Poroshenko ready for dialogue with Donbas only after new elections, 28.05.2015

Kiev will not hold a dialogue with the current leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko told the 8th Kiev security forum on Thursday. "We will hold a dialogue with Donbas, but with the other Donbas, a Ukrainian one," Poroshenko said stressing: "We must ensure fair elections."

Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk announced a similar stance at the forum saying his government would never talk to the current Donbas representatives.

"We will communicate only with the legitimate representatives of this region, we want to hold legitimate elections there," the prime minister said, adding that he was ready to talk to the DPR and LPR leaders "only when they are behind bars."

"By the way, we have got enough empty prison cells," he stressed.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/797267>

Putin Classifies Information on Deaths of Russian Troops on Special Missions, 28.05.2015

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday declared all deaths of Russian soldiers during special operations to be classified as a state secret, a move that comes as Moscow stands accused of sending soldiers to fight in eastern Ukraine.

Putin, who has repeatedly denied any involvement of Russian troops in a pro-Russian rebellion there, amended a decree that had previously classified only deaths of servicemen during war time as secret. Asked to explain the rationale behind Putin's move, his spokesman Dmitry Peskov had no immediate comment.

Russian opposition activists released a report saying at least 220 serving Russian soldiers were killed in fighting in two hot spots in east Ukraine last summer and earlier this year.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/putin-classifies-information-on-deaths-of-russian-troops-on-special-missions/522552.html>

<http://en.censor.net.ua/news/338024/putins-decree-on-classifying-casualties-is-a-misplaced-effort-to-cover-up-troop-losses-in-donbas-state>

Attempts to build Ukraine's defense industry into NATO have no chance to success — envoy, 28.05.2015

Attempts to build Ukraine's defense industry into NATO structures have no chance to success, especially after Ukraine had denounced the agreement on military cooperation with Russia, Alexander Grushko, Russia's Permanent Representative to NATO, said.

"They will get the bits of what it [Ukraine's military and defense industry] once was," Grushko said. "The fact that made Ukraine's military and defense sector strong was that it was closely linked to Russia's defense industry," the Russian diplomat explained.

Grushko expressed his doubts over a possibility of using the production capacities of the Antonov aviation concern for NATO needs. "Western countries have recently launched programmes of retooling their parks of planes. The United States, for example, is using 99% of home-made aircraft for this purpose," Russia's Permanent Representative said.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/797133>

About 50,000 Ukrainian soldiers serve in ATO zone now – Poroshenko, 29.05.2015

"We have created a new, highly patriotic, well-equipped and highly efficient, modern, transparent, fair, Armed Forces of Ukraine with an extremely strong fighting spirit, which did not exist a year ago. Last year there were between 3,000 to 5,000 ready for combat missions. Simultaneously, there were from 17,000 to 23,000 soldiers in Donbas, who, of course, could not repel all attacks in the most dangerous directions. Now I can disclose a very important figure: nowadays there are about 50,000 servicemen in the ATO zone alone. This is a powerful force now, which is able to stand on the defensive," Poroshenko said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1083363-about-50000-ukrainian-soldiers-serve-in-ato-zone-now-poroshenko.html>

US will not lift sanctions against Russia due to occupation of Crimea, regardless of its actions in Donbas - Ambassador Payette, 29.05.2015

Sanctions against Russia regarding the occupation of the Crimea will remain in force regardless of Russia's actions in Eastern Ukraine. This was stated by U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt. "Crimea sanctions will remain in place regardless of Russia's actions in eastern Ukraine/ceasefire implementation under Minsk [agreement]," he wrote.

"US sanctions designed to hold Russia responsible for illegal annexation of Crimea, but not disrupt free information flow to people there," the diplomat added.

<http://en.censor.net.ua/news/338053/us-will-not-lift-sanctions-against-russia-due-to-occupation-of-crimea-regardless-of-its-actions-in-donbas>

Russia Will Respond to NATO's Missile Defense Buildup in Europe – General, 29.05.2015

"In a situation of an unrestrained expansion of NATO's missile defense shield, capable of intercepting the Russian ICBMs, Russia will, as we have repeatedly warned, find it necessary to adequately respond to this expansion," General Anatoly Ivanov said in Moscow.

In April, Russia's military chief of staff General Valery Gerasimov warned European countries planning to host installations for a US-led missile defense shield that Russia would be forced to target them. "Non-nuclear powers where missile-defense installations are being installed have become the objects of priority response," he said, referring to Poland and Romania.

<http://sputniknews.com/russia/20150529/1022696991.html>

Pifer: Sanctions not changing Russia's course, but force it to pay price for actions in Ukraine, 29.05.2015

"It will be important for the United States and the European Union to maintain economic sanctions against Russia, and to be ready to intensify these sanctions if the east of Ukraine faces new military actions, or if Russia does not fulfill its part of the implementation of the Minsk agreements," Pifer said.

According to Pifer, Western economic sanctions are already having a significant impact on the Russian economy. "[The sanctions] have not yet achieved the political goal of changing Russian policy, but as long as the sanctions continue to be in effect, the economic price for Russia will grow," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1083437-pifer-sanctions-not-changing-russias-course-but-force-it-to-pay-price-for-actions-in-ukraine.html>
http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/030415_Pifer_Testimony.pdf

Navalny Says Putin Will Stop At Nothing To Stay In Power, 29.05.2015

Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny says Vladimir Putin will stop at nothing to maintain his "monopoly on power" and accused the Russian president of launching a war against Ukraine in order to enrich himself and his inner circle.

"I really hope that he doesn't press the nuclear button right before his death and doesn't want to take the rest of humanity with him to the grave," Navalny said in a joint May 28 interview with the Russian-language services of RFE/RL and VOA.

"But I don't see any barriers or limits, or actions that he won't take in order to keep his power atop all of Russia," Navalny added.

In the wide-ranging interview, Navalny accused Putin of instigating the war in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed separatists and Kyiv's forces that has killed more than 6,100 people since April 2014, calling the Kremlin's role in the conflict a "crime."

<http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-navalny-interview-putin-crimea-sanctions/27042000.html>

Poroshenko promises to sign decree on martial law in case of onslaught on the Armed Forces' positions in the Donbas, 29.05.2015

"The key position is that if the truce is violated now, the demarcation line is crossed, the attack on the Ukrainian Armed Forces is organized, a decree on introduction of martial law will be immediately signed by me and submitted to the parliament," the president said at the Year with Poroshenko TV program which was shown by the Ukrainian TV channels Thursday night on the occasion of the year of his tenure as the president.

He stressed that legislative support for martial law introduction has been considerably "improved during that short period of time." "And I have any doubts that the martial law will be introduced in a few hours and Ukraine will demonstrate its readiness to fight a war, aspiration to victory and defense, to peace," the president said.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337993/poroshenko_promises_to_sign_decree_on_martial_law_in_case_of_onslaught_on_the_armed_forces_positions

De-monopolization means setting clear principles, not fighting concrete oligarchs – Poroshenko, 29.05.2015

"Today we should de-monopolize the Ukrainian economy and ban oligarchs from influencing power via transparent and effective European mechanisms," Poroshenko said on the "Year of Poroshenko" program to mark the first year of his tenure, which aired on Ukrainian television channels on Thursday evening.

"Would oligarchs quickly retreat? No, they protect themselves and they will protect themselves. First they tried to protect themselves with private armies, [which are] threatening to the Ukrainian authorities, but they got a rap on their knuckles and they will get it more," he said.

He said oligarchs were previously convinced that they could buy any power they sought.

"What did I start doing in fighting against oligarchs? I am independent from any of them. I financed my election campaign myself and until now no kopeck of so-called "aid to the president and administration" has arrived and [such money] will not arrive," Poroshenko said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/268683.html?>

Poroshenko expects new Odesa governor Saakashvili fights corruption, attracts investors to region, 30.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has expressed hope that Mikheil Saakashvili would reach success in fighting against corruption on the post of head of Odesa Regional Administration.

"This is the person who is able to materialize ideas and who changed his country [Georgia] in the transparency, efficiency, anticorruption areas, attracting new investors, establishing fair court, protecting rights of citizens and democracy and whom I want to see in Ukraine – this is Mikheil Saakashvili," he said, introducing the new head of Odesa Regional Administration to Odesa region officials.

<http://ukrnews.today/poroshenko-expects-new-odesa-governor-saakashvili-fights-corruption-attracts-investors-to-region/>
<http://www.unian.info/politics/1083902-saakashvili-officially-becomes-odesa-governor-pledges-to-turn-odesa-into-global-miracle.html>

Lavrov's subordinate: Moscow won't disclose blacklisted EU officials' names, 31.05.2015

"Russia doesn't make such lists public. If European officials with diplomatic passports doubt that there will be no problem with entering Russia's territory, they can check the information at Russian embassies and consulates," Deputy Director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's information and press department Maria Zakharova wrote on Facebook on May 31.

According to her, the Russian organizations will "in a timely manner" provide all the necessary information whether this or that European official will be allowed or denied entry to Russia.

"Let me repeat once again: European <...>colleagues have been given answers both in public and via diplomatic channels (at negotiations, meetings, via international organizations) to all their questions about the causes behind the introduction by Russia of the retaliatory list and about the algorithm European politicians wishing to visit Russia should follow," she wrote.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1084061-lavrovs-subordinate-moscow-wont-disclose-blacklisted-eu-officials-names.html>

Actions of Ukrainian Authorities

Terrorist planning to blow up fortifications detained in Kharkiv, 02.05.2015

In Kharkiv, the Security Service of Ukraine detained a local resident while he was attempting to commit a terrorist act. The detainee is a member of the "Kharkiv guerrillas" group, nickname Kot (The Cat). It is noted that the perpetrator was detained while trying to set a mine with a fuse on the fortifications of the Kharkiv third line of defense.

"Soon after, six TNT blocks weighing 200 grams, various detonators, including clockwork and other terrorist weapons were seized in the detainee's garage," the SBU stated.

It is also noted that activities on the detention of the remaining members of the group continue.

http://en.censor.net.ua/photo_news/334963/terrorist_planning_to_blow_up_fortifications_detained_in_kharkiv_photo

Court Arrested Four Russians Accessory to Terrorism in Ukraine, 05.05.2015

It was said by the adviser to head of the Security Service of Ukraine Markian Lubkivskyi:

"The first case concerns two citizens of Russia, who in February of this year recruited Ukrainian citizens for participation in a terrorist organization, intentionally collected information on deployment and movement of Ukrainian military equipment in Donetsk and Zaporizhia regions," said Lubkivskyi.

According to him, this information was henceforth transmitted to "DNR" leaders and was used in combat against Ukraine's military units. "The second case refers to two Russian citizens, being a part of neutralized saboteur group (six detained, one killed), who were detained on April 23 of this year by Ukrainian servicemen," wrote the advisor to head of SSU. He recalled that the group offered resistance during detention. Its members were seized of large quantities of weapons.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/court-arrested-four-russians-accessory-to-terrorism-in-ukraine.html>

Trilateral Contact Group to meet with militants in Minsk on May 6, 05.05.2015

Amid a huge rise in violations of the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, it was announced that a meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group of representatives of Ukraine, the Russian-backed militants, and the OSCE would hold a meeting in Minsk on May 6.

<https://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine-abroad/unian-trilateral-contact-group-to-meet-with-militants-in-minsk-on-may-6-387790.html>
<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32794.html>

Ukraine general budget reaches record surplus in 1Q15, 05.05.2015

Ukraine reported its 1Q15 general budget at a UAH 14.0 bln surplus, compared to a UAH 0.5 bln surplus in 1Q14. At the same time, the 1Q15 central budget (net of local budgets) surplus reached UAH 4.2 bln, compared to UAH 4.1 bln deficit in 1Q14. General budget revenue surged 25.0% yoy in 1Q15 on the back of a 55.4% yoy VAT increase, 58.5% yoy excise duty upsurge, 26.7% yoy growth in personal income tax collections and 2.6x jump in import tariff revenue. Also during the reported period, Ukraine received UAH 6.2 bln in a first wire from the sale of 3G licenses. At the same time, the central bank's support for the budget in 1Q15 shrunk by a third to UAH 5.5 bln from UAH 15.8 bln a year ago.

General budget spending increased only 17.2% yoy in 1Q15 compared to 26.9% yoy general spending growth targeted for the whole year.

Alexander Paraschiy: The general budget surplus is positive, though it's too early to celebrate. The main source of the budget collections upsurge was rapid hryvnia devaluation in February. We see it as a one-off effect that will fade out in line with falling consumption. Another point of concern is the modest spending activity of local budgets. Starting the year, local authorities received more own financial resources (like 5 percent of local excise duties) to boost their coffers. At the same time, the procedures for spending those funds have not been fine-tuned yet. As a result, local authorities are just sitting on money and are waiting for clear instructions on what to do with those funds.

<http://concorde.ua/en/research/daily/ukraine-general-budget-reaches-record-surplus-in-1q15-14029/>

President urged Italy to ratify the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, 06.05.2015

President Petro Poroshenko has held a meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy Paolo Gentiloni. According to the President, without the support of Italy, it is impossible to achieve the unity of the EU in its solidarity with Ukraine.

The parties have discussed the ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement by the EU countries and the implementation of this Agreement by Ukraine. The Head of State has urged Italy to accelerate the ratification of the Agreement by the two houses of the Parliament. 17 countries have already ratified this document. On May 7, the Senate of France will consider the ratification. "Taking into account high level of our bilateral relations, we expect positive decision from the Italian Parliament," Petro Poroshenko said.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32796.html>

Meeting between Ukrainian President and Moldovan Prime Minister: It is important to stick together today, 06.05.2015

President Petro Poroshenko has held a meeting with Prime Minister of Moldova Chiril Gaburici. "We are very interested in developing contacts with Moldova," the Head of State said at the meeting. The President has noted the importance of strong and politically stable Moldova for Ukraine. Ukraine is interested in coordinating actions on the European integration and the exchange of experience on the introduction of the visa-free regime.

June 27, 2014, when Ukraine Moldova and Georgia simultaneously signed the Association Agreement with the EU, is an important page of our history," Petro Poroshenko said. According to him, it is important to use benefits of the European integration at most and reduce risks. "Coordination of actions and efficient mutual support is an important factor," he emphasized.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32798.html>

President discussed projects of cooperation and exchange of experience with Foreign Minister of Singapore, 06.05.2015

President Petro Poroshenko has held a meeting with Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Law of Singapore K. Shanmugam. The parties have discussed the issue of international security and broadening of economic cooperation. The President has urged the Singaporean business to increase the volume of investment in Ukraine.

In his turn, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore has expressed support to sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. According to him, Singapore condemns the annexation of Crimea as well as any other attempts to violate sovereignty of a state.

The Head of State has expressed gratitude for that support and noted: "I am an optimist, for our country enjoys the support of the entire world and I am proud for my nation, which struggles for peace, freedom and independence of our state".

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32802.html>

One must restore order and return competition in the energy sphere – President at the NSDC meeting on energy security, 06.05.2015

The Head of State has noted that the European rules took effect in the fuel and energy complex. The President has informed that the Law "On Gas Market" had been signed recently. It has been elaborated jointly with the European Energy Community. The President has emphasized: "I guarantee that nobody will enter the Forbes list again taking the plum from state monopolies and traditionally corrupt environment in gas sector. The state will not be a milch cow anymore. Wild capitalism in this sphere should come to an end with the adoption of this Law. I want it to be heard both in Kyiv and Vienna". "The arrest of 500 million cubic meters of gas from Osthem Company carried out by the Prosecutor-General's Office jointly with the Ministry of the Interior should be also perceived in this context," the Head of State added.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32799.html>

Three terrorist suspects arrested in Kharkiv region, 06.05.2015

Two men and a woman were arrested by SBU on May 1, 2015, the press service of General Prosecutor's Office reported.

"Available at the moment case materials indicate that all three are residents of Kharkiv region have been involved in the activities organized by the Kharkiv guerrillas terrorist group. During searches conducted at the suspects' residences and in the special hiding place located in the outskirts of Kharkiv we have removed a Shmel flamethrower, an AK-47 assault rifle, a grenade launcher, grenades, electric detonators, TNT explosives and other ammunition," the report stated. According to the investigators, these citizens were involved in the commission of seven blasts in the city of Kharkiv. In particular, a 30-year-old suspect, a native of Donetsk region, was charged with blowing up the flagpole located at the intersection of Pravda Avenue and Halan Street. A 36-year-old resident of Kharkiv city was caught at the scene where he attempted to install a sticking mine in the fortifications facilities of the city.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/three_terrorist_suspects_arrested_in_kharkiv_region_331144

Meeting of NATO-Ukraine Commission at ambassadorial level was held at NATO headquarters, 06.05.2015

The main aim of the event was the preparation to the NATO-Ukraine Commission meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers which is due to be held in Antalya (Turkey) on 13 May 2015.

Director of Directorate General for International Security of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Sergiy Shutenko and Director of the Central unit of the Security Service of Ukraine Vitaliy Naida took part in the meeting from Ukrainian side.

The state of the security situation in Ukraine in the context of military aggression from Russia was reviewed during the meeting and views on expectations in this regard from the ministerial meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission in Antalya were exchanged.

Annual National Programme of NATO - Ukraine cooperation for 2015 were also presented.

<http://nato.mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/36028-u-shtab-kvartiri-nato-vidbulosya-zasidannya-komisiji-ukrajina-nato-na-rivni-posliv>

President at the NSDC meeting: One must return future NATO membership to the National Security Strategy of Ukraine, 06.05.2015

Opening the session, the President has emphasized that the threat of large-scale hostilities by the Russian-terrorist groups had been increased requiring additional measures to ensure the defense of the state. "From operative regrouping of troops, specification of tasks on the fifth wave of mobilization, improvement of anti-airborne and counter-sabotage defense of Mariupol, Berdyansk and the entire Azov coast to the National Security Strategy," the President has emphasized.

He has noted that the draft Strategy should provide for the achievement of Ukraine's defense and security sector's compatibility with respective structures of NATO member-states. The President has reminded that Russia had significantly changed the strategy at the session of its Security Council trying to use the experience of aggression and war.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32800.html>

Kyiv offers Moscow new gas tariff formation system, 06.05.2015

Ukraine has proposed Russia to use a new system of tariff formation for gas transit, it is RAB (Regulatory Asset Base), which may lead to tariff increase by 1.5 times.

National Joint-Stock Company Naftogaz Ukrainy informed Apostrophe news website.

According to director for business development Yuriy Vitrenko, transition to the new system will also guarantee certain volumes of gas pumping through the gas transportation system of Ukraine. In addition, RAB will allow to use tariff under the input/output system and to take into account the cost of gas transportation system.

The proposal of Ukraine can be considered during the gas talks among Ukraine, the EU and the Russian Federation before the end of May.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/kyiv_offers_moscow_new_gas_tariff_formation_system_331145

SSU Detains Militant From "Somali" Gang, 06.05.2015

Security Service of Ukraine counterintelligence together with the SSU Office in Kherson region and "Alpha" special forces detained a militant from "Somali" gang with the call sign "Hrek", informed on his Facebook page Markiyanyan Lubkivskiy, adviser to the head of the SSU.

"The detainee is a citizen of Ukraine, born in 1981, who took an active part in attacks on the officials of law enforcement agencies and the Armed Forces of Ukraine in ATO area" – reads the statement.

A criminal proceedings under Part 1 of Art.258-3 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine "Creating a terrorist group or terrorist organization" was opened against the detainee.

The investigation continues. At the time being the connectio

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/ssu-detains-militant-from-somali-gang.html>

Police Detains Two Wanted "DNR" Militants In Donetsk Region, 06.05.2015

Donetsk region police detained two dangerous criminals who have been wanted for a long time, informed on his Facebook page Vyacheslav Abroskin, the head of the Interior Ministry in Donetsk region. According to him, both detainees are residents of Mariupol.

"The first one, citizen X, was born in 1968, was an activist of the pro-Russian movement. In April and May last year was one of the candidates for the "people's mayor" of Mariupol, but then the crowd did not support him. Had relation to the "first DNR defense minister" Igor Khakimzyanov, born in 1980, "- wrote Abroskin.

He noted that Khakimzyanov himself was detained last May by the soldiers of "Azov" battalion, and in September he was exchanged for the soldiers of Ukrainian Armed Forces who had been hold prisoners by the militants.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/police-detains-two-wanted-dnr-militants-in-donetsk-region.html>

Ukraine approves national security strategy till 2020, 07.05.2015

Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) on May 6 approved the National Security Strategy to 2020, the country's main defense-planning document.

<http://ukrcanco.org/ukraine-approves-national-security-strategy-till-2020/>

President discussed consequences and lessons of World War II with European leaders and UN Secretary-General: We will win again as long as we are together!, 07.05.2015

President Petro Poroshenko delivered a speech at the Panel Debate «The Legacy of World War II after 70 Years» in Gdansk. The Debate was attended by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President of the European Council Donald Tusk and leaders of 14 European states. In his address, the President called Ukraine "the new forefront of Europe", urged the Heads of State not to come to Moscow to "the parade of cynicism" on May 9 and offered to consider a new European Responsibility Charter.

"I am very honored to be here with you today and to speak on behalf of the people of Ukraine - a heroic nation that shares a glory in the Great Victory of humanity against the Nazism," the President emphasized.

The Head of State noted that the EU had risen from the wreckage of World War Two. "But the European integration is not yet completed. Before the EU's Eastern borders coincide with the frontiers of European values, the struggle will go on," the President of Ukraine said.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32810.html>

Trilateral meeting between Petro Poroshenko, Bronislaw Komorowski and Ban Ki-moon was held in Poland, 07.05.2015

In the course of the working visit to Poland, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has held a meeting with President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The parties have noted the importance and symbolism of the meeting in Gdansk, where a lot of European leaders came to honor the memory of the deceased in the World War II. The interlocutors have discussed the situation in Donbas and noted the absence of full access for the verification of ceasefire and withdrawal of heavy armament.

Petro Poroshenko has emphasized that UN should play greater role in the settlement of the situation in Donbas and, inter alia, send a peacekeeping mission there.

The Head of State has also noted that humanitarian situation in the area of conflict was extremely difficult and the delivery of Ukrainian and international humanitarian aid was impossible.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32808.html>

Ukraine adopts May 8 and poppy to remember WWII victims, 07.05.2015

Ukraine is changing the way it commemorates World War II, as euronews correspondent Maria Korenyuk reports from Kyiv. "For the first time in Ukraine's history, May 8 has become the Day of Remembrance for World War II victims. According to historians, during those years Ukraine lost about 5 million soldiers and 4 million civilians," she said. War in Ukraine is very much part of the present, not just the past. This year the country is adopting the poppy to remember the victims of World War II.

<http://www.euronews.com/2015/05/07/ukraine-adopts-may-8-and-poppy-to-remember-wwii-victims/>

SBU gives PGO materials on Surkov and his deputy's involvement in terrorism in Ukraine – Nalyvaichenko, 07.05.2015

"All the materials of the investigation established and found by the SBU when executing the order of the PGO, are sent to the PGO. We also sent materials and evidence that, according to the SBU is enough to suspect Russian citizen you mentioned [Surkov] and his first assistant Inal Ardzinba in committing crimes connected to terrorism on the territory of our state, [crimes connected] to calls to overthrow the constitutional order and latest high-profile crimes, including contract killings in Odesa," SBU Chief Valentyn Nalyvaichenko said during his visit to SBU Academy in Kyiv. "I'd like to note the complete cooperation and the intention that this will be the materials that will get to court. When they get to court, [we] can and must talk of giving them to international experts," he said when commenting on the statement by an international organization that there was no foreign presence in the Maidan events and that the SBU failed to present materials proving it.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264322.html>

Regular call-up to military service in Ukraine to be conducted through April-June, 2015 – decree, 07.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has made amendments to the decree on the duration of regular call-up to military service of Ukrainian citizens and discharge of soldiers in 2015. According to the signed decree that was posted on Thursday, the duration of the spring call-up was prolonged from May to June. The same decree defines the duration of the autumn call-up – from October to November, 2015.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264290.html>

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/the-president-of-ukraine-signed-decree-on-another-wave-of-demobilization.html>

Akhmetov company top managers interrogated at SBU, 07.05.2015

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) interrogates top managers of a company owned by Ukrainian tycoon Rinat Akhmetov over the case of the miners' strikes held in Kyiv last month. This has been announced by SBU chairman Valentyn Nalyvaichenko at the National Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine, an Ukrinform correspondent reports.

In particular, when asked whether the SBU is investigating into involvement of Akhmetov in financing of the miners' strikes, Nalyvaichenko said: "The Security Service has issued summons to the top managers of a company owned by a man whom you mentioned. The SBU investigators interrogate the top managers of this company within the criminal proceeding." Nalyvaichenko recalled that the Security Service had instituted criminal proceedings over illegal funding, of the so-called miners' protests from abroad.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/akhmetov_company_top_managers_interrogated_at_sbu_331185

Poroshenko in Poland pays tribute to those killed in World War II, 08.05.2015

Paying a working visit to Poland, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko took part in a ceremony to commemorate those killed in the World War II at the Heroes of Westerplatte Monument to the perished workers of the shipbuilding plant in Gdansk.

This has been reported by the press office of the Head of State.

The ceremony was also attended by President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowski, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President of the European Council Donald Tusk, the presidents of Lithuania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Romania and Croatia.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/poroshenko_in_poland_pays_tribute_to_those_killed_in_world_war_ii_331215

Breaking with the past, and Russia, Ukraine now celebrates victory in WWII on May 8, 08.05.2015

News of the defeat of Nazi Germany reached Moscow on May 9, so the Soviet Union, and latterly the former Soviet Union republics, have traditionally celebrated the victory a day after the countries of western Europe.

The new date was set by a decree of Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko "On the celebration in 2015 of the 70th anniversary of the victory over Nazism in Europe and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II."

The new date is not the only symbolic change marking Ukraine's break with its Soviet past. The symbol of the memory of war victims in Ukraine has now become the red poppy, as in many European countries. The St. George's Ribbon, which was the traditional symbol in the FSU, is now shunned in most of Ukraine, as it was appropriated as the symbol of the Russian-backed militants now fighting Ukrainian government forces in the east of the country.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1075843-breaking-with-the-past-and-russia-ukraine-now-celebrates-victory-in-wwii-on-may-8.html>

Russia and Ukraine celebrated Victory Day's 70th anniversary very differently, 10.05.2015

Russia celebrated the 70th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany during World War II in epic style on Saturday, with a massive military parade in Moscow's Red Square.

The national parade during the largest secular holiday in Russia is a chance for the country to display its military might; military vehicles and hoards of soldiers were the centerpiece of the Victory Day celebrations, which are held annually. But the 70th anniversary doesn't come along every year.

In both countries, it was a sight to be seen.

In Kiev, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko led a small procession of officials and diplomats to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to honor those who died during WWII. During an address to the group, Poroshenko made a clear distinction between Ukraine marking the day and Russia's commemoration.

"May 9 will always be a red date in the Ukrainian calendar, just as these red poppies that symbolize the remembrance of the fallen," said Poroshenko. "We will never celebrate this day under the Russian scenario again, because it provides for the cold-blooded use of the Victory Day for an apology to the expansionist policy regarding neighbors aimed at keeping them in the sphere of one's influence and restoration of empire."

<http://mashable.com/2015/05/09/russia-ukraine-victory-day/>

Ukrzaliznytsia declares technical default, 12.05.2015

The Ukrainian State Railway Administration Ukrzaliznytsia has informed its creditors that the company is in technical default.

Acting Director of the Ukrainian State Railway Company Ukrzaliznytsia Maksym Blank said.

"Today we have informed our creditors about technical default on certain debt obligations of Ukrzaliznytsia and the beginning of the negotiation process on domestic debt," he said.

"We also informed our internal and external creditors about directions and volumes of restructuring that Ukrzaliznytsia is planning to conduct in 2015," Blank said.

"The total amount of debt restructuring is about UAH 32 billion... We expect that the bulk of the talks will be held within the next two months," he said.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335802/ukrzaliznytsia_declares_technical_default

Ukraine begins antitrust investigation against Gazprom, 14.05.2015

The Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine (AMC) has launched an investigation into violations of Ukraine's antimonopoly legislation by the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom, the acting head of the Committee Mykola Barash said during a press conference.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine-abroad/unian-ukraine-begins-antitrust-investigation-against-gazprom-388515.html>

Ukrainian parliament approves mobilization of demobilized military in special period, 14.05.2015

The law invalidates the regulation during a special period that prohibits the mobilisation of those who have been demobilised over the last six months.

The explanatory note to the bill states that the provisions of the third paragraph of Article 23 of the Law of Ukraine "On mobilisation preparation and mobilisation", which supplement this Law according to the Law dated March 18, 2015 (the changes took effect on April 15, 2015),

provides for deferment for military service during the mobilisation of reservists from among citizens who have already passed the military service, and were transferred to the reserve.

As noted by the head of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on national security and defence, Serhiy Pashinsky, the parliament has also adopted a law according to which the demobilised soldiers are being transferred to the operational reserve of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1077867-ukrainian-parliament-approves-mobilization-of-demobilized-military-in-special-period.html>

Ukrainian president thanks Europe for its solidarity and unity with Ukraine, 15.05.2015

Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko has met French president Francois Hollande in Germany and has also held talks with European Council President Donald Tusk.

Poroshenko and Tusk reportedly discussed the possibility of sending an EU mission to Ukraine to assess the situation in the country's east, where Ukrainian troops are fighting Russian-backed militants. Poroshenko spoke on the conflict, saying: "Today Ukraine is fighting for democracy, for freedom, for European dignity. We'll win the battle only when we become united. I want to say thank you to Europe for its solidarity and unity."

Poroshenko underlined to his European counterparts that the conflict in Ukraine's east is a fight for European values

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/poroshenko-hollande-427354.html>

Delegation of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine takes part in spring session of NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Budapest, 18.05.2015

The main issues of the session are:

- threats from the Russian Federation to the Euro-Atlantic security;
- revitalization of the terrorist group Islamic state;
- Alliance's adaptation to the hybrid threats, which include the information, political and economic methods of warfare instead of exclusively military approach;
- future of Afghanistan and its National Security Forces in connection with the completion of the NATO military mission and starting of its advisory and training mission "Resolute support";
- achievement of the political agreement in nuclear talks between Iran and Western powers;
- situation in the Balkans, in the context of recent acts of violence in the Republic of Macedonia;
- situation in the Middle East and North Africa, including the challenges caused by conflict in Syria, Iraq and Libya, leading to a rapid increase in the number of refugees and migrants who hope to get to Europe. The Ukrainian question is centerpiece of the session.

<http://nato.mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/36490-delegacija-verkhovnoji-radi-ukrajini-beru-uchasty-u-vesnyanij-sesiji-parlamentsykoji-asambleji-nato-v-budapesti>

Kernes evacuated from court room due to life threat; other convicted bombarded with eggs, 18.05.2015

Operatives of the special Hryfon unit of the Interior Ministry of Ukraine evacuated Kharkiv mayor Hennadii Kernes from the court room of Poltava Kyivsky district court due to threat to his life. This was announced by the convict's lawyer Oleksandr Hulchenko.

According to him, the latest information was received that those demonstrating in front of the court building are armed with fire weapons.

Besides, other convicts have been bombarded with eggs.

On Monday, a preparatory meeting on trial of Kernes and his two bodyguards convicted of murder threats, tortures, and kidnapping was to take place.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/336551/kernes_evacuated_from_court_room_due_to_life_threat_other_convicted_bombarded_with_eggs

Kiev to Prosecute 2 Russian Soldiers Captured in Ukraine for 'Terrorist Acts', 18.05.2015

Ukraine on Monday accused two captured Russian servicemen of having killed Ukrainian troops in fighting in its east and said they would be prosecuted for "terrorist acts."

The Ukrainians seized on the capture of the two Russians, both wounded, to support their accusations of direct Russian military involvement in the separatist conflict despite a cease-fire signed in February. Russia denied any role there.

In a video posted online by the Ukrainian interior ministry, one of the prisoners gave his name as Alexander Alexandrov. He said he had been on a spying mission in Ukraine as part of a 14-member special forces group from the central Russian city of Tolyatti.

"We were discovered. I was wounded in the leg as I tried to get away. ... We've been here four or five days," he said.

The capture and possible prosecution of the two Russians and the potential embarrassment for Russia's Vladimir Putin come as the United States and its European Union allies press Moscow to fully implement the Minsk peace accords as a step to ending the crisis.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/520992.html>

Deputy Mayor of Ternopil detained for 217,000 hryvnia bribe - Prosecutor General's Office, 19.05.2015

The Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine (PGO) together with Interior Ministry personnel exposed illegal activities of the corrupt deputy chairman of Ternopil, Ternopil regional council lawmaker, who, abusing his official position, systematically demanded and received illegal profit for granting the use of land in the city.

In particular, during the search, law enforcement officers seized 135,000 hryvnia, which he demanded and received from a citizen for lease of land.

According to the PGO, the deputy mayor demanded and received illegal profit totaling 217,000 hryvnia.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/336754/deputy_mayor_of_ternopil_detained_for_217000_hryvnia_bribe_prosecutor_generals_office

SBU uncovers international financial scam involving Night Wolves biker, 19.05.2015

Officers of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) have exposed an illegal scheme involving Russian biker Alexandr Zaldostanov, nicknamed Surgeon, who in conjunction with the management of two financial companies Forex Trend and Forex Trend Ltd. seized the funds of citizens of Ukraine, Russia and the CIS countries, some of which were used to finance terrorists of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics.

"It has been established that the offenders seized the funds that citizens invested in the companies for further investment into international financial markets. The fraudsters converted these funds into cash through accounts opened by members of the Night Wolves biker club, and part of the assigned amount was transferred to support militants from the DPR and LPR," the SBU press center said in a statement released on Tuesday.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266605.html>

Valeriy Chaly discussed further support of Japan towards Ukraine, 19.05.2015

Valeriy Chaly expressed gratitude to Japan for upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. He noted that the position of Japan was very important, especially on the eve of the G7 Summit that will be held on June 7-8 in Germany. Ukraine expects the given Summit to touch upon the issue of peaceful settlement in Donbas and ways to counter Russian aggression. The parties discussed the fulfillment of the Minsk agreements and the prospects of deploying the international peacekeeping mission under the aegis of the UN in Ukraine.

Yasumasa Nagamine assured of Japan's readiness to further provide comprehensive support to Ukraine, inter alia, through consolidation of efforts of the international community.

Valeriy Chaly thanked Japan for the large-scale financial aid to Ukraine, namely the allocation of USD 1.5 billion of credit aid for the implementation of a series of projects to support development.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32893.html>

Ukraine's Defense Ministry asks for another 7.7 bln, 19.05.2015

"In view of increasing number of personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine after the adoption of the Law of Ukraine 'On the Armed Forces of Ukraine' and conduct of partial mobilization, the Defense Ministry of Ukraine asks to provide UAH 7.7 billion to meet the immediate needs in 2015," the Defense Ministry notes in its appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

Of this sum, UAH 3.9 billion are to be allocated to pay money allowances to the servicemen, UAH 1.8 billion - to provide clothing and equipment supply, UAH 1.3 billion - to provide feeding support to servicemen. In addition, another UAH 432.5 million are needed to pay assistance to the families of the dead and wounded soldiers, who took part in the anti-terrorist operation, UAH 181.8 million - to arrange training centers, landfills, field camps and checkpoints, as well as UAH 120 million - to pay compensation for hiring military premises.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/ukraines_defense_ministry_asks_for_another_77_bln_331487

Institute of financial ombudsman to be created in Ukraine, 19.05.2015

This is stipulated in the comprehensive program for financial sector development for 2015-2020, which was approved by the National Reforms Council.

To improve the standards of protecting the rights of consumers and financial market investors, this program will also raise the standards of the disclosure of information on financial services, establishes clear sanctions for market participants for violating the rights of financial services consumers, introduces a mechanism to protect the rights of minority shareholders, and increases the transparency of payments to the depositors of banks undergoing liquidation.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/economic/266590.html>

Rada appoints Ihor Bilous as State Property Fund chief, 19.05.2015

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has appointed Ihor Bilous as Head of State Property Fund of Ukraine.

All in all, 258 MPs voted in favor of his appointment on Tuesday.

Bilous led State Fiscal Service from its creation in June 2014 until February 24, 2015.

He had previously led the State Tax Service.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266490.html>

President of Ukraine discussed international support with President of Slovakia, 20.05.2015

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko had a meeting with President of Slovakia Andrej Kiska, who is on an official visit to Ukraine. The parties discussed the importance of international support of Ukraine in its integration into the EU and counteraction to the Russian aggression. The parties negotiated the situation in Donbas. Petro Poroshenko emphasized that Ukraine clearly complied with the Minsk agreements. However, the opposite party doesn't fulfill its obligations. The President informed on recent detention of two Russian regular soldiers in the ATO area. "It is another irrefutable evidence of Russian aggression against Ukraine and presence of Russian Armed Forces in the Ukrainian territory," Petro Poroshenko said. The Ukrainian President expressed hope that the EU Summit of June 19 would consider the issue of prolonging sanctions against Russia in conjunction with the issue of full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32896.html>

http://portal.rada.gov.ua/en/news/top_news/109865.html

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/32898.html>

Poroshenko vows to amend law on UPA, 20.05.2015

According to the statement, Poroshenko also told the Polish president about the "lack of real progress in implementing the Minsk agreement" and "the continuation of the tense situation in the Donbas." At the same time, a statement posted on the Web site of the President of Ukraine only mentions that the two sides "exchanged views on the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga." Polish Foreign Minister Grzegorz Schetyna also said during a broadcast on Polish Radio that the chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman had spoken of the need to amend the law "On the legal status and honoring the memory of fighters for Ukrainian independence in the 20th century" (No. 2538-1).

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1080155-poroshenko-vows-to-amend-law-on-upa.html>

Ukrainian govt proposes urgent change in law on foreign military access to country's territory, 20.05.2015

The Ukrainian Cabinet will ask Verkhovna Rada to change the law regulating the access and presence of foreign armed forces in the country's territory.

"The government will ask the parliament to consider and allow admission of foreign armed forces in the event of such foreign forces conduct operations to maintain peace and security under the United Nations or European Union resolutions, Yatseniuk told the government on Wednesday. Ukraine's President and National Security and Defense Council came up with an initiative to send peacekeeping troops to Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which are temporarily out of the Ukrainian government's control, "with the aim to implement the Minsk agreements and restore full control by the Ukrainian government over Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as over the national border between Ukraine and Russia."

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266847.html>

SBU freezes bank accounts of ten self-proclaimed 'ministers', terrorist' leaders, 20.05.2015

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has said it, in cooperation with the State Service for Financial Monitoring of Ukraine to combat the financing of terrorism, has revealed and frozen the bank accounts of ten leaders of the terrorist organizations of the so-called 'Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics'.

"In particular, transactions with accounts belonging to the self-declared 'ministers' and 'chairmen of people's councils' of the terrorists have been frozen. Law enforcement agencies revealed over UAH 14 million in the accounts of nine national financial establishments of the so-called 'chairman of council of ministers', 'state security minister', 'transport minister', 'energy and coal industry minister', and other terrorist pretender officials," reads a report issued by the SBU press centre on Wednesday.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266896.html>

Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine V.Muzhenko visits NATO strategic command for operations (Mons, Belgium), 21.05.2015

During the visit V.Muzhenko met with the leadership of Allied Command, acquainted with the activities of its main elements and discussed urgent issues of interaction and practical cooperation.

<http://nato.mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/36669-nachalynik-generalynogo-shtabu-zbrojnih-sil-ukrajini-vmuzhenko-vidvidav-shtab-strategichnogo-komanduvannya-nato-z-operacij-m-mons>
<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266715.html>

Russian Main Intelligence Directorate coordinates militants' attacks from Grad and Uragan MLRSes in the Donbas – SBU, 21.05.2015

SBU stated that the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Federation (GRU) masterminds and coordinates rocket artillery attacks committed by the militants against the Ukrainian servicemen and civilians in the Donbas.

"We see clear evidence that the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Federation special forces operatives create favorable conditions for the use of Grad and Uragan multiple rocket launchers, which come from the territory of the Russian Federation to the territory of Ukraine to conduct shelling of both the Armed Forces of Ukraine and civilian population, and they also provide security of the equipment" the Security Service of Ukraine Counterintelligence Department Head Vitalii Naida said at a briefing in Kyiv on Thursday.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337001/russian_main_intelligence_directorate_coordinates_militants_attacks_from_grad_and_uragan_mlrses_in_the

Parliament Denounced A Series of Agreements with Russia, 21.05.2015

This is stated by the official website of the Verkhovna Rada.

In particular, the agreements to have been denounced:

Agreement on transit of Russian military units temporarily located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova through the territory of Ukraine (dated 04 December 1998)

Agreement on mutual protection of classified information (15 November 2001)

Agreement on cooperation in military intelligence (7 February 2002)

Agreement on the organization of military interstate transportation and payments for them (12 September 2002)

Agreement on military cooperation (25 November 1995)

It should be recalled that the Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk explained the reasons for the denunciation of agreements, including agreements on military cooperation, "the Russian Federation is an aggressor state, the Russian Federation illegally annexed the Crimea, Russia carried out military intervention in Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Russia poses a threat to Ukrainian state and its territorial integrity."

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/parliament-denounced-a-series-of-agreements-with-russia.html>

Rada passes bill on national police, 21.05.2015

A total of 284 MPs supported the respective bill during the plenary sitting on Thursday.

When presenting the bill at a sitting of the profile committee on May 13, Interior Minister Arsen Avakov said that according to the bill the Interior Ministry should be a civil formation, including the National Police, National Guard, border troops, Emergency Situations Service, Migration Service and the service center of the Interior Ministry.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267012.html>

Parliament plans to ban advance payment of NBU's profit to national budget, 22.05.2015

The Ukrainian parliament on Friday passed at first reading the president's draft law No. 2743 on amending the Budget Code of Ukraine on developing the institutional ability of the National Bank of Ukraine (NBU) and banning advance payments of the NBU's profit to the budget, the adoption of which is one of the structural benchmarks of the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

267 lawmakers supported the document.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267370.html>

Ukrainian parliament allows use of video and audio records in official bribery cases, 22.05.2015

The law authorizes the use of video and audio records in courts to prove cases of bribery and extortion by officials. Also, the law as a whole is designed to strengthen the role of civil society in combatting corruption by introducing the institution of public prosecution in criminal proceedings.

It is stipulated that a natural or legal person can be appointed a public prosecutor if they are directly affected by a criminal offense or if they have knowledge of crimes involving official corruption in relation to other persons, as stipulated in Article 368 (acceptance of an offer, promise or receiving illegal benefits by an official), Article 370 (provocation of bribery) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. At the same time the public prosecutor has the same rights as the investigator and the prosecutor, and becomes a full participant in criminal proceedings. The chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee for legislative support to law enforcement, Andriy Kozhemiakin, said that according to the law the public prosecutor shall be "provided with a legal weapon in the fight against corruption, which allows the initiation of a special procedure for criminal proceedings; use technical means to record the crime; apply for the application of security measures in criminal proceedings; appeal against the inaction and other illegal actions of the investigator and the prosecutor."

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1081035-ukrainian-parliament-allows-use-of-video-and-audio-records-in-official-bribery-cases.html>

Minister of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine signs final document of the International Energy Charter, 22.05.2015

On May 21, 2015, on behalf of Ukraine Minister of Energy and Coal Industry Volodymyr Demchyshyn signed the final document of the International Conference (Hague II) under to the International Energy Charter.

The preliminary Agreement, the so-called European Energy Charter, needed thorough modernisation due to the change in the overall situation in the global energy sector. There appeared the necessity to update the given Contract according to contemporary challenges and demands of the energy market.

The principal objective for the signatory countries (about 70 in number) is to ensure energy security and sustainable, predictable development aimed at meet the growing demand for energy in the world. Apart from that, the International Energy Charter expands the geography of its actions.

It is a strategic goal for Ukraine to join the International Energy Charter. This allows us to ensure the support of the countries that share the same principles of action in the energy field and ready to face together all current and future challenges in energy sector.

http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/publish/article?art_id=248177693×tamp=1432279501000

Interior Ministry sends summons to Firtash for questioning, investigative actions – Avakov, 23.05.2015

Ukraine's Interior Ministry has sent a summons to Ukrainian businessman Dmytro Firtash for questioning and carrying out investigative actions, Interior Minister Arsen Avakov has said.

"In connection with the investigation into the criminal case on Ostchem Group's corruption schemes and the theft of the state property of Ukraine, the investigative department of the Ukrainian Interior Ministry sent a summons to Dmytro Firtash for questioning and carrying out investigative actions," Avakov wrote on his Facebook page.

According to the minister, the authority has appealed to the United States FBI with an invitation to participate in joint investigative actions on the case.

"Given the materials on the damages to the state of Ukraine available to the investigators of the two countries, the Interior Ministry is ready to carry out joint investigative actions on the case both in the territory of Ukraine and in the United States," the minister said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267532.html>

Ukrainian speaker enacts partial departure from human rights convention pending end of Russia's aggression, 25.05.2015

Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada Chairman Volodymyr Groysman on Monday signed a parliamentary declaration on the departure from some of the country's obligations under the Human Rights Convention until the full end of Russia's armed aggression, the Ukrainian parliament announced on its website on Monday.

It was reported that last Thursday, May 21, the parliament approved the declaration, whereby the country abandons some of the commitments it assumed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms until military aggression ends in full. The relevant decree was favored by 249 parliamentarians.

Among other things, the document provides for "full termination of Russian military aggression" through removal of all illegal armed groups and restoration by Ukraine of full control over the national border.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267656.html>

Dnipropetrovsk Regional Council declares Russia aggressor state, LPR and DPR terrorist organizations, 27.05.2015

The corresponding decision to appeal to the United Nations, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development, the national parliaments of the world was supported by 92 MPs out of 103 registered in the session hall.

<http://www.veooz.com/news/OJ9caPx.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1082593-dnipropetrovsk-regional-council-declares-russia-aggressor-state-lpr-and-dpr-terrorist-organizations.html?>

Poroshenko Signs Ukraine Debt Repayment Legislation, 28.05.2015

The Ukrainian cabinet has said the legislation, adopted by parliament last week, is needed to protect "state assets" from "unscrupulous creditors."

Russia says that if Ukraine were to default on its obligations, it would "defend its national interests." The country holds a \$3 billion Ukrainian Eurobond whose full repayment is due by the end of the year. Ukraine's move comes as it negotiates the terms for restructuring \$23 billion worth of foreign debt. Kyiv hopes to secure the next tranche of a \$17.5 billion bailout program with the IMF this summer to shore up its foreign currency reserves.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-poroshenko-signs-debt-repayment-legislation/27042053.html>

Poroshenko to personally introduce Saakashvili as Odesa region governor on Saturday – source, 29.05.2015

This became known on Friday evening, Odesa Regional Administration Press Secretary Mykola Pokrovsky told. The new governor will be represented by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in person.

The incumbent Odesa governor, Ihor Palytsia, was appointed to his office on May 6, 2014, by the then acting President of Ukraine and Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Oleksandr Turchynov.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1083763-poroshenko-to-personally-introduce-saakashvili-as-odesa-region-governor-on-saturday-source.html>

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/cStuaFgMplmLESP0hStXGa>

Saakashvili becomes Ukrainian citizen – decree, 30.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has signed a decree on admission of Ukrainian citizenship to Mikheil Saakashvili.

According to a decree posted on the president's website on Saturday on admission of Ukrainian citizenship to Saakashvili as a person the admission of Ukrainian citizen for whom is of Ukraine's state interest, Saakashvili, born in Georgia and living in Kyiv, acquires Ukrainian citizenship.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/269009.html>

Saakashvili to be appointed Odesa governor today - Odesa Regional Administration, 30.05.2015

KYIV, May 30 /Ukrinform/. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has made a submission on the appointment of ex-President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili as chairman of the Odesa Regional State Administration, having granted the request of the President of Ukraine.

Spokesperson for President of Ukraine, Stanislav Tseholko, has posted this on Facebook. The new governor is to be officially presented in Odesa today, at 14:30, media report citing local officials.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/saakashvili_to_be_appointed_odesa_governor_today_odesa_regional_administration_331842

Poroshenko introduces Saakashvili as head of Odesa Regional Administration, 30.05.2015

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has introduced former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili as head of Odesa Regional Administration.

"Proper words should be found for everyone in multiethnic Odesa region," Poroshenko said, addressing Saakashvili and repeated these words in several languages – Ukrainian, Russian, Romanian and Bulgarian.

He said that among Saakashvili's tasks is fighting against corruption, the provision of transparency in work of customs agencies and protection of rights of citizens and democracy. Poroshenko thanked Ihor Palytsia who had been head of Odesa Regional Administration since May 6, 2014 for stabilizing the situation in Odesa region after May 2, 2014.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/269002.html>

Terrorism / Separatism

Militants fire 'banned' weapons at Ukrainian army positions overnight, 01.05.2015

In the attacks, which were recorded from 1800 to midnight on Thursday, the militants used weapons of types that they should have been withdrawn far from the front line, according to the Minsk peace agreements, the press center said.

It said the militants shelled the positions of Ukrainian troops with 120mm mortars and 122mm caliber artillery. According to the Minsk agreement, all weapons of caliber over 100mm were to be withdrawn to create a 50 kilometer wide security zone along the length of the front line between the two side. In Donetsk region the militants fired 122mm artillery at Ukrainian army positions at the town of Avdiivka. In the same area the militants also used 120mm mortars, heavy machine guns and small arms to attack Ukrainian army positions.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1073866-militants-fire-banned-weapons-at-ukrainian-army-positions-overnight.html>

MILITANTS OPENED FIRED AT UKRAINIAN POSITIONS 29 TIMES, USING ARTILLERY - ATO HEADQUARTERS, 01.05.2015

"The positions of the ATO forces near Pisky, Shyrokyne, and Maiorske were attacked by militants who used mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms, and near Avdiivka - 122 mm artillery and heavy machine guns twice. In the Luhansk region the militants used an automatic grenade launcher against the positions of the Ukrainian military near Shchastia.

"In addition, the gangs opened fire from automatic grenade launchers, small arms, anti-tank missile system and a machine gun on the positions of the ATO forces in the area of Sokolnyky and Triokhizbenka. During the period two drones of the militants moving in the direction of Avdiivka were recorded," the summary concludes.

<http://utr.tv/en/news/hot-news/item/27187-militants-opened-fired-at-ukrainian-positions-29-times-using-artillery-ato-headquarters.html>

Chief Monitor of OSCE Special Monitoring Mission calls for respect of monitors' safety and freedom of movement, 02.05.2015

The most serious incident occurred early Saturday afternoon when a patrol in Shyrokyne was hit by small arms fire. There were no injuries.

Also on Saturday in Pisky (near Donetsk airport), four mortar shells landed nearby an SMM patrol while it was approaching an observation point. There was no fighting in the area at the time and the situation was quiet. Less than two hours later, the same patrol, while stationary in Adviiivka, came under cross fire including by 152mm artillery that is proscribed under the Minsk agreements. In both cases there were no injuries.

The Chief Monitor also voiced concern over an incident on May 1, when the members of the battalion on the ground interfered with the work of an SMM observation point near Shyrokyne.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/154781>

Militants use heavy artillery systems to shell ATO forces in Pisky, Shyrokyne, Avdiivka, 02.05.2015

The ATO forces in the town of Avdiivka, the villages of Opytne, Pisky [near the destroyed Donetsk airport], Triokhizbenka, and the village of Shyrokyne [located at the coast of the Sea of Azov, not far from the Ukrainian-held city of Mariupol in Donetsk region] were under fire from heavy artillery systems. Militants also used 82mm-caliber mortars eight times.

"In Donetsk region, militants shelled our positions near Avdiivka from a 120mm-caliber mortar, 122mm-caliber artillery systems, and a tank. A skirmish occurred near the village of Pisky from 2214 to 2240 Kyiv time on Friday. Dense fire from small arms by Ukrainian troops forced the enemy to retreat," the press center said. The hottest spot in Luhansk region was the village of Triokhizbenka where the ATO forces were shelled by militants from 120mm-caliber mortars, automatic grenade launchers and machine guns. "Over the period under review, the Ukrainian forces spotted eight enemy drones flying in the sky in Donetsk region," the ATO press center said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1074073-militants-use-heavy-artillery-systems-to-shell-ato-forces-in-pisky-shyrokyne-avdiivka.html>

MILITANTS VIOLATE DONBAS TRUCE 35 TIMES ON SATURDAY, 02.05.2015

"The enemy violated the ceasefire 35 times, used mortars 14 times," the ATO press center wrote on Facebook on Saturday evening.

Pro-Russian militants also attacked the positions of Ukrainian troops along the line of contact 11 times, using automatic and hand-held grenade launchers and small arms.

The ATO forces near the town of Avdiivka in Donetsk region were under fire – militants were using anti-tank grenade launchers, 82mm- and 120mm-caliber mortars, and 122mm- and 152mm-caliber artillery systems.

<http://utr.tv/en/news/politics/item/27235-militants-violate-donbas-truce-35-times-on-saturday.html>

Spot Report by OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 03.05.2015

On 2 May, at 11:55hrs, en route to Shyrokyne, approximately 1km west of the entrance of the village, the SMM heard a burst of small-arms fire originating from north-west of its position. The SMM armoured vehicle sustained a direct hit to its rear right corner from a single 5.45mm bullet fired in the burst. The SMM patrol did not sustain casualties as a result of the attack.

On 2 May, at 14:45hrs, while monitoring at a Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) observation post in Pisky (government-controlled, 13km north-west of Donetsk), four 82mm mortar shells impacted 100m from the SMM's location. The SMM patrol did not sustain casualties. The SMM took shelter and retreated from the area as soon as it was possible.

On 2 May, at 16:05hrs, the same SMM patrol visited the JCCC patrol base in Avdiivka (government-controlled, 15km north-west of Donetsk). Whilst there, the SMM observed what it assessed to be shelling by 152mm artillery. The SMM took cover in a nearby underground shelter and was only able to depart from the location following the implementation of a five-minute local ceasefire. The SMM patrol did not sustain casualties.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/154786>

Russian troops use tanks to shell Novotoshkivka – Moskal, 03.05.2015

"After 4 p.m. the village of Novotoshkivka was subjected to shelling from tanks and mortars. Several shells and mines have flown into the center of the village near the previously destroyed shopping center and water tower," he stated. According to Moskal, a few high-rise buildings had their doors and windows blown out by the blast wave, and a few shells and mines exploded in gardens and did not cause serious damage.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/334977/russian_troops_use_tanks_to_shell_novotoshkivka_moskal

Putin's mercenaries locate their bases near schools and kindergartens of Donetsk, 03.05.2015

In particular, according to air reconnaissance of the regiment, one of the terrorist bases in Donetsk is located in Budionovsk district of the city on 10 Prokofieva str., nearby secondary school #118 and residential homes.

The intelligence of Dnipro-1 recorded 18 tanks, one IFV, 46 Ural trucks and two APCs in close proximity to schools and kindergartens.

http://en.censor.net.ua/video_news/335019/putins_mercenaries_locate_their_bases_near_schools_and_kindergartens_of_donetsk_air_reconnaissance_video

ATO forces in Shyrokyne being shelled from mortars, howitzers; casualties reported, 03.05.2015

It's the ninth time on Sunday, May 3, when pro-Russian militants started shelling Ukrainian troops positioned in the village of Shyrokyne, eastern Ukraine, using 152mm-caliber self-propelled artillery systems, the Defense of Mariupol organization wrote on its Facebook page.

"At 1815 Kyiv time the enemy began firing for the ninth time today on the Ukrainian positions in the village of Shyrokyne. 152mm self-propelled artillery systems are being used. As a result, residents of the eastern districts of Mariupol can hear powerful cannonade,"

<http://www.unian.info/war/1074311-ato-forces-in-shyrokyne-being-shelled-from-mortars-howitzers-casualties-reported.html>

Russian-separatist forces cite shelling to justify next offensive, 03.05.2015

On the May 1 Labor Day holiday, Kremlin-backed separatist leader Oleksandr Zakharchenko said that his forces would take more territory around his home base of Donetsk to "guarantee the safety of our land" from attacks by the Ukrainian military.

Donetsk, which lost more than half of its pre-war population of 1 million people, was pounded with rocket salvos the next day.

Social media from 10:30 p.m. until after midnight were filled with videos shot by local residents, some of whom narrated in English, of shelling of the regional capital, which Kyiv hasn't controlled since mid-April 2014.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/kyiv-post-plus/russian-separatist-forces-cite-shelling-to-justify-next-offensive-387714.html>

Militants attack in earnest: 56 ceasefire violations in first half of Sunday, 04.05.2015

"As in the previous days, the enemy used Grad BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, 152mm and 122mm heavy artillery systems, and 120mm mortars to shell the Ukrainian positions along the contact line," the statement reads.

In particular, according to the ATO headquarters, for six minutes starting from midnight, missiles from Grad launchers were being fired at the Ukrainian positions near the town of Avdiyivka in Donetsk region. The enemy used 152mm artillery to fire on the positions of Ukrainian forces near the village of Shyrokyne.

What is more, 122mm artillery systems were used to shell ATO forces near Avdiyivka twice and near the villages of Opytne, Vodiane and Shyrokyne one time each. Fire from 120mm mortars was opened to attack Ukrainian forces near Opytne three times, near the village of Pisky and the town of Avdiyivka twice each, and near Shyrokyne and Krymske one time each, ATO headquarters noted.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/militants_attack_in_earnest_56_ceasefire_violations_in_first_half_of_sunday_331085

Powerful preparation fire upon Ukrainian positions conducted from Donetsk, 04.05.2015

Facebook user Igor Savchuk noted: "The cease-fire is over. Separatists conduct heavy preparation fire in Donetsk and its vicinities. In Dzerzhynsk, powerful explosions [occur]. In Krasnoarmiisk, loud crashes are heard.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335056/powerful_preparation_fire_upon_ukrainian_positions_conducted_from_donetsk

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 04.05.2015

The SMM monitored the implementation of the "Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements". The SMM, based on its monitoring – which was restricted by third parties and by security considerations* – observed ongoing fighting in and around Donetsk airport and Shyrokyne. The SMM observed military movement and presence along the contact line.

Whilst in the "DPR"-controlled village of Savelivka (53km north-east of Donetsk), the SMM heard more than 20 incoming explosions at a location approximately 2km east of its position. Residents told the SMM that live-fire training exercises by the "DPR" – which they said were an almost daily occurrence – were ongoing. The SMM observed troop movements and trenching in government-controlled areas to the north-north-east of Donetsk.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/155091>

Massive rise in number of militant attacks on Ukrainian forces, fears of Russian-militant offensive grow, 04.05.2015

"The number of ceasefire violations over the past day was 95, which is almost at the level seen before the conclusion of the [peace] agreements in Minsk [on February 12.] The enemy is no longer hesitating to fire on our positions several times a day with heavy artillery and rockets, trying to provoke Anti-Terrorist Operation forces into giving the appropriate response."

The huge increase in attacks came just days after Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko warned that the combined Russian-militant forces might launch a fresh offensive in mid-May. "We keep getting more evidence and information proving that the aggressor will commence a military offensive in the second half of May," Poroshenko said on April 30.

"[But] I don't want to frighten anyone, and you should know that the country is capable of protecting its citizens," the Ukrainian president said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1074373-massive-rise-in-number-of-militant-attacks-on-ukrainian-forces-fears-of-russian-militant-offensive-grow.html>

Ukraine Has Withdrawn All the Heavy Armaments From the Clash Line – Motuzianyk, 04.05.2015

The Ukrainian side has withdrawn all the heavy weapons from the clash line in the Donbas as required by the Minsk agreement, said Olexandr Motuzianyk, ATO spokesman at a briefing today in Kiev, informs "Ukrainska Pravda".

"According to the Minsk agreement, all the heavy weapons prescribed by the protocols have been withdrawn by Ukrainian side to the distance provided by the Agreement... There are no our MRLS' there, all of them are at the designated storage areas," – he said.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/ukraine-has-withdrawn-all-the-heavy-armaments-from-the-clash-line-motuzianyk.html>

In Kiev during the arrest robbers killed two policemen, 04.05.2015

In Kiev today about 1:30 in Desnyanskiy area during the arrest of two suspects police were killed and three wounded.

"Night two unknown masked men, at gunpoint, committed robbery at a petrol station. Attackers wounded in the arm and took the gas station employee from the fund of 800 hryvnia " - said in a statement. During the prosecution of suspected employee two special police regiment were killed, three police officers are in serious condition in hospital. One of the attackers arrested. Started criminal proceedings. Conducted operational-search measures to arrest other intruders.

<http://en.molbuk.ua/ukraine/90919-u-kyievi-pid-chas-zatrymannya-zagynuly-dvoje-milicioneriv.html>

http://en.censor.net.ua/photo_news/335064/three_criminals_who_killed_kviv_police_officers_at_night_have_been_detained_one_was_killed_in_shooting

http://zik.ua/en/news/2015/05/04/seized_extremists_planned_terrorist_acts_in_kviv_586738

Two killed, three wounded as Ukrainian army vehicle hits landmine in Luhansk region, 04.05.2015

Two Ukrainian army servicemen were killed and another three were injured when their armored personnel carrier (APC) drove over a landmine on Saturday, the governor of Luhansk region Hennadiy Moskal has said. According to Moskal, the incident happened at about 16:00 near the village of Katerynivka in the region's Popasnyanskiy district. The Ukrainian APC was on a reconnaissance patrol mission on a dirt road when it went over the mine, Moskal said. He said two soldiers killed, aged 30 and 40, died at the place of the explosion. Three others have been hospitalized.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/two-killed-three-wounded-as-ukrainian-army-vehicle-hits-landmine-in-luhansk-region-425169.html>

The LNR law on martial law starts may 5, 04.05.2015

The law of the self-proclaimed Luhansk people's Republic On martial law starts on may 5th, informs on the first day of the week Luhansk information center.

"The law" On martial law "is the legal basis of the legal regime of martial law, at the time entered within the Republic or in particular areas in the event of aggression against the LC or an imminent threat of aggression," - said in the report.

This aggression against LNR, according to the law, recognizes the use of armed force by a foreign state (group of States) against the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of the Luhansk national Republic or in any other manner inconsistent with the UN Charter. The purpose of martial law is the development environment for reflection or prevention of aggression against the people's Republic of Lugansk, according to the document.

<http://news.rin.ru/eng/news/107434/>

Combat reconnaissance patrol vehicle blown up near Katerynivka: two soldiers killed, three wounded - Luhansk governor, 04.05.2015

A combat reconnaissance patrol vehicle (BRDM) of the Ukrainian army blew up on a land mind on a soil road near Katerynivka village of the Popasna district, the Luhansk region on May 3, at around 4 p.m. This was announced by the Luhansk governor Hennadii Moskal press service. Two soldiers, aged 30 and 40, were killed on spot, 3 more were wounded and taken to hospital.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335066/combat_reconnaissance_patrol_vehicle_blow_up_near_katerynivka_two_soldiers_killed_three_wounded_luhansk

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 05.05.2015

The SMM continued to observe ceasefire violations[1] in and around Donetsk airport ("Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled, 11km north-west of Donetsk), and near Shyrokyne (20km east of Mariupol). From the observation point on the eastern outskirts of government-controlled Berdianske (1.5km west of Shyrokyne, 20km east of Mariupol), between 14:20 and 18:00hrs, the SMM heard 47 mostly outgoing explosions and observed 26 airbursts of small arms fire. The explosions came from south-east, east, north and north-west direction from a distance between 0,3km and 2.5km. The weapons used included 82mm mortars, anti-tank guns and small arms. This represents a decrease compared to the number of ceasefire violations recorded on 4 May at this location.

<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=dfe4558e0a&e=6b2886dd4c>

Militants attack Ukrainian army positions 27 times overnight, 05.05.2015

On Monday evening the situation in ATO zone remained tense, the press center said.

In Donetsk region, the ATO positions were shelled with 120mm mortars near the villages of Shyrokyne, Pisky, Gnutovo, Opytne, and with 82mm mortars near the village of Pisky, Mayorsk, Leninske, and Kirovo.

Moreover, the militants attacked Ukrainian positions near Shyrokyne and near the settlements of Opytne, Pisky, and Hranitne with 122mm caliber artillery and tank shells, while at Avdiivka attacks were carried out with automatic weapons, hand grenades and small arms.

In Luhansk region the militants also opened fire using 82mm caliber mortars, attacking the positions of the Ukrainian army near the village Syze.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1074585-militants-attack-ukrainian-army-positions-27-times-overnight.html>

Volunteer Killed Near Pisky – General Staff, 05.05.2015

On May 4 volunteer Dmytro Afanasyev died of severe injuries received during the Russia-backed militants' attack with 120mm mortars on Ukrainian positions near the village Pisky, reported the press service of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

"Unfortunately, the death of this man was used by certain people to discredit the Ukrainian authorities and misinterpreted to make an impression that volunteer battalions of Ukrainian Armed Forces are still performing combat missions in ATO area," the General Staff said.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/volunteer-killed-near-pisky-general-staff.html>

Militants holding 300 prisoners, SBU chief says, 05.05.2015

"We're not departing from that which is true, that which [the prisoners'] mothers and families have said: There really are [people] who are looking for relatives who have not returned home - our military, volunteers, representatives of the Interior Ministry and the National Guard - up to 300 people," Nalyvaychenko said.

"We don't play around with the figures, we have an objective picture."

According to the head of the SBU, in the next few days the militants may release a certain number of prisoners.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1074706-militants-holding-300-prisoners-sbu-chief-says.html>

LNR introduces 'martial law', 05.05.2015

"Aggression against the LNR is recognized as the use of armed force by a foreign state (group of states) against the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Luhansk or in any other manner inconsistent with the UN Charter," the militant organization's document on introducing martial law reads.

The document also reads that "during the period of martial law limitations may be imposed, to the extent necessary, to ensure national defense and state security, on the rights and freedoms of citizens, on the activities of enterprises, institutions, organizations, and on the rights of their officials. Additional duties may be assigned with regard to enterprises, institutions, organizations, their officials and citizens."

<http://www.unian.info/society/1074597-lnr-introduces-martial-law.html>

Terrorists disguised as Ukrainian troops are planning to attack peaceful rally in Donetsk on May 9 - Presidential Administration, 05.05.2015

The "DPR" and "LPR" terrorists are preparing a large-scale bloody provocation May 9. They are going to fire at a peaceful rally in Donetsk to create a pretext for a major offensive near Shyrokyne, Pisky, and Stanytsia Luhanska villages.

Presidential Administration of Ukraine speaker on ATO Colonel Andrii Lysenko said at a briefing in Kyiv today. "According to the intelligence, the leaders of the illegal armed groups are preparing a massive bloody provocation. In particular, the militants are going to commit an attack on the peaceful rally in Donetsk during celebration of the Victory Day on May 9. The enemy intends to accuse the ATO forces in advance of committing this terrorist attack," he said.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335151/terrorists_disguised_as_ukrainian_troops_are_planning_to_attack_peaceful_rally_in_donetsk_on_may_9_presidential

Only 20% of ATO soldiers receive status of combatants, 05.05.2015

According to Shcherbatiuk, the status of combatant has been granted to 39,000 soldiers.

"Even this figure is quite significant, because there are many military men drafted recently and they will soon be eligible for this status. In addition, the law allows the status to be given to people who were only in the ATO zone for a few hours. That means that the number of people could be quite extensive," the lawyer said.

At the same time, he pointed to the range of challenges faced by the participants of ATO and their relatives when applying for the status of combatant. He said there was the lack of a clear approach to participants in volunteer battalions - a law has been adopted but has yet to be signed by the President first."

<http://www.unian.info/society/1074739-only-20-of-ato-soldiers-receive-status-of-combatants.html>

Ukrainian Army Suffers Deadliest Day in 3 Weeks in Blow to Truce, 06.05.2015

Five servicemen were killed in the past 24 hours, four by a land mine and one in an ambush, Defense Ministry spokesman Andriy Lysenko said Wednesday. Twelve were injured, while the separatists target the town of Shyrokyne, near the Mariupol port, he said. The rebels accused Ukraine of breaking the cease-fire 55 times in the past day, including with artillery.

"Ukraine has numerous pieces of evidence that insurgents are systematically violating" the cease-fire, Lysenko said in Kiev. "The enemy is delivering dense fire from heavy weapons -- large-caliber cannons, mortars. Snipers are also at work."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-05-06/ukrainian-army-suffers-deadliest-day-in-3-weeks-in-blow-to-truce>

Joint press statement of Trilateral Contact Group, 06.05.2015

The working groups were established in response to the relevant provision of the Package of Measures on the Implementation of the Minsk agreements adopted on 12 February 2015, which was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the so-called Normandy Format.

At the inaugural event in Minsk four working groups have been set up under the auspices of the TCG, in keeping with point 13 of the Package of Measures on the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements agreed upon on 12 February 2015, on the following issues: security, political affairs, IDPs and refugees and humanitarian assistance as well as economic affairs and rehabilitation. All four working groups, initially coordinated by the respective representatives of the OSCE, have met today for the first time and agreed on their next steps.

The TCG remains hopeful that the establishment of working groups today will advance the implementation of the Minsk arrangements and thereby contribute to a political solution to the Ukraine crisis.

<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=28a48bf686&e=6b2886dd4c>

ATO: Situation in Donbas worsens, militants using heavy artillery widely, 06.05.2015

In Donetsk region militants fired three times on Ukrainian army positions with 152 millimeter caliber artillery not far from Avdiivka, and attacked twice near Shyrokyne, the press service of Ukraine's Anti-Terrorist Operation headquarters said.

"The Ukrainian military positions near the village of Shyrokyne were shelled by 122mm caliber artillery two times. The militants used the same weapons when launching an attack on [Ukrainian] fortifications near the settlements of Opytne and Vodyanoye," the press service statement reads.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1074990-ato-situation-in-donbas-worsens-militants-using-heavy-artillery-widely.html>

Five soldiers killed and twelve more wounded yesterday – Lysenko, 06.05.2015

"We lost five our soldiers and another 12 were injured in battles for the past 24 hours," he said at a briefing on Wednesday. According to him, the greatest number of casualties was inflicted as the armored vehicle of the Armed Forces tripped a land mine near Avdiivka.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335231/five_soldiers_killed_and_twelve_more_wounded_yesterday_lysenko

Ukraine loses control of 28 towns, villages since truce as five soldiers killed overnight, 06.05.2015

Five Ukrainian soldiers were killed in the last day while combined Russian-separatist forces have a "powerful strike force" of 3,000 soldiers and several dozen armored vehicles facing the Azov Sea coastal city of Mariupol in Donetsk Oblast, military analyst Dmytro Tymchuk said. Kremlin-backed forces have also reinforced their formations in the Svitlodarsk-Artemivsk area of the region by moving two convoys of infantry and armor consisting of 18 armored personnel carriers, seven tanks and several trucks closer to the front line, he said on Facebook on May 6. A combined Russian-separatist reconnaissance group struck a transport vehicle with a rocket-propelled grenade in a village near Artemivsk in Donetsk Oblast on May 5, killing at least five serviceman and wounding 12, according to Ukraine's military spokesman Andriy Lysenko.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/ukraine-loses-control-of-28-towns-villages-since-truce-as-two-soldiers-killed-overnight-387900.html>

Russian engineers' report on MH17 crash 'based on fake photos from Russian General Staff', 06.05.2015

But the report includes images faked by the General Staff of the Russian Federation, Apostrophe said, quoting data from the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) published in July last year. The Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta published the leaked report by Russian engineers on the MH17 crash. According to the report, the aircraft was indeed hit by SAM Buk-M1 missile, but from territory supposedly controlled by Ukrainian military.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1075119-russian-engineers-report-on-mh17-crash-based-on-fake-photos-from-russian-general-staff.html>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 07.05.2015

Fighting continued to rage in and around the destroyed "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled Donetsk airport, with the SMM during the reporting period recording hundreds of explosions. At the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) observation post at "DPR"-controlled Donetsk Railway Station (8km north-west of Donetsk), the SMM, between 13:25 and 18:00hrs, observed a total of 573 explosions. Members of the JCCC at the observation post told the SMM that there had been two unsuccessful attempts to introduce local ceasefires at 9:00 and 9:30hrs. The SMM observed that the second attempt had lasted over an hour. The SMM also accessed "DPR"-controlled Spartak (8km north of Donetsk) and the airport, noting sporadic low-level incoming mortar rounds.

From an observation point on the eastern outskirts of government-controlled Berdianske (1.5km west of Shyrokyne; 18.5km east of Mariupol), the SMM, from 17:24 to 17:34hrs, heard more than a hundred detonations, assessed to have been incoming fire from Grad multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) located approximately 6km north-north-east of its position[1].

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=c5187b0c92&e=6b2886dd4c>

Multinational inspection team starts its work in ATO area, 07.05.2015

This is reported by the press center for the anti-terrorist operation.

"Multinational inspection team of verifiers, who will study the socio-political situation in the zone of conflict for two weeks and contribute to the search for possible ways of resolution of the crisis, has started its work in the ATO area. The group began working in the city of Kramatorsk. Following inspections of other places in Donbas will be determined according to the agreed plan, depending on the situation," the statement reads.

The Danish group will make a corresponding report on the results of inspections to be submitted to the OSCE participating States.

<http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/331172>

OSCE registers shelling from 'Grads' in Donbas for first time since Minsk-2, 07.05.2015

Observers of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) have registered the usage of 'Grad' multiple rocket launchers in Donbas for the first time since the second Minsk agreements were made in February, Deputy Chief Monitor of the mission Alexander Hug has said.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/osce-registers-shelling-from-grads-in-donbas-for-first-time-since-minsk-2-388003.html>

Since autumn 2014, bodies of 560 deceased Ukrainian soldiers found in eastern Ukraine, 07.05.2015

Over 500 bodies of deceased Ukrainian servicemen have been found in the eastern Ukraine by "People's Memory Union" all-Ukrainian NGO.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/since-autumn-2014-bodies-of-560-deceased-ukrainian-soldiers-found-in-eastern-ukraine-388001.html>

Official numbers of refugees from Donbas and Crimea in Ukraine reach 1.262 million, 07.05.2015

There are currently over 1.262 million refugees or 941,764 families from Donbas and Crimea registered in Ukraine, according to the data of structural social protection divisions of regional and Kyiv state administrations.

<http://ukrnews.co/official-numbers-of-refugees-from-donbas-and-crimea-in-ukraine-reach-1-262-million/>

OSCE mission reports problems accessing checkpoints on Ukrainian-Russian border that are uncontrolled by Kyiv, 07.05.2015

OSCE SMM Deputy Chief Monitor Alexander Hug told a briefing on Thursday, responding to a question as to what access the OSCE SMM has on the Ukrainian-Russian border and whether it has regular monitoring points in Shyrokyne and the Donetsk airport, that the OSCE SMM until recently had access, even though not regular, to some checkpoints, but the situation changed in the past ten days, especially on the border in Luhansk region, where the mission's access is restricted. As to Donetsk region, Hug said that access to the border is still possible, specifically, to the Novoazovsk pass.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264429.html>

Three More Ukrainian Servicemen Freed From Captivity To Militants, 07.05.2015

In the evening of May 6, a regular exchange of prisoners occurred, during which three more ATO participants were released. This was announced by President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko on Facebook.

"Good news. A moment ago it was reported that our three guys from the 13th infantry battalion and 1st Tank Brigade were released from captivity. Glory to Ukraine!" wrote the president. As reported, the exchange, which lasted about 12 hours, was conducted according to "one for one" rule. As noted, the men were taken captive on January 29, while defending checkpoint near Uhlehirsk. They stayed in former premises of the SSU in Donetsk for three months.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/three-ukrainian-servicemen-more-freed-from-captivity-to-militants.html>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, 08.05.2015

The use of weapons directly observed was much less than in previous days. It should be noted in this context, however, that the SMM was restricted in its patrolling in Donetsk and Luhansk region during the reporting period as a result of last week's increase in violence (see SMM Spot Report 3 May 2015, www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/154786). Furthermore, the movement of the SMM was impaired due to lack of mobile telephone coverage, reportedly caused by damage of the optical fibre cable, which resulted in the SMM vehicle tracking devices becoming non-operational. According to the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) in Donetsk, 120mm mortar outgoing shelling started early in the morning at 06:50hrs from Pisky village (12km north-west of Donetsk, government-controlled) to Zhabunki village (11km north-west of Donetsk, "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled).

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=b10694369f&e=6b2886dd4c>

Two Ukrainian serviceman killed, 26 wounded in past 24 hours - Ukrainian military, 08.05.2015

Two Ukrainian servicemen were killed and 26 wounded in separatist eastern territories over the past 24 hours, Ukraine's military said on Friday, as attacks continued despite a ceasefire.

In a speech to mark the 70th anniversary of the end of World War Two, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said he would stick to the Minsk peace agreements that the separatists accuse him of violating.

"Questions of war and peace are as relevant today as ever before ... No matter how much my peace plan is criticised, I will not swerve from this path," he told parliament.

Violence has fallen significantly since a peace accord was signed in Minsk, Belarus, in February, but both government troops and pro-Russian rebels accuse the other side of violations and casualties are reported almost daily.

"Banned weapons are used all along the frontline ... this is evidence of deliberate attempts by the enemy to sabotage the Minsk agreements," Ukrainian military spokesman Andriy Lysenko said in a televised briefing.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/two-ukrainian-serviceman-killed-26-wounded-past-24-095802757.html#8LyfTK8>

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/two-ukrainian-servicemen-freed-from-captivity-to-militants.html>

Militants escalating conflict with heavy weapons from hidden arms depots in city of Donetsk, 08.05.2015

"We're currently being shelled constantly in Pisky, [a village on the front line near the city of Donetsk]," Bereza said. "Previously it was only 82mm caliber mortars, but the militants have switched to more powerful weapons now. I'm not taking about what's going on with small arms – those little skirmishes are subsiding." Under the Minsk agreement of February 12, all weapons of a caliber larger than 100mm were to have been withdrawn by both sides far out of range of the front line. However, Ukraine has reported the use by the militants of 122mm mortars, 122mm D-30 howitzers, and 122mm Grad multiple rocket launchers many times since the supposed ceasefire was to have come into effect.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1075869-mp-militants-escalating-conflict-with-weapons-from-hidden-arms-depots-in-city-of-donetsk.html>

Two Ukrainian Servicemen Freed from Captivity to Militants, 08.05.2015

Two soldiers of "Donbas" battalion were released from captivity in eastern Ukraine. This was reported by adviser to Deputy Defense Minister Vasyl Budyk:

"Today, as a result of direct negotiations two soldiers of "Donbas" battalion were released," said Budyk. He specified that Artur Garmash and Valentyn Koval were freed.

It should be recalled that yesterday three fighters of 13th infantry battalion and the first tank brigade were also release from captivity.

Ukraine President Says Almost 7,000 Civilians Killed in War, 08.05.2015

Speaking before parliament, Petro Poroshenko said that more than 1,000 people remained unaccounted for. The figures mark a sharp increase from the most recent United Nations tally of around 6,100 people killed.

Addressing an assembly packed with soldiers, Poroshenko said that 1,657 Ukrainian troops had also been killed in combat — which he described as aggression from Russia.

Moscow has always denied supplying separatist rebels with either equipment or manpower, but it has been open in its diplomatic support for the separatists.

Poroshenko said Russian involvement in the war had forced Ukraine to seek to align further with the West.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/ukraine-president-7000-civilians-killed-war-30896197>

New defensive line outside Artemivsk attacked by militants, deaths reported, 08.05.2015

"[Russian-backed militants] launched an attack on the front positions of the 30th mechanized brigade [of the Armed Forces of Ukraine] from an 82mm-caliber mortar just an hour after the fortification facilities were opened. Then they engaged 120mm-caliber mortars. It lasted for about two hours. The final round was shelling from Grad [multiple rocket launchers]," Deputy head of the coordination center of the Staff of the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) Ilya Kiva said. According to him, two soldiers from the 30th brigade were killed and nine were wounded with different levels of injury.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/new-defensive-line-outside-artemivsk-attacked-by-militants-deaths-reported-426035.html>

Terrorists shelled Ukrainian troops 40 times over past 24 hours, 08.05.2015

This was stated by Dmytro Tymchuk citing Information Resistance data reports:

"In addition to the 'traditional' Donetsk and Mariupol bridgeheads terrorist hostilities intensified in the Artemivsk and Luhansk sectors. The illegal armed groups shelled the villages of Pisky, Opytne, Shyrokyne, Hranitne, Luhanske, Maiorske, Kurdiurmivka, Zolote, Rozsadky, Lozove, Sokilnyky, Triokhizbenka, Stanytsia Luhanska, and Krymske, as well as Avdiivka and Svitlodarsk towns.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335377/terrorists_shelled_ukrainian_troops_40_times_over_past_24_hours

Militants using heavy machine guns to shell Ukrainian troops on May 9, 10.05.2015

From 06:00 to 18:00 Kyiv time on Saturday, May 9, militants continued shelling Ukrainian troops in the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) zone from heavy machine guns, the Ukrainian military officials report.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/unian-militants-using-heavy-machine-guns-to-shell-ukrainian-troops-on-may-9-388225.html>

ATO update: Militants attack Ukraine's forces almost 30 times in last day, 09.05.2015

"In the past 24 hours, militants shelled Ukrainian troops from 120mm-caliber mortars 20 times, from 122mm-caliber artillery systems and tanks four times, and from a 152mm-caliber artillery system one time. All in all, they used tanks four times for attacks," presidential administration spokesman for the ATO Andriy Lysenko said at a briefing.

Though the Mariupol sector has seen a certain decrease in armed attacks by pro-Russian illegal units, the village of Shyrokyne has been shelled by militants from tanks and heavy-caliber weapons and mortars.

"The situation in the ATO zone remains tense. Pro-Russian militants don't stop their attacks even during the holidays, intensifying shelling from weapons banned under the Minsk agreements," he said. In the Donetsk sector, the area around the destroyed Donetsk airport, in particular, the villages of Pisky and Vodiane, and the town of Avdiyivka, and the districts around the town of Horlivka remain the hottest spot in the Donbas war, Lysenko said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1076304-ato-update-militants-attack-ukraines-forces-almost-30-times-in-last-day.html>

Sunday morning starts with militants' intensive artillery fire, one ATO soldier wounded, 10.05.2015

The Sunday morning in the anti-terrorist operation (ATO) zone in eastern Ukraine began with intensive artillery fire on Ukrainian positions in the village of Shyrokyne, which is not far from the Ukrainian-controlled city of Mariupol in Donetsk region. The firing still goes on.

<https://www.facebook.com/unian.info/posts/1574761272798478>

Fighting continues in combat zone hotspots, military spokesman says, 11.05.2015

Despite a ceasefire in Ukraine having been supposed to come into effect nearly three months ago, fierce fighting continues at the hotspots of Pisky near the battle-shattered Donetsk airport and the village of Shyrokyne near the Ukrainian-held port city of Mariupol.

Speaking at a briefing in Kyiv on Monday, the press secretary of the Presidential Administration of Ukraine on the Anti-Terrorist Operation, Colonel Oleksandr Motuzyanik, said that while fighting has decreased in some parts of the combat zone, it continues unabated in two main hotspots. "The hottest point was the town of Pisky – it saw 10 attacks [by Russian-backed militants] on Ukrainian army positions," Motuzyanik said.

"Near Mariupol the town of Shyrokyne again became the epicenter [of the fighting.] There were 17 cases of the violation of the ceasefire on the part of the militants," he said.

<http://lenta.newspaper.net/en/news?id=341887580&date=2015-05-11>

Three Ukrainian soldiers killed, one wounded in Donbas conflict zone in last day, 12.05.2015

Three Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and another one injured in the Donbas conflict zone over the last 24 hours, National Security and Defense Council spokesman Andriy Lysenko said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1076952-three-ukrainian-soldiers-killed-one-wounded-in-donbas-conflict-zone-in-last-day.html>

Ukraine's ATO - Militants massing 700 tanks for offensive in Donbas, 13.05.2015

Some experts expected an attack on May 9, celebrated as Victory Day in Russia and other former Soviet countries, but that day passed without much incident. However, the danger of possible active offensive operations is increasing, the ATO headquarters said.

Intelligence suggests that the militants have restocked their weapon and ammunition supplies, and they are targeting the positions of the Ukrainian armed forces in order to improve their skills for the active phase of hostilities.

The most threatening force of the enemy is its tank brigades, the headquarters said. The number of armored vehicles of the Russian-backed militants is already almost 700 units, it said.

"On the territory of Luhansk region and Luhansk the militants have created three powerful rear maintenance bases, where they store their armored vehicles. There is a lot of military equipment in Donetsk - the militants hide it in residential areas, industrial bases, and warehouses," National Security and Defense Council spokesman Andriy Lysenko said.

<http://arab.com.ua/en/ukraine-s-ato---militants-massing-700-tanks-for-offensive-in-donbas>

ATO: Militants fire heavy weapons on Pisky, Shyrokyne and Stanytsia Luhanska, 13.05.2015

"The militants have no guidelines and formats of agreements. Starting from 1800 on Tuesday, they fired for a maximum of an hour on a territory where people do not want war. They fired banned artillery, mortars and rocket-propelled grenades, and other weapons available to them," the report says.

In addition, the militants fired large-caliber mortars near the village of Shyrokyne.

According to the report, in the direction of Artemivsk the militants fired 152mm artillery on the village of Druzhba. They also fired 120 mm mortars and tank weapons on the villages of Leninske and Kirove.

From midnight till morning, the militants continuously shelled the village of Stanytsia Luhanska. A sniper was working near the village of Shastyia.

"In addition, the militants fired anti-aircraft guns and heavy machine guns twice on the village of Opytne," the report reads.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1077312-ato-militants-fire-heavy-weapons-on-pisky-shyrokyne-and-stanytsia-luhanska.html>

Militants attack Avdiyivka with mortars, teenager wounded, 14.05.2015

"At 1720 Kyiv time militants opened mortar fire on the town of Avdiyivka. As a result of direct hits near school No. 2 at 11 Korolyov Street, a boy, born in 2002, was wounded by fragments. He was rushed to Dimitrov Hospital," Head of the Ukrainian Interior Ministry's main department in Donetsk region Vyacheslav Abroskin wrote.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1078064-militants-attack-avdiyivka-with-mortars-teenager-wounded.html>

149 guardsmen killed, 657 injured during ATO, 15.05.2015

According to the report, lump-sum grants have been paid to 74 families of the dead soldiers with the total amount being up to UAH 45 million.

"In addition, the department has already prepared the documents for the payment of assistance to 20 families of the dead soldiers. The office is also ready to submit to the Commission the documents for 55 families of fallen soldiers for getting aid payments," the department said.

Moreover, in accordance with the order of the first deputy head of the Anti-Terrorist Operation at Ukraine's SBU state security service, the military of the National Guard will receive compensation totaling UAH 2.708 million, including UAH 574,000 for the successful execution of combat missions and UAH 2.134 million for direct participation in hostilities.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1078330-149-guardsmen-killed-657-injured-during-ato.html>

Militants attack Ukrainian troops near Schastia, shell Shyrokyne on Saturday, 16.05.2015

In particular, they attacked areas near the village of Shyrokyne several times, opening fire from grenade launchers, anti-tank missile systems and small arms, the ATO press center reported.

In addition, they used a 120mm-caliber cannon artillery systems to shell areas near the village of Novoselivka-2 and Shyrokyne. A sniper also worked there.

There was a skirmish between Ukrainian soldiers and pro-Russian militants near the town of Schastia in Luhansk region. The enemy used 120mm-caliber mortars, an AGS-17 automatic grenade launcher and small arms. According to the ATO press center, militants shelled Ukrainian positions to the northeast of the village of Lozove in Donetsk region, using 152mm-caliber artillery systems and 120mm-caliber mortars. The Butivka coalmine also came under fire, being the target for automatic grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1078751-militant-attack-ukrainian-troops-near-schastia-shell-shyrokyne-on-saturday.html>

3 Ukrainian servicemen killed, 17 wounded in past 24 hours in east: military, 17.05.2015

Three Ukrainian servicemen have been killed and 17 wounded in fresh separatist attacks in eastern Ukraine in violation of a ceasefire agreement, a Ukrainian military spokesman said Sunday. Two of the deaths were a result of a mortar attack near the town of Svitlodarsk, northeast of separatist-controlled Donetsk, spokesman Andriy Lysenko said in a briefing. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said last Wednesday that 83 Ukrainian servicemen have been killed in rebel attacks since the cease-fire came into force in February.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/World/2015/May-17/298269-3-ukrainian-servicemen-killed-17-wounded-in-past-24-hours-in-east-military.ashx>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 17.05.2015

The SMM continued to observe ceasefire violations in and around Donetsk airport, albeit of reduced intensity.[1] Throughout the SMM's presence at two observation points near the village of Shyrokyne the situation was relatively calm. The SMM heard on 15 May three explosions whereas no ceasefire violations were registered on 16 and 17 May. However, the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) in Donetsk reported instances of mortar shelling in Hranitne (government-controlled, 57km south of Donetsk) and Chermalyk (government-controlled, 72km south of Donetsk). The senior representatives of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Russian Federation Armed Forces at the JCCC in Donetsk jointly reported 27 ceasefire violations in and around Donetsk airport and 25 violations in and around the area of Shyrokyne (20km east of Mariupol) involving mortar, tank and small arms and light weapons (SALW) fire for the period between 00:00 and 12:00hrs.

While on route south of Olenivka ("DPR"-controlled, 21km south-west of Donetsk) the SMM observed that the defensive positions in the areas around both "DPR" and government-controlled checkpoints were reinforced, and signs warning of mine danger were posted along the side of the road near the checkpoints, on both the "DPR" and Ukrainian Armed Forces side.

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=d828b83045&e=6b2886dd4c>

Two civil volunteers, two soldiers killed in landmine blast on Sunday, 17.05.2015

One of the servicemen was a colonel who worked as a deputy of a unit commander for logistics, representative of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine Vladyslav Selezniiov said on the air on Channel 5 on Sunday.

"An UAZ Hunter SUV was going on a certain route this afternoon. There were two Ukrainian servicemen on board, one of them was in the rank of colonel, he was a deputy commander for logistics. There were three volunteers with them. We're now trying to find out which route and which mission that vehicle was running with. A landmine exploded when the SUV moved over it, going along an unpaved road near the town of Popasna. Two Ukrainian servicemen and two civil volunteers were killed in the blast. The third volunteer with severe burns (about 80% of total body surface area, according to doctors) is in hospital now. The doctors are fighting for his life," Selezniiov said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1078897-2-civil-volunteers-2-ukrainian-soldiers-killed-in-land-mine-blast-on-sunday-afternoon.html>

Militants clash with Ukrainian army near Novomykhailivka, 18.05.2015

According to the report, this time the militants focused their shelling in the area of Donetsk. In the areas of Luhansk and Mariupol, the night was calm. "During this period, the Ukrainian army recorded reconnaissance overflights by enemy drones in the directions of Triokhizbenka-Slavianoserbsk, Myronivskiy-Troitske, Myronivskiy-Popasna, Novoaidar-Severodonetsk, Raihorodok-Shastyia, Donetsk-Slavianoserbsk," the ATO headquarters said.

<http://www.veooz.com/news/1J6lXH2.html>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 18.05.2015

The SMM observed continued violations of ceasefire in and around Donetsk airport[1] ("Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled, 12km north-west of Donetsk city centre), although at a relatively low level of intensity. Over an almost 10-hour period from 7:36 to 17:30hrs, the SMM at the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination observation point at Donetsk central railway station ("DPR"-controlled, 8km north-west of Donetsk city centre) heard a total of 109 explosions caused by incoming and outgoing artillery and mortar fire, as well as SALW fire including heavy machine gun bursts. The SMM concluded that the explosions occurred at locations to the west, north-west and north of its position and at distances ranging between 1.5 and 7km from its position. Locations in the areas where the SMM concluded that the explosions had occurred included in or around government-controlled Pisky to the west, "DPR"-controlled Donetsk airport to the north, and government-controlled Opytne farther north.

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=0643fcedf1&e=6b2886dd4c>

General Staff: 50,000 Russian military deployed near Ukraine's eastern border, 18.05.2015

There are 50,000 Russian troops deployed near Ukraine's eastern border.

Acting Spokesperson for the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Vladyslav Selezniiov said this on air of Ukraine's 5 channel, 24tv.ua news website reported.

According to him, the Russian troops are divided into separate battalion task groups that can independently solve combat missions, and act as a part of other units of the Russian armed forces. Selezniiov noted that, such a build-up of forces is a psychological factor, since, in his opinion, the Kremlin would not dare to start open military invasion of the Ukraine-controlled section of the border.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/general_staff_50000_russian_military_deployed_near_ukraines_eastern_border_331416

Ukrainian Aerial Reconnaissance Detects 9K35 Strela-10M2 Surface-to-air Missile System In Occupied Territory, 18.05.2015

Soldiers of aerial reconnaissance platoon of "Dnipro-1" regiment detected prohibited weapons on the territory controlled by the militants, reports "Dnipro-1" regiment's press service via Facebook. Aerial reconnaissance platoon managed to detect an anti-aircraft missile system "Strela-10M2" in the village Oktyabr of Donetsk region, 5 km far from the clash line. Such equipment in the militants' possession is a gross violation of the Minsk agreements.

As per statement, SAM "Strela-10M2" was designed to destroy air targets at low altitudes.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/ukrainian-aerial-reconnaissance-detects-9k35-strela-10m2-surface-to-air-missile-system-in-occupied-territory.html>

Two Ukrainian soldiers killed, four wounded in Donbas conflict zone in last day, 18.05.2015

"Over the past day, as a result of military actions two our soldiers were killed, another four were injured," Spokesman for the Presidential Administration on ATO, Colonel Andriy Lysenko said.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/two_ukrainian_soldiers_killed_four_wounded_in_donbas_conflict_zone_in_last_day_331435

Ten Ukrainian soldiers wounded in Donbas conflict zone in past 24 hours, 19.05.2015

Militants trying to break through Ukrainian lines in some areas - Information Resistance Group No Ukrainian soldiers have been killed but ten were injured in the Donbas conflict zone over the last 24 hours, National Security and Defense Council spokesman Andriy Lysenko said at a briefing in Kyiv on Tuesday.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/ten-ukrainian-soldiers-wounded-in-donbas-conflict-zone-in-last-day-428197.html>

Defense Ministry says Luhansk TPP is important target for militants, 19.05.2015

Luhansk thermal power plant (TPP) is an important strategic target for the militants, according to information from Russian spies detained in the town of Shastya, where the TPP is located, Valentyn Fedychev, the chief inspector of Defense Ministry main inspection has said in an interview with Ukrainian television's Channel 5.

Fedychev said the seizure of the thermal power plant would lead to a destabilization of the situation in the area, which, in his opinion, is one of the goals militants are striving to achieve.

"A very important point is that the third brigade of special forces' units were involved in tactical intelligence," Fedychev said. "This is the group that can operate up to 700 km into [enemy territory], and it was ordered to operate virtually on the frontline. This is evidence that the TPP is given a very important priority. In fact, its seizure and the discontinuation of the power supply to the northern part of the Luhansk region would destabilize the situation."

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/fRjt4U7j9nzguyeWjXx8FO>

Almost 1,300,000 IDPs Registered in Ukraine – Ministry of Social Policy, 19.05.2015

As of May 18, 1,292,834 internally displaced persons or 1,016,060 families from the Donbas and the Crimea were registered in Ukraine, reported the press service of the Ministry of Social Policy, referring to the data provided by its structural units of regional and city administrations. According to the Ministry, 366,882 households have applied for the financial aid, 303,008 of them has been provided with it. "A total of 1,19 billion hryvnias were spent for this purpose", – reported the Ministry.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/almost-1-300-000-idps-registered-in-ukraine-ministry-of-social-policy.html>

Russian Army in Ukraine: Captured soldiers give exclusive account, 20.05.2015

The servicemen were transferred to Kyiv to face terrorism charges after being seized on May 16. More evidence of active Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine, despite the Kremlin's staunch denials. Two servicemen were transferred to Kyiv on Monday, to face charges of terrorism after their capture on Saturday in the region of Luhansk. Aleksandr Aleksandrov and Yevgeniy Yerofeyev confessed to belonging to a Russian reconnaissance unit near to the Volga River city of Togliatti. They were wounded and picked up by volunteers from the Aidar Battalion. They spoke with a reporter from Ukraine Today's partner news agency TSN.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/captured-russian-soldiers-give-exclusive-account-428002.html>

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-soldiers-captured-in-ukraine-send-messages-to-family-back-home/521908.html>

Poroshenko says 1,800 soldiers, 7,000 civilians killed during Donbas conflict, 20.05.2015

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has said that 1,800 soldiers and nearly 7,000 civilians have been killed during the conflict in Donbas.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/poroshenko-says-1800-soldiers-7000-civilians-killed-during-donbas-conflict-388999.html>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 20.05.2015

The SMM observed continuous ceasefire violations in and around Donetsk airport ("Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled, 12km north-west of Donetsk). During an 11-hour period from 7:30 to 18:45hrs, the SMM at the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination observation point at Donetsk central railway station ("DPR"-controlled, 8km north-west of Donetsk city centre) heard a total of 176 explosions caused by incoming and outgoing artillery and mortar fire, as well as bursts of anti-aircraft gun and heavy machine gun. The SMM assessed that the explosions occurred at locations to the west, north-west and north and at distances ranging between 3.5 and 8km from its position.

The SMM observed that hostilities had resumed in Shyrokyne (20km east of Mariupol) in the late evening of 19 May, with artillery explosions heard all the way to Mariupol. The situation remained the following day, when from its observation point (4.5km south-west of Shyrokyne, 16km east of government-controlled Mariupol) the SMM heard a noticeable increase in the number of explosions, mostly outgoing and some incoming mortar shells (82mm and 120mm). This marked a significant increase over the previous days with a total of more than 200 explosions over the course of the day.

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=e333e711e9&e=6b2886dd4c>

General Staff: Three Ukrainian soldiers killed, six wounded in fighting near Katerynivka, 20.05.2015

"Today, a military clash took place near the village of Katerynivka, as a result of which we lost three soldiers," Talalay said.

As for reports about four soldiers being killed, he said that these had been false.

"This is a mistake. Three soldiers killed, six wounded," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1079894-general-staff-three-ukrainian-soldiers-killed-six-wounded-in-fighting-near-katerynivka.html>

Overwhelming new evidence of prisoners being tortured and killed amid conflict, 20.05.2015

The 36-page report - Breaking Bodies: Torture and summary killings in eastern Ukraine - provides compelling evidence of frequent and widespread prisoner abuse by a broad range of captors on both sides of the conflict.

Former prisoners described being beaten until their bones broke, tortured with electric shocks, kicked, stabbed, hung from the ceiling, deprived of sleep for days, threatened with death, denied urgent medical care and subjected to mock executions.

John Dalhuisen, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director at Amnesty International, said: "In the shadow of eastern Ukraine's still smouldering conflict, our on-the-ground research shows that accounts of detainee torture are as commonplace as they are shocking. More than 30 former prisoners held by both sides gave us consistent and harrowing accounts of their captors' abuse.

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/ukraine-overwhelming-new-evidence-prisoners-being-tortured-and-killed-amid-conflict>

Russian activists say find fresh graves of soldiers killed in Ukraine, 20.05.2015

Two activists who travelled around central Russia this week said they found fresh graves of soldiers from a special forces brigade of the army's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), which is based in Tambov, a city 400 kilometres (250 miles) south of Moscow.

Their investigation came as the Ukrainian authorities showed off two captured Russians they claim are serving GRU soldiers detained after being wounded in a firefight while on a scouting mission in war-torn east Ukraine.

One of the activists Vadim Korovin -- who posted pictures of the graves online -- told AFP that the burials helped show that the Russian military is carrying out "large-scale reconnaissance operations" in east Ukraine despite a tenuous truce.

One of the graves is near Tambov while the other is in the Tatarstan region on the Volga. Both show the date of death as May 5, 2015 and both have been adorned with identical wreaths from the Russian defence ministry, according to the pictures.

<http://news.yahoo.com/russian-activists-fresh-graves-soldiers-killed-ukraine-114424034.html>

Militants constantly shell Donetsk sector overnight, 21.05.2015

From 18:00 last night, Russian-terrorist troops have continued to destroy the infrastructure of Donbas and shell positions of ATO forces, mostly with mortars and artillery of prohibited calibers. This is reported by the press center for the anti-terrorist operation.

"Using mortars and artillery of prohibited calibers, militants each hour fired on the area of Donetsk. They shelled the town of Avdiyivka, the villages of Opytne, Krasnohorivka, Starohnativka, Pisky, Mariyinka, Wodiane and the mine of Butivka. The village of Hranitne was fired at with antitank missile system," the statement reads.

Militants fired mortars, grenade launchers, machine guns and small arms at the villages of Luhanske, Lozove, Kirove, Leninske and Maiorsk.

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/gSb1WzYa58rZOO2GiOEEa>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 21.05.2015

The SMM observed continuous ceasefire violations in and around Donetsk airport ("Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled, 12km north-west of Donetsk). At the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) observation point at the Donetsk central railway station ("DPR"-controlled, 8km north-west of Donetsk city centre), between 7:30 and 16:30hrs, the SMM heard over one hundred explosions caused by incoming and outgoing artillery, mortar fire and multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) as well as bursts of anti-aircraft gun and heavy machine gun. The SMM assessed that the explosions occurred at locations to the west, north-west and north, in areas adjacent to the Donetsk airport including Pisky (government-controlled, 7km west of Donetsk) and Opytne, Zhabunsky and Spartak ("DPR"-controlled, 7km, 10km and 14km north-west of Donetsk).

The area of Shyrokyne (20km east of Mariupol) remained tense. During the morning from its observation post (government-controlled, 4.5km south-west of Shyrokyne, 16km east of Mariupol) the SMM heard multiple bursts consistent with machine-gun and small-arms fire, from 8-10km north-east and north-north-east of its position. Throughout the day, the SMM heard 84 explosions caused by mortar fire (82mm and 120mm) and multiple bursts of heavy machine-gun and small-arms fire.

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=ee7fe5a35c&e=6b2886dd4c>

Up to 700 Ukrainian servicemen may be held captive in Chechnya, 21.05.2015

According to different data, from 400 to 700 Ukrainian citizens, captured during the fighting in Donbas, may be held in Chechnya or Adygea federal subjects of Russia.

This has been reported by the Open Russia NGO.

Relatives of missing Ukrainian soldiers say that soldiers themselves or unknown people have called them from phones on roaming in Russia, namely from Chechnya and Adygeya. Some relatives of the missing persons were offered by unknown persons by telephone or via the volunteers to return a prisoner for a large ransom. Some callers talked with an Eastern accent.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/up_to_700_ukrainian_servicemen_may_be_held_captive_in_chechnya_331560

Situation in Donbas conflict zone remains tense - ATO headquarters, 22.05.2015

In last day there have been no significant changes in ATO area, the situation remains tense. According to the ATO press center, the militants used artillery and mortars of prohibited calibers along the contact line.

"The enemy shelled the villages of Wodiane, Opytne, Pisky, Severne, Slavne, Hranitne, the towns of Avdiivka, Maryinka and the mine of Butivka using 120mm mortars and 122mm artillery. During the night militants fired MLRS Grad at the village of Novolaspa. In the direction of Artemivsk the criminals shelled the villages of Novhrodske, Shyroka Balka, Leninske, Kirove, Zolote and Troitske with the same types of weapons. Self-propelled artillery was used by militants in shelling the villages of Shyroka Balka and Kirove. Long-suffering Shyrokyne was shelled with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms," the headquarters said.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/situation_in_donbas_conflict_zone_remains_tense_ato_headquarters_331624

Captured Russian soldier: Kremlin doesn't want to admit presence of Russian army in Donbas, but it's there, 22.05.2015

According to the report, Aleksandrov said that he would like to have the status of a prisoner of war, as he went to the Donbas under military orders.

"I wish I was a prisoner of war. I like this status more than the status of a mercenary or a bandit. I was ordered to go to the Donbas, and as a soldier I had to execute it. It was a mission," he said. At the same time, commenting on the claims by the Russian authorities that no Russian soldiers are in Donbas, Aleksandrov said: "As you can see, [the Russian army] is there. It is just not good for the Kremlin to admit this."

The second captured Russian soldier, Yevgeniy Yerofeyev, has however denied that the Russian military is present in the Donbas.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1080901-captured-russian-soldier-kremlin-doesnt-want-to-admit-presence-of-russian-army-in-donbas-but-its-there.html>

Three Ukrainian soldiers killed, 12 wounded in Donbas conflict zone in last day, 22.05.2015

During the last day three Ukrainian servicemen have been killed, another 12 injured in the area of the anti-terrorist operation in Donbas as a result of hostilities and military clashes.

Spokesman for the Presidential Administration on the anti-terrorist operation, Colonel Andriy Lysenko said this at a briefing in Kyiv on Friday, an Ukrinform correspondent reported.

"Over the past day, as a result of active hostilities three our soldiers were killed, another 12 were injured," he said. According to him, the greatest losses were in the direction of Donetsk.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/three_ukrainian_soldiers_killed_12_wounded_in_donbas_conflict_zone_in_last_day_331618

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/fresh-fighting-erupts-in-eastern-ukraine/522068.html>

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 22.05.2015

The SMM observed a decrease in ceasefire violations as compared to previous days.

Specifically, the SMM observed a small number of ceasefire violations in the area of "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled Donetsk and Donetsk airport ("DPR"-controlled, 10km north-west of Donetsk). The violations were limited to light-weapons fire, including a limited number of bursts from anti-aircraft guns, automatic grenade launchers, and 82mm mortars. The SMM observed no ceasefire violations in the vicinity of Shyrokyne (20km east of Mariupol). The Ukrainian Armed Forces Major-General at the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (JCCC) headquarters in Soledar (government-controlled, 77km north-north-east of Donetsk) told the SMM that the coke and chemical plant in Avdiivka (government-controlled, 17km north-north-west of Donetsk) had been shelled on 21 May. The Chief Engineer of the plant later corroborated the information, telling the SMM that thirty 120mm mortars had impacted in the plant, killing one worker and injuring two.

At Donetsk airport, the SMM observed the recovery of human remains at the "old terminal building" and the vicinity to the west of it. The remains were recovered by members of the "DPR". Representatives of the JCCC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, along with international and local media representatives were present.

<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=a205365721&e=6b2886dd4c>

Bodies of several 'cyborgs' recovered from the wreckage of Donetsk airport, 22.05.2015

"Today, from 10 to 12 a.m. the bodies of Ukrainian 'cyborgs' were recovered from the rubbles of the Donetsk airport. There were two or possibly four bodies of our heroes. Identification is very difficult," Head of the press center of the Ukrainian group of the Joint Coordination Centre for cease-fire monitoring Ruslan Semeniuk said.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337204/bodies_of_several_cyborgs_recovered_from_the_wreckage_of_donetsk_airport

Captured Russian soldiers charged with terrorism in Ukraine, 23.05.2015

Two Russian soldiers have been charged in Ukraine with terrorism offences after being captured by Ukrainian troops earlier in the week.

The pair who admitted working for the Russian military could face up to 15 years in prison.

After interviewing the soldiers at a military hospital in Kiev, Michael Bociurkiw, spokesperson for the OSCE special monitoring mission to Ukraine said:

"Both individuals claimed that they were members of a unit of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and that they were on a reconnaissance mission and that they had been to Ukraine on missions before." The Kremlin has once again denied its involvement in the war in eastern Ukraine and said they would take the necessary steps to get its two citizens freed.

<http://www.euronews.com/2015/05/23/captured-russian-soldiers-charged-with-terrorism-in-ukraine/>

Donetsk airport 'cyborg' Kuzminykh released from militant captivity – Poroshenko, 23.05.2015

The commander of the 90th battalion of the 81st brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the defender of Donetsk airport (popularly called "cyborgs"), Oleh Kuzminykh on May 21 was released from the captivity of DPR militants, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko wrote on his Facebook page. "Our cyborg Oleh Kuzminykh was released from captivity at 21.58. SBU First Deputy Head Vasyl Hrytsak told this to me," reads the statement.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/267498.html>

Avakov's adviser: Mozgovoy eliminated by Russia's GRU special forces, 24.05.2015

Leader of a terrorist organization from the so-called Luhansk People's Republic ('LPR'), Commander of the "Prizrak" (Ghost) Battalion Alexey Mozgovoy and his six bodyguards have been killed by special forces of Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate, also known as GRU, according to Heraschenko.

"I've had a call from friends from Luhansk region, who have been monitoring radio communication. They claim that two hours ago a GRU special forces group eliminated well known leader of an 'LPR' terrorist organization Alexey Mozgovoy and his six bodyguards near the village of Mykhailivske outside Alchevsk," Anton Heraschenko wrote on Facebook on Saturday evening with reference to his own sources.

"The reason was the same as with another known leader of a Luhansk terrorist gang, nom de guerre "Batman" in January – his unwillingness to obey orders from Moscow," he wrote.

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/c9p7lXyqo93glWJUCzGWWm>

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/top-rebel-commander-killed-in-eastern-ukraine/522226.html>

Donbas militants continue using banned weapons, 24.05.2015

Russian-backed militants continue firing on the Ukrainian ATO forces, using the weapons banned under the Minsk peace agreement, Presidential Administration Speaker for ATO issues, Colonel Oleksandr Motuzianyk said at a briefing in Kyiv on Sunday.

According to him, the situation in the ATO zone remains difficult; however, the intensity of firing by militants has insignificantly declined in recent days.

"At the same time, the weapons banned by the Minsk agreements are actively used by militants against the ATO forces," he said.

In the past day, they twice fired on the Ukrainian troops from a tank, while 120mm-caliber mortars were used eight times, and 122mm-caliber artillery systems were used six times.

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/ngogX15uvRB0zhM7wmyvG>

Militants hit water main in Luhansk region, many houses in occupied territory to be cut off, 24.05.2015

The water main in the town of Zolote has been damaged as a result of shelling by militants, and a large occupied territory in Luhansk region – from the town of Pervomaisk to the town of Krasny Luch – has been cut off from the water supply, Moskal's press service said.

"The pipe near our farthest roadblock, which is regularly shelled from mortars, has been damaged. The hydraulic damper has been unsealed, and it is flooding civilian houses and our military fortification facilities. Simultaneously, various dirt gets into the damaged pipe, therefore the water supply will be cut off in the occupied territories in Luhansk region, namely the towns of Pervomaisk, Stakhanov, Brianka, Alchevsk, Antratsyt, Kirovsk and other towns and villages as far as the town of Krasny Luch, in the coming hours, Moskal said.

According to him, this is a vast territory where there is no alternative source of the water supply. Considerable funds and labor force are needed to repair the water main.

<http://uazmi.com/news/post/c4Satmeo1DfwbXYG0iRDxc>

Yesterday terrorists constantly fired at Shyrokyne. A fire fight took place near Hnutove - ATO press center, 25.05.2015

The past 24 hours were restless, both day and night.

According to the HQ, on the night of May 24 at the Donetsk direction the terrorists used tank weapons, mortars and artillery of prohibited calibers against Opytne, Pisky, Butivka mine, Kamianka, Verkhnetoretske, Avdiivka, Hranytne, Berezove, and Taramchuk. At the Luhansk direction the militants attacked Sokolnyky, Stanytsia Luhanska, and Shchastia.

"A relative truce at the Mariupol direction has ended. The criminals used mortars, self-propelled guns, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms to fire at Shyrokyne practically non-stop. In the area of Hnutove a military clash occurred, which, however, did not last long. Faced with dense fire, a sabotage group of criminals backed away," the report says.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337416/yesterday_terrorists_constantly_fired_at_shyrokyne_a_fire_fight_took_place_near_hnutove_ato_press_center

Russian Consul to Ukraine Visits Suspected Russian Soldiers, 26.05.2015

The two Russians, Alexander Alexandrov and Yevgeny Yerofeyev, were detained on May 16 in eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russian insurgents and Ukrainian armed forces are still fighting in spite of a formal cease-fire. Ukrainian authorities and the men themselves say they are serving Russian soldiers who were on a military intelligence mission for Moscow. Russia insists both are former servicemen who had quit the army at the time of their capture.

Alexandrov and Yerofeyev were both "feeling alright," Oleg Grishin, a spokesman for the Russian embassy in Kiev, told TASS after consul Alexei Gruby visited them in a Kiev hospital. Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement earlier Tuesday that Russian representatives were being prevented from seeing the men, who earlier complained to reporters that their country had "forgotten and abandoned" them.

"Not only is the Ukrainian side denying access to the detained men, it is also politicizing this issue via the media," the statement said.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-consul-to-ukraine-visits-suspected-russian-soldiers/522409.html>

Militants damage pipeline in Luhansk region: nine villages without gas, 26.05.2015

"Stanychno-Luhanskiy district was subjected to massive artillery shelling from the right bank of the Siverskiy Donetsk River, which is occupied by the militants," the report reads.

"Near the village of Olkhove, a shell damaged a medium-pressure gas pipeline, as a result of which nine villages in the district - Olkhove, Nyzhnie Olkhove, Verkhnie Olkhove, Herasymivka, Yuhanivka, Kamyshne, Stepne, Shyrokiy, and Kolesnikivka - were left without gas supplies," the report says. According to the press service, a total of 3,600 households were without gas as of the morning of May 26. In addition, the militants also fired on the regional center – Stanytsia Luhanska: According to preliminary reports, no civilians were killed, and report of wounded or killed soldiers are being verified.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1082038-militants-damage-pipeline-in-luhansk-region-nine-villages-without-gas.html>

Terrorists were firing at Ukrainian positions at all directions last night - ATO press center, 26.05.2015

According to the headquarters, at the Donetsk direction the criminals used mortars, artillery, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms to fire at Opytne, Pisky, Krasnohorivka, Novomykhailivka, Vodiane, Avdiivka and Butivka mine: "At night the invaders shelled Petrovske twice using multiple rocket launchers.

"At the Luhansk direction they fired tank weapons at Syze village three times. The criminals used rocket-propelled grenades, mortars, anti-aircraft guns, and machine guns to fire at Zhovte, Shchastia, and Staryi Aidar. At the Artemivsk direction they used grenade launchers, machine guns and small arms against Kirove.

"At the Mariupol direction they used the same weapons against Shyrokyne and Myrne. Though, it was almost quiet there after 10 p.m.," the report says.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337551/terrorists_were_firing_at_ukrainian_positions_at_all_directions_last_night_ato_press_center

Lysenko: Russia digging ditches on border with Ukraine to stop militants returning in tanks, 26.05.2015

"Russia is not just building fortifications along the border with Ukraine, there have long been there about 40,000 soldiers from the regular armed forces of the Russian Federation and internal troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia," Lysenko said.

"In addition, it was decided to erect fortifications to prevent militants from coming back to the territory of the Russian Federation, in case they intended to.

"This [building of fortifications] is meant to signal clearly to those mercenaries who are now in the Donbas that if they are already there, they won't be able to leave."

<http://www.unian.info/war/1082213-lysenko-russia-digging-ditches-on-border-with-ukraine-to-stop-militants-returning-in-tanks.html>

Six killed in Ukraine fighting, 27.05.2015

Four pro-Russian rebels, a Ukrainian soldier and one civilian were killed in clashes that broke out over the past 24 hours in violation of a February truce deal, officials said on Tuesday. The civilian died during an artillery fire attack on the Avdiivka Coke and Chemical Plant, which sits on the outskirts of the rebels' de facto capital Donetsk. A resulting fire at the plant caused a small ammonia leak, Ukraine military spokesman Andriy Lysenko told reporters, without providing further details.

Lysenko said 12 Ukrainian soldiers were also wounded in clashes across the war zone.

The pro-Kiev governor of the separatist province of Lugansk said a soldier died when his military ambulance came under fire near the Russian border. It was not clear whether he was referring to the same serviceman as the one mentioned in Lysenko's daily update.

Rebel authorities said four of their fighters were killed and another three injured in the past day. Fighting was particularly heavy in Shyrokyne, near the strategic port city of Mariupol, military officials from both sides said.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-1-320298-Six-killed-in-Ukraine-fighting?>

Now convoy of Russian tanks arrive by rail at border with Ukraine days after military trucks and rocket launchers were spotted nearby, 27.05.2015

A freight train pictured carrying a convoy tanks towards the Ukrainian border looks to escalate tensions between the two sides even further.

The nine tanks arrived in the southern town of Matveev Kurgan on Monday, before being driven along the streets on Tuesday.

The arrival of the convoys will no doubt be seen as more aggression from the Russians towards their neighbours, who have been arming Ukraine's separatist rebels for months.

Matveev Kurgan is just 17 miles from the border, and just 72 miles from Donetsk, where some of the heaviest fighting of the 15-month conflict has taken place.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3098407/Now-convoy-Russian-tanks-arrive-rail-border-Ukraine-days-military-trucks-rocket-launchers-spotted-rolling-town.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Russia does not hold any talks with Ukraine regarding detained commandos - Head of SBU Nalyvaichenko, 27.05.2015

This was stated by Head of the SBU Valentyn Nalyvaichenko. "Russia does not conduct any negotiations and we do not need such negotiations. The investigation is underway. Within the investigation negotiations are a request of the court or the investigator, and there should be an answer," he said at a briefing in Kyiv on Wednesday.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337746/russia_does_not_hold_any_talks_with_ukraine_regarding_detained_commandos_head_of_sbu_nalyvaichenko
http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337660/russias_consul_visited_russian_special_forces_operatives_detained_in_the_donbas

Ukrainian soldiers engaged in three firefights with terrorists last night. The enemy was forced to flee, 28.05.2015

According to the headquarters, a clash with an enemy sabotage and reconnaissance group took place near Berezove last night. The criminals also used Grad multiple rocket launchers in the area. It is also noted that at the Luhansk direction the terrorists fired mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and small arms at Orikhove, Zhovte, Shchastia, Triokhizbenka, and Bolotne. "At the Artemivsk direction the militants opened mortar fire on Lozova, Troitske, and Novozvanivka. Here a clash with a sabotage and reconnaissance group of the enemy also took place. A fire fight occurred in the area of Nelipivka. In both cases, our soldiers gave an adequate response to the invaders, who did not resist too long and were forced to flee," the headquarters reported.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337862/ukrainian_soldiers_engaged_in_three_firefights_with_terrorists_last_night_the_enemy_was_forced_to_flee

State Department reports numerous violations of cease-fire by terrorists, 28.05.2015

Terrorists fighting in the Donbas actively violate the Minsk agreements. Numerous violations of the cease-fire on their side have been recorded.

This was stated by acting deputy spokesman of the State Department Jeff Rathke at a briefing. He noted that the vast majority of the cease-fire violations had been carried out by Russian and separatist forces. Rathke could not confirm or deny the journalists' information as to the alleged existence of violations by the Ukrainian forces.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/337888/state_department_reports_numerous_violations_of_ceasefire_by_terrorists

Russian humanitarian aid convoy undergoes customs clearance on border with Ukraine, 28.05.2015

Russia's Emergencies Ministry's trucks with humanitarian aid for Donbas have arrived at the border with Ukraine in the Russian southern Rostov region, the ministry's National Crisis Management Centre told TASS. "Customs clearance is underway at the border checkpoints of Donetsk and Matveyev Kurgan," the spokesperson said adding that on the way the convoy had split into two parts - the first heading to Luhansk and the other - to Donetsk.

The white-painted trucks are carrying 1,000 of humanitarian aid - foodstuffs (pasta, vegetarian oil and various cereals), building products for restoration works and medicines for health facilities.

<http://tass.ru/en/world/797141>

Russian Soldier Captured in Ukraine Will Cooperate with Investigators, 28.05.2015

One of the two Russian fighters detained recently in Ukraine has agreed to cooperate with investigators, his lawyer told Ukrainian television.

The soldier, Alexander Alexandrov, who has identified himself as a Russian army sergeant who was on active duty performing a military assignment in rebel-held eastern Ukraine, was not going to appeal his arrest by Kiev government forces, his lawyer Konstantin Kravchuk said. "My client has chosen the position of cooperating with the investigation," Kravchuk was quoted as saying, adding: "And the conditions of his stay in a VIP-room of a military hospital more than satisfy him." The other soldier, Yevgeny Yerofeyev, who said he was an army captain, has refused to cooperate and will appeal his arrest, his lawyer Oksana Sokolovskaya said, RIA Novosti reported. "All that the investigation wants to get and is trying to drag out of my client, it will not be given to them," she was quoted as saying.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russian-soldier-captured-in-ukraine-will-cooperate-with-investigators/522490.html>

Donbas terrorists flash their Russia-supplied weapons in social media, 28.05.2015

After Mozgovoi's killing, Russian mercenaries felt that something was wrong. In the so-called 'Luhansk People's Republic' "cleaners" from the Main Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation appeared. As known, a mercenary anticipating the end of his gamble is quite unstable. So "field commanders" started to eliminate their benefactors right in full public view. Even Motorola [infamous Donbas terrorist leader from Russia – ed.] didn't stand aside.

The photos demonstrate a Russian 7.62-mm Pecheneg machine gun, developed of a PK machine gun, in service with the Russian army. It has never been supplied to Ukraine and has never been in service with the Ukrainian army, another photo shows a large-caliber Kord machine gun with a 12.7x108-mm belted feed.

Kord machine gun was designed in the 90s to replace the NSV machine gun, the production of which partially ended up outside of Russia after the breakup of the Soviet Union. It was developed at Degtyarev plant in Kovrov city.

http://en.censor.net.ua/photo_news/337505/donbas_terrorists_flash_their_russiasupplied_weapons_in_social_media_photos
<http://www.unian.info/war/1083320-separatist-website-unintentionally-posts-proof-of-russia-weapon-presence-in-donbas.html>

Separatist Leader Pledges To Retake Ukrainian Towns, 29.05.2015

Aleksandr Zakharchenko said on May 29 in the rebel-controlled Ukrainian city of Donetsk that separatist forces will regain control over Slovyansk, Kostyantynivka, and Krasnoarmiyisk, which were briefly held by the rebels last year.

He said "as soon as we realize" that retaking the towns by political means is not possible, "a decision will be made to liberate these territories."

<http://www.rferl.org/content/ukraine-separatists-vow-to-take-towns/27042979.html>

Counterintelligence Prevents a Terrorist Attack In Stanytsia Luhanska, 29.05.2015

"On May 28 in Stanytsia Lugansk military counterintelligence group received operative information that the terrorists had planned to blast an explosive device near the premises of Pension Fund in Stanytsia Luhanska amidst a large crowd of people who were supposed to hold a public assembly demanding to open a pedestrian crossing through the destroyed bridge." – reported the press service. Ukrainian military engineers demined the improvised radio-controlled bomb, made of a 120mm mine, thus preventing the terrorist attack.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/counterintelligence-prevents-a-terrorist-attack-in-stanytsia-luhanska.html>

Four Ukrainian soldiers wounded in ATO zone in last day, 30.05.2015

"Despite the intensity of firing on our positions in the past day, no Ukrainian soldiers were killed, whereas four were wounded," Lysenko said.

Two of them were injured in a skirmish near the town of Krasnohorivka, press officer of the B Sector of the ATO's headquarters Yevhen Silkin told Channel 5.

Russian-backed militants had been firing on Ukrainian positions for three hours. The firing stopped only at about one o'clock at night. After that there was a long pause in shelling. The Ukrainian troops deployed near the villages of Kamyanka, Opytne and Pisky [the latter is near the destroyed Donetsk airport] were also under enemy mortar fire.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1083866-four-ukrainian-soldiers-wounded-in-ato-zone-in-last-day.html>

Ukrainian troops repel militants' attacks on Triokhizbenka, Schastia, 31.05.2015

Militants started shelling the ATO positions on the outskirts of Triokhizbenka and Schastia at 1100 Kyiv time on Sunday.

"Mercenaries were using mortars and small arms, having focused fire on the ferries that link the areas controlled by the Ukrainian authorities and by the terrorists. According to the ATO headquarters, no Ukrainian soldiers were killed or wounded.

http://uazmi.com/news/post/f0so7a1vpVYj4FZzxuVrS_without_casualties

Pilot Savchenko

Kremlin wants to keep Savchenko behind bars for another six months, 05.05.2015

The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation extends the period of investigation into the case against MP of Ukraine Nadiya Savchenko for six months until November 13.

Lawyer of Savchenko Nikolai Polozov has posted: "Tomorrow at 14:30, at Moscow's Basmanny District Court, the investigation will request to extend the period of custody for Savchenko until November 13, 2015," he posted.

The lawyer said in a commentary to an Ukrinform correspondent that tomorrow two hearings on the case of Savchenko would be held.

"The investigation makes the decision on the period extension. They need time to get expert studies, to familiarize with new materials. So tomorrow, the Moscow's Basmanny District Court will hold two hearings on case of Savchenko. The first hearing will refer to our complaint regarding the PACE immunity. The second hearing concerns the request of the investigation to prolong custody period," Polozov said.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/kremlin_wants_to_keep_savchenko_behind_bars_for_another_six_months_331121

Doctors do not hospitalize Savchenko, allow her to continue participating in court session, 06.05.2015

Earlier today, an ambulance was called to Savchenko during the hearings of her case after she said she was feeling unwell and was having chest pain.

Doctors have allowed former Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko to continue participating in Moscow Basmanny Court session on extending the term of her arrest, Judge Natalya Mushnikov said on Wednesday. Doctors said that Savchenko's heartbeat and blood pressure are normal. Earlier today, an ambulance was called to Savchenko during the hearings of her case after she said she was feeling unwell and was having chest pain.

Before the court session started, Savchenko's defense lawyers filed a request to postpone hearings on extending the former pilot's arrest terms. Lawyers said they did not have time to prepare for the hearings properly as they learned about them only yesterday.

"In my prison cell, I found out that I will have two court sessions today. That's why I did not have time to prepare," Savchenko said. However, the court refused to postpone the session.

<http://tass.ru/en/russia/793260>

Nadia Savchenko to remain under arrest until late June - Moscow court ruling, 06.05.2015

The Basmanny Court of Moscow has extended the custody period for the Ukrainian woman Nadia Savchenko, who is accused in Russia of abetting the murder of Russian journalists, until June 30 at the investigator's request, an Interfax correspondent reported.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/nadia-savchenko-to-remain-under-arrest-until-late-june-moscow-court-ruling-387952.html>

PACE Claims Jailed Ukrainian Pilot Savchenko is Immune From Russian Prosecution, 06.05.2015

According to RAPS, attorney Ilya Novikov presented a PACE document at Moscow's Basmanny district court Wednesday stating it considered Savchenko, who was elected in absentia to the Ukrainian parliament in October and approved as a PACE delegate in January, had immunity from prosecution despite having become a parliamentarian after her alleged crime took place. Russia accuses Savchenko, Ukraine's first female military pilot, of having abetted the deaths of Russian journalists Igor Kornelyuk and Anton Voloshin, who were killed by mortar fire in eastern Ukraine in June. Savchenko, who claims she was captured by pro-Russian separatists and taken to Russia against her will last summer, has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. The court rejected PACE's argument, claiming Savchenko's status as a delegate does not make her eligible for immunity.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/520307.html>

Russian authorities are going to continue the trial of Savchenko in Voronezh – lawyer, 07.05.2015

Savchenko's lawyer Mark Feigin reports:

"Here is some news concerning Nadiya Savchenko. We receive information from different sources that the trial of the merits is intended to be considered in Voronezh!" he wrote.

"With this set of invalid evidence along with the outright fabrication of Savchenko's case it was actually more appropriate to consider it in Grozny," Feigin commented ironically.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335329/russian_authorities_are_going_to_continue_the_trial_of_savchenko_in_voronezh_lawyer

Savchenko's case singled out as separate one, 07.05.2015

Savchenko's lawyer Ilya Novikov announced this: "Apparently, the matter has come to the finish line, moving ahead to the court," he suggested. "We don't believe that the Russian court could justify Savchenko, but if the diplomats agree, then the Russian authorities will be able to save face by granting her amnesty after sentence has been passed," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1075723-savchenkos-case-singled-out-as-separate-one.html>

Savchenko to stay in custody till June 30 at least, 07.05.2015

Savchenko's lawyer Mark Feygin posted this information on Twitter.

"The judge reads out the decision. And it is upheld. To leave in custody," he posted.

As reported, May 6, the Basmany District Court of Moscow considered the request of the investigation to leave Savchenko in pretrial custody till June 30, 2015.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/savchenko_to_stay_in_custody_till_june_30_at_least_331175

Nadiya Savchenko's 34th birthday marked by #FreeSavchenko Global Campaign, 10.05.2015

Another global campaign under the banner #FreeSavchenko begins today, May 11, to celebrate Nadiya Savchenko's birthday. 329 days have now passed since the kidnapped Ukrainian pilot-turned-MP has been illegally held in Russia.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/freesavchenko-global-campaign-starts-may-11-to-mark-nadiya-savchenko-s-birthday-426471.html>

Kremlin: Savchenko case has no relation to Minsk agreements, 13.05.2015

The case of Ukrainian pilot, MP and member of the Ukrainian delegation to PACE Nadia Savchenko is not related to the implementation of the Minsk agreements, spokesperson for the Russian president Dmitry Peskov told journalists on Wednesday.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1077451-kremlin-savchenko-case-has-no-relation-to-minsk-agreements.html>

Adviser to Ukrainian Interior Minister suggests swapping Russian POWs for Savchenko, 18.05.2015

Two Russian soldiers captured near Shchastya should be swapped for Nadiya Savchenko, a Ukrainian fighter pilot jailed in Russia, Anton Herashchenko, an MP and an adviser to the Ukrainian Interior Minister has said on his Facebook page. But he also wrote that the Russian soldiers should be prosecuted according to Ukrainian law first. "Once we have a fair and open trial of the two war criminals from Russia that were sent to kill our citizens, I offer an exchange: the two Russian war criminals are to be exchanged for Nadezhda Savchenko and almost all of our 400 prisoners," Herashchenko wrote.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/adviser-to-ukrainian-interior-minister-suggests-swapping-russian-pows-for-savchenko-427875.html>

Probing in Savchenko case over, court hearing may take place in August – lawyer, 22.05.2015

"A pre-trial investigation is over. Then there will be familiarization under Article 217 of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Russian Federation. Studying 24 volumes provided by the investigators will take about six weeks. Then there will be indictment, preliminary hearings. This means the case could be heard by the court in August," Feygin told UNIAN.

According to him, Savchenko is charged with three counts: being an accessory to the murder of Russian journalists, crossing the Russian border illegally, and attempting to murder five people. Feygin said, it hasn't been decided yet which court will hear the Savchenko case.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1080790-probing-in-savchenko-case-over-court-hearing-may-take-place-in-august-lawyer.html>

Mass Media

Eight journalists killed in Ukraine in 2014 - Independent Media Union, 03.05.2015

This is stated on the official website of the Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine: "Over the year of this confrontation [between Ukraine and Russia-backed separatists - ed.], more than 40 media representatives went through captivity. Several journalists are still being held prisoners. Thus, virtually all local journalists, supporters of democratic freedoms, were forced to leave the occupied territories because of the threat to life and health. Many media outlets have ceased the existence due to pressure on editorial teams, embezzlement or property damage, or economic inability to evacuate the media to Ukrainian territory," the statement said.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/335030/eight_journalists_killed_in_ukraine_in_2014_independent_media_union

ATR world's only Crimean Tatar TV channel starts broadcasting on Internet, 07.05.2015

ATR, world's only Crimean Tatar TV channel that had stopped broadcasting in Crimea, as the Russian Federal Service for the Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roscomnadzor) refused to register it, decided to renew its work on the Internet. ATR editor Roman Spiridonov wrote on Facebook that news from Zaman TV Channel's information service would be available on the websites of ATR and "15 Minutes" web-based media, which is a part of ATR media holding.

Spiridonov said that journalists were already finishing "Children of War" series and a documentary on Crimean Tatars' deportation.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/264350.html>

Another attack on journalists investigating Interior Ministry corruption, 25.05.2015

For the second time in the space of a few weeks, investigative journalists probing corruption within the Interior Ministry have come under attack. The film crew was from the same programme whose findings recently led to top Traffic Police official Oleksandr Yershov losing his job.

The film crew from the programme 'Schemy: Corruption in Detail' run by the First National TV Channel and Radio Svoboda was attacked in Kominternivske, near Odesa.

Journalist Maria Tymoshchuk and cameraman Maxim Lenko were on a work-related task near the office of Lemodo, a firm which recently won an Interior Ministry tender to provide vehicle number plates worth 70 million UAH. The company is registered in the Odesa oblast, and up till this successful tender had never been engaged in such activities.

According to Tymoshchuk, they arrived at what proved to be the extremely modest Lemodo office. The one room was closed, and they photographed the sign on the door, and spoke with people in other offices. Somebody ran up to them shouting that they mustn't film there, that they didn't have permission, and smashed their video camera.

The journalists have filed a complaint with the police over obstruction of their legitimate journalist work (Article 171 of the Criminal Code).

<http://khp.org/index.php?id=1432326275>

Ukraine Worldwide

Conscription to Russian army starts in Crimea, 01.04.2015

According to the report, more than 150,000 people aged from 18 to 27 years, subject to conscription, will be sent to the Russian Armed Forces by July 15. In particular, according to the Russian Defense Ministry, about 500 Crimean recruits will join the Russian Armed Forces.

All of them, according to officials of the Russian Defense Ministry, will serve on the peninsula.

On March 30 Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law that defines the rules for the Crimean population on recruitment and delays in service in the Russian Armed Forces.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1062388-conscription-to-russian-army-starts-in-crimea.html>

Detained Crimean Tatar Assemblyman Launches Hunger Strike, 06.05.2015

A high-ranking member of the Crimean Tatar assembly has begun a hunger strike at the facility where he awaits trial for allegedly organizing "mass disorder" ahead of Russia's annexation of Crimea. Ahtem Ciygoz began his protest on May 6 after being placed in solitary confinement this week at the Simferopol facility, assembly first deputy chairman Nariman Celal told RFE/RL. It is not known why Ciygoz was sent to solitary confinement.

Ciygoz is a deputy chairman of the assembly, or Mejlis. He was arrested in late January by Russian authorities for his alleged role in clashes with pro-Russian demonstrators in February 2014, a month prior to Moscow's annexation of Crimea.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/crimean-tatar-assemblyman-hunger-strike-ukraine/26999780.html>

France ratifies Association Agreement between Ukraine and EU, 07.05.2015

"The conclusion of the Association Agreement aims to strengthen political dialogue and economic and trade exchanges between the EU and Ukraine, which will bring together the regulatory framework and conduct a comprehensive trade liberalization in the context of "political association and economic integration" with the EU," the preamble to the bill said. The bill was passed under the accelerated procedure, initiated by the government on March 25, 2015.

http://www.ukrinform.ua/eng/news/france_ratifies_association_agreement_between_ukraine_and_eu_331192

Police arrests in feared clampdown on Remembrance of Crimean Tatar Deportation, 18.05.2015

The occupation regime in Crimea is actively detaining both journalists and Crimean Tatars taking part in traditional remembrance actions marking the 71st anniversary of the Deportation of the Crimean Tatar people.

At the Zapadnaya bus station in Simferopol, Crimean Tatars driving in cars with Crimean Tatar flags were stopped by a large contingent of OMON riot police in full combat gear and with shields. Radio Svoboda's Crimean Service reports that around 60 people were taken away in police vans, to draw up protocols.

<http://khpg.org/en/index.php?id=1431960060>

U.S. SIGNS LOAN GUARANTEE AGREEMENT FOR UKRAINE, 18.05.2015

The United States today reaffirmed its strong commitment to the people of Ukraine by signing a \$1 billion sovereign loan guarantee agreement with the Government of Ukraine. The guarantee will help the Government of Ukraine continue to institute reforms that tackle corruption, improve the business climate, put the economy on a sustainable path to growth, and make government more responsive to the people.

"The \$1 billion loan guarantee will help the Government of Ukraine to carry out its ambitious economic reform agenda," said USAID Acting Administrator Alfonso Lenhardt. "The guarantee sends a strong signal of U.S. support for Ukraine in achieving its reform goals and fulfilling the Ukrainian people's aspirations for a prosperous and democratic future."

<http://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/may-18-2015-us-signs-loan-guarantee-agreement-ukraine>

Diaspora organizations in US call on Obama to give Ukraine lethal weapons, 20.05.2015

The associations strongly recommend that U.S. leadership to provide Ukraine with defensive lethal military equipment, which will allow the people of Ukraine to better protect them.

"The tragic reality is that, despite the strong diplomatic, economic and other efforts of the United States and the European Union aimed at changing the policy of the Kremlin, the annexation of the Crimea is continuing, the destabilization in eastern Ukraine is continued, Ukrainians continue to be victims of violence, inspired, if not provoked by the Russian Federation," the organizations said in a letter to the U.S. president.

The letter noted the U.S. president's own statement: "In the 21st century, we cannot idly watch as Europe's borders are changing at gunpoint. We call on actively be engaged in protection of the rights of Ukraine and other countries of the region to live in freedom from unwanted external interference, to defend its sovereignty and independence, to choose your own friends."

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1079929-diaspora-organizations-in-us-call-on-obama-to-give-ukraine-lethal-weapons.html>

Spain ratifies EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, 20.05.2015

This follows from the report of the Ukrainian Embassy in Spain posted on its website.

"Spain has submitted the document, which ratifies the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, to the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe. Prior to that the document has been approved by the parliament and signed by the King," the statement reads. The embassy noted that the ratification of the document witnesses that Spain adheres to its commitments with respect to Ukraine.

Thus, 18 out of the 31 countries (Bulgaria, Great Britain, Hungary, Denmark, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Croatia, Sweden, Estonia, Spain, and Ukraine itself) have fully accomplished the procedure of ratification at the moment.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/266916.html>

End of Isolation: Britain Asks Putin for Help in Middle East – German Media, 26.05.2015

Britain and Russia have announced their intention to cooperate closely to solve the Syrian crisis. Prime Minister David Cameron and Vladimir Putin have agreed to a meeting between senior security advisers of both countries, the newspaper reported, referring to a statement of the British government.

The activities of the Islamic State and the Syrian civil war were the main topic of the half-hour phone call, the government's spokeswoman said.

However, according to the newspaper, both countries do not want to reveal the turnaround in their relations too quickly. Thus, they are conducting military maneuvers that recall the days of the Cold War.

The US and other Western countries started major military maneuvers with around 100 warplanes in Scandinavia near the border with Russia on Monday. The exercise in northern Norway, Sweden and Finland is presumably aimed at enhancing the military cooperation between America and the EU.

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However, according to the newspaper, both countries do not want to reveal the turnaround in their relations too quickly. Thus, they are conducting military maneuvers that recall the days of the Cold War.

<http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150526/1022565937.html>

EU criticises 'unjustified' Russian travel blacklist, 31.05.2015

Russia has imposed an entry ban on 89 European politicians and military leaders, according to a list seen by Reuters, a move that has angered Europe and worsened its standoff with the West over Moscow's role in the Ukraine conflict.

A spokeswoman for EU foreign affairs said that in recent months Russia had denied entry to a number of EU politicians. "We consider this measure as totally arbitrary and unjustified, especially in the absence of any further clarification and transparency," she said.

A spokeswoman for Britain's Foreign Office said there was no justification for the travel ban.

"If Russia's intention is to put pressure on the EU to ease sanctions then this is not the way to do it," she said. A Russian Foreign Ministry official confirmed to Russian media that lists of banned individuals had been sent to EU states but declined to comment on the individuals themselves.

<http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/496134/news/world/eu-criticises-unjustified-russian-travel-blacklist>

This document was made possible due to the support of CIVICUS.