



Monitoring of Xenophobia and Extremism in Ukraine December 2015

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Introduction

Meanwhile, the situation in Donbas remains stably tense, which, however, did not prevent the OSCE Special Representative Martin Sajdik from declaring the prolongation of the Minsk agreements throughout 2016. Frankly, it's not clear who authorized the European diplomat to make such high-profile statements. For Ukraine, such developments are of a dialectic nature: on the one hand, the official Kyiv will not be pushing with decisions that could spark sharp dissent, on the other - a conflict in Donbas is indeed becoming frozen.

The EU has officially extended sanctions against Russia for another six months, pointing out the Kremlin's reluctance to fulfill the Minsk agreements. The US has also launched a portion of new sanctions, denying the assumption that Ukraine was "exchanged" for Syria in geopolitical confrontation with the Russian Federation. The flywheel of the election campaign is spinning faster overseas, so the Ukrainian issue will surely be activated from time to time.

But Washington must do more than just punish Russia. It must bolster Ukrainians as it struggles to build a new, reform-minded government while continuing to fight to maintain the country's territorial integrity.

As winter sets in, the continuing war in Ukraine's east has devolved into an economic siege as Russia leverages gas supplies, coal shipments and debt repayment to attempt to extract concessions from a Ukrainian government that is still battling Russian proxies violating the Minsk II cease-fire. With Ukraine's economic output having shrunk by a quarter, the currency sharply devalued and a population fearful of an uncertain future, Ukraine is teetering on the brink.

Next year, Ukraine can expect approximately \$3 billion to \$4 billion in conditional support from the United States and the European Union, combined. This sum is insufficient. Lawrence Summers, the former United States Treasury secretary, called on Europeans to deliver on

promises to support Ukraine's reform efforts with increased funding of \$5 billion to \$10 billion, calling it an important "security investment."

However, the "eminence grises" closer to the very top understand that, having stopped at the parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, the Russian Federation has gained nothing, globally Russia gained nothing. Indeed, it has grown an atavistic part to its body: a subsidized region, which Russia had itself destroyed.

The appointment to the Contact Group of Boris Gryzlov, one of Putin's closest confidants, aims to try once again to force the official Kyiv to agree with Russia on the elections in the occupied Donbas. This man, as a permanent member of the Russian Security Council, took a direct part in developing the plans of seizing Ukraine's south-eastern regions.

The occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine have ceased to be just a subject of Kremlin pressure on the official Kyiv. There are indications showing that this de facto no man's land, held by the Russian proxies, has turned into an industrial park and logistics center for the illegal production and smuggling of weapons, including to the Middle East. Prior to the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Donetsk and Luhansk regions were among the most industrialized areas of the country. With gross regional product at UAH 164 billion in 2013, Donetsk region was Ukraine's second most developed area, after the capital city of Kyiv. After the occupation, a number of local industrial landmarks were looted. Some factories were disassembled to be cut into scrap metal, but some technologies were taken back to Russia on reverse route of the so-called "humanitarian" convoys. However, there are bits of information squeezing through the contact line in the ATO zone that the remaining industrial capacities are far from being idle. Some enterprises have been working non-stop lately.

Prognosis

Only 8% of Ukrainians favour closer ties with Russia – Poll, 13.12.2015

49% of Ukrainians seek deepening relations with the EU, while only 8% stand in favor of closer ties with Russia, that's according to the results of a survey by International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), presented by the foundation's chief Rakesh Sharma. At the same time 14% supports the idea Ukraine have no close relations either with Europe or with Russia. According to Sharma, the survey shows that half of Ukrainians believe Ukraine will benefit from forging closer political and economic relations with Europe rather than with Russia. In addition, according to the study, 19% say Ukraine should have close relations with both Europe and Russia, while another 14% would rather see Ukraine have no close relations with either Europe or Russia.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/only-8-of-ukrainians-favor-closer-ties-with-russia-poll-512344.html>

Poll: Most Russians want to see Ukraine independent, 14.12.2015

59% of Russians believe that it would be more beneficial for Russia if Ukraine was an independent state, having good-neighborly and mutually beneficial relations with Russia, according to the findings of a survey by the Levada Center, an independent Russian polling and sociological research organization. In November 2014, this view was shared by 64%. At the same time, 27% believe that it would be better if Ukraine remained under economic and political control of Russia. A year ago, this point of view was expressed by 22%. According to 59% of those polled, the annexation of Crimea has done more good than harm to Russia, while 22% have the opposite opinion. The poll was conducted on November 20-23, 2015. A total of 1,600 people aged from 18 were questioned in 48 regions of Russia. The poll's margin of error is no more than 3.4%.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/poll-most-russians-want-to-see-ukraine-independent-553535.html>

Statements of officials

Poroshenko says Russia causing 'environmental disaster' in Ukraine, 01.12.2015

"My country has become a victim of hybrid warfare, which has hybrid effects. One of them is a risk of environmental disaster in the eastern part of Ukraine, Donbass," Poroshenko said. He paid tribute to the "courage and unbroken spirit" of the French in the wake of this month's attack by the Islamic State group that left 130 dead in Paris. But he said this was "a daily reality for Ukraine for almost 21 months". "We have been suffering from the terrorism sponsored and promoted by the Russian Federation," he said. Poroshenko accused pro-Russian forces in the eastern Donbass region of having "flooded many mines", leading to the poisoning of drinking water and the soil. Russia denies directly supporting separatists in eastern Ukraine, and Poroshenko's speech underlined the challenge of reaching a unanimous global agreement on climate change over the next fortnight when many of the participants are involved in bitter conflicts with each other.

<https://in.news.yahoo.com/russia-causing-environmental-disaster-ukraine-163014909.html>

RUSSIA ONCE AGAIN FOILS CONSULTATIONS WITH THE EU, UKRAINE ON DCFTA, 01.12.2015

"Today Russia presented the old and the new proposals at the same time of their, in fact, well-known document," Klimkin said after the tripartite ministerial consultations held in Brussels on December 1. "Thus, as a result of these proposals, we remained on the same positions. We will continue to coordinate our position with our friends and partners from the EU, and EU member states. In the near future the expert consultations will be held. Let's see if the Russian side is ready to take into consideration our arguments and the arguments of the European side," said Ukraine's top diplomat. "For example, the Russians offered us to join restrictions on trade already introduced by Russia, including those against the European Union. That is, the Russians propose that we, conditionally, launch free trade with the EU, but at the same time join the bans in respect of certain EU member states," said the minister.

<http://www.lifeinvest.com.ua/?p=3959>

Canada introduces multiple-entry visas for the Ukrainians at least 10 years, 02.12.2015

"We have already introduced these multiple-entry visas for 10 years. We also try to increase the proportion of those who receive these long-term visas for a period of validity of the passport," - said the ambassador of Canada to Ukraine Roman Vashchuk. He explained that when a Ukrainian passport is valid for 10 years, it is possible to obtain a visa for this period.

"If the passport is valid for five years, you can get a visa for five years" - said the Ambassador.

"We are already implementing these agreements, and we hope that more visitors will be able to take advantage of them", - concluded the diplomat.

<http://newsme.com.ua/en/world/3210227/>

NATO warns about risk of resumption of violence in Donbas, 02.12.2015

"We meet today to reaffirm our strong continued commitment to Ukraine and our support for a peaceful and diplomatic end to the conflict. There has been some progress on implementation of the Minsk agreements. But the situation is still fragile. Russia has not withdrawn its troops or its equipment. The illegal separatist groups are yet to be disarmed," he said while opening a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. According to Stoltenberg, Ukraine still does not have full control over its own borders. "Ceasefire violations have recently increased. So we see a real risk of a resumption of violence. It is urgent that the Minsk agreements are implemented and that they are implemented in full," he said. "NATO has been supporting Ukraine politically as well as practically, including by setting up Trust Funds, to enable Ukraine to better defend itself and to strengthen and reform its institutions. We strongly encourage Ukraine to continue along the path of reform. Continued progress is essential for a strong democracy, stability and prosperity," Stoltenberg stressed.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1200298-nato-warns-about-risk-of-resumption-of-violence-in-donbas.html>

President: EU should demonstrate unity in the issue of sanctions for the non-implementation of the Minsk agreements, 02.12.2015

In Vilnius following the meeting with President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė, Petro Poroshenko noted: "When I am being asked what does Ukraine need from the EU, I have a clear and straightforward answer — unity and solidarity. Only strong and united European Union can tackle challenges and threats of the modern world — for example, security threats caused by annexation and aggression, terrorist attacks or problems of refugees". The President emphasizes that the EU demonstrates unity and powerful support for Ukraine despite the fact that Russia wants to see Europe weak, disintegrated and separated. "I have no doubt that at the European Council session of December 17, the EU will demonstrate unity and strength, inter alia, in the issue of sanctions for the non-implementation of the Minsk agreements and refute rumours about the alleged displacement of Ukraine from the top priorities of the EU. It didn't happen and I can assure you that it won't happen," Petro Poroshenko stated.

<http://www.mil.gov.ua/en/news/2015/12/02/president-eu-should-demonstrate-unity-in-the-issue-of-sanctions-for-the-non-implementation-of-the-minsk-agreements/>

Ukrainian former FM: 'You cannot involve terrorists to fight against other terrorists', 02.12.2015

Speaking about the role of the summit, Volodymyr Ohryzko said, "It is very important when more than 150 leaders are coming together to discuss very acute global problems. We are facing a very big global challenge. If we continue only to speak and make declarations, in a couple of decades our kids will face dramatic challenges for their future. [The important part] was the readiness of many political leaders of the world to start thinking about practical steps. [...] Conferences like this create a good opportunity to the leaders to discuss other very important issues on the global agenda."

Ohryzko added that among those other issues the fight against the Islamic State was "probably number one." Explaining the chances of Russian-American cooperation against the Islamic State, Ohryzko said, "How can we involve other terrorists to fight against ISIS?" "What in my view is a big challenge for all of us is the attempt of President Hollande to involve Russia to fight against ISIS. What does it mean in practice? It means that we are trying to use Russia, an aggressor state which is supporting terrorists who are fighting against the Ukrainian state, to fight other terrorists."

<http://uatoday.tv/society/ohryzko-546221.html>

MEPs Brok, Fotyga, Plenković: Russia must show commitment to the Minsk agreements, 03.12.2015

Representatives of the German, French and Ukrainian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and of the EEAS, took part in the meeting. Elmar Brok (EPP, DE), Anna Fotyga (ECR, PL), and Andrej Plenković (EPP, HR) issued the following statement after the meeting:

"Ukraine remains one of the main priorities of the European Parliament's foreign agenda. We are fully supportive of the Minsk agreements as the internationally acknowledged basis for a political solution to the conflict in the Donbas and a peaceful reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories and further remind of the objective of ending the illegal annexation of Crimea. We appreciate the diplomatic efforts of Germany and France and also welcome the operational and financial support provided by the European Union but also by the IMF and others. We underline the positive developments of reforms undertaken by the Ukrainian authorities and their commitment to the Minsk process and encourage them to continue on this path. We encourage them to conclude the constitutional reforms including decentralisation as fast as possible.

It became clear during our discussions today that the Russian authorities bear a particular responsibility in this situation, leading to the deterioration of the security situation in the region. We call on them to urgently demonstrate their commitment to achieve all points covered by the agreement. The implementation of Minsk is the condition for lifting the sanctions.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20151203IPR06034/html/Brok-Fotyga-Plenkovi%C4%87-Russia-must-show-commitment-to-the-Minsk-agreements>

Klimkin: OSCE in deep crisis, 03.12.2015

"The OSCE is in deep crisis, a lot of ministers openly say it," he said. At the same time, he said, Ukraine will continue to actively work with the organization. "We try to use the OSCE, despite the fact that it is a consensus-type organization," Klimkin said. He added: "We offered several draft resolutions (for a ministerial meeting), but of course, all of them have been crashed by the Russian side. And, of course, there is little hope that we will see the final declaration of the ministerial meeting."

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/klimkin-osce-in-deep-crisis/>

Sanctions against Russia should be kept until Minsk agreements fully implemented, - Kerry, 03.12.2015

John Kerry reaffirmed the immutable position of the U.S. on the necessity of extending sanctions against Russia until the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The U.S. secretary of state emphasized that possible coordination with Russia on the important issues of international agenda would not be held at the cost of Ukraine's interests. The American politician reiterated the position of the U.S. on the non-recognition of Russia's occupation of Crimea. Petro Poroshenko informed John Kerry on the recent steps in the implementation of domestic reforms in Ukraine. John Kerry praised the appointment of Ukraine's anti-corruption prosecutor, having emphasized it was an extremely important signal of fight against corruption.

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/363570/sanctions_against_russia_should_be_kept_until_minsk_agreements_fully_implemented_kerry
http://en.censor.net.ua/news/363516/kerry_calls_on_russia_to_help_remove_its_forces_from_donbas_voice_of_america

Turchynov advocates introduction of visa regime with Russia from 2016, 04.12.2015

"In 2014, NSDC decided to introduce the visa regime with Russia and instructed the Cabinet of Ministers to implement this task. The first stage of the task has been implemented. You know that Russian citizens can enter Ukraine only if they have passports for travelling abroad. I'm sure that next year we should introduce the real and rather tough visa control and visa regime with Russia. We have many Ukrainians who are staying in Russia, and one of the reasons why the government does not accelerate the visa regime is that we understand that Russia will at once introduce retaliatory measures," Turchynov said in an interview.

He said that the government is tackling the issue now, particularly, the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine. Turchynov also said that Russian spies woke up on the Ukrainian-Russian border.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/308835.html>

Turkish Foreign Minister says Crimea Ukrainian, 04.12.2015

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu spoke in favor of the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, with respect for its territorial integrity, including Crimea. The parties must focus on finding a political solution concerning the crisis in Ukraine, he said, addressing the OSCE ministerial meeting in Belgrade on Thursday. According to Cavusoglu, Turkey hopes that the situation in Ukraine will be resolved while respecting the independence of the state, as well as its political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, including Crimea.

<http://en.vnews.agency/news/world/14523-turkish-foreign-minister-says-crimea-ukrainian.html>

Austria to lend shoulder to Ukraine in light of Donbas developments – Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, 04.12.2015

As the ministry's press service reported on Thursday, Kurz and Klimkin met on the sidelines of the 22nd sitting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Belgrade (Serbia), during which the parties discussed an implementation of the Minsk Agreements. Klimkin also informed his Austrian colleague on a current situation in Donbas, namely the number of the Russian armament and Russian armed forces deployed on the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, "without withdrawal of which implementation of the Minsk Agreements, stabilization of the situation in Ukraine, and free elections in Donbas are impossible." "In the frames of a bilateral dialogue Kurz said that the Austrian Investment Bank decided to restore insurance of export activity for the Austrian companies in Ukraine," the ministry said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/308869.html>

Poroshenko: Russia should pay if Minsk accords fail, 05.12.2015

EU sanctions should be maintained until the Minsk agreements are not fulfilled, and Russia has to pay in case of failure of the Minsk process, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said in an interview on December 3. "Until the provisions of the Minsk agreements are not implemented, the European sanctions should be maintained! If the Minsk process fails, Russia will have to pay," Poroshenko said. Poroshenko rejects the arguments of those who say that sanctions do not work and have serious consequences for the European Union.

<http://uatoday.tv/business/poroshenko-russia-should-pay-if-minsk-accords-fail-548124.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1203703-poroshenko-we-will-fight-for-every-inch-of-ukrainian-land.html>

Russia to sue Ukraine if debt is not repaid by December 20, 05.12.2015

Russia is set to file a lawsuit against Ukraine if Kyiv fails to have repaid the USD 3-billion debt by December 20, Russia's Finance Ministry said on December 5. "This week we received an official refusal of the U.S. government for loan guarantees to Ukraine," the ministry said in a statement. "Therefore, we have nothing to do but to file a lawsuit against Ukraine if the borrower fails to fulfil its liabilities in full on December 20, 2015, which will mean Ukraine's sovereign default."

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/russia-to-sue-ukraine-if-debt-is-not-repaid-by-december-20-548184.html>

Poland considering asking for access to nuclear weapons under Nato program, 06.12.2015

Poland's deputy defence minister has said the ministry is considering asking for access to nuclear weapons through a Nato program in which non-nuclear states borrow the arms from the US. Tomasz Szatkowski said the ministry was discussing whether to ask for access to Nato's "nuclear sharing" program to strengthen the country's ability to defend itself. Polish media said Szatkowski's comments on Saturday to the private broadcaster Polsat marked the first time a Polish official has indicated the country wants to join the program. Among Nato's 28 members there are three nuclear powers – the US, France and Britain – but only the US has provided weapons to allies for nuclear sharing.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/06/poland-considering-asking-for-access-to-nuclear-weapons-under-nato-program>

<http://seenthis.net/sites/837182>

President: We will do everything to return Crimea via international legal mechanisms, 06.12.2015

"For Putin, Crimea is a territory that must be turned into a military base. For me, it is Ukrainian territory. Crimeans are Ukrainians. I will do everything to return Crimea through international legal mechanisms, judicial decisions and political and diplomatic means," President Petro Poroshenko said. According to the President, "we must do everything possible to defend the rights of Crimean Tatars". He reminded that Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov had received greater opportunities to struggle for the rights of Crimean Tatars after their election to the Ukrainian Parliament. Also, Mustafa Dzhemilev was appointed Advisor to the President in order to elaborate actions for the return of Crimea.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/zrobimo-vse-dlya-togo-shob-shlyahom-mizhnarodnih-pravovih-me-36441>

Biden visits war-scarred Ukraine to reaffirm US support, 07.12.2015

US Vice President Joe Biden arrived in Kiev late Sunday to reassure its pro-Western leaders that Washington remains committed to Ukraine despite stepped-up efforts to work with Russia against Islamic State jihadists. Biden's three-day visit is his fourth to Kiev since Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in March 2014 and then watched with approval as pro-Kremlin insurgents carved out their own region in the eastern industrial heartland of the ex-Soviet state. After arriving at around midnight (2200 GMT on Sunday), he is due to meet Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko Monday and deliver a highly-anticipated address to parliament the following day. "We do not know if there is any other historical precedent for a foreign official giving a speech like this," a senior US administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said in a teleconference with reporters.

<http://news.yahoo.com/biden-visits-war-scarred-ukraine-reaffirm-us-support-031812095.html>

Dzhemilev: Crimea should be named part of Ukraine in all agreements, 07.12.2015

Crimea should appear only as a part of Ukraine in all agreements signed by Ukraine regarding the Russian-annexed peninsula, Crimean Tatar leader, Ukrainian presidential envoy for Crimean Tatar People's affairs, and Ukrainian MP from the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko Mustafa Dzhemilev (Cemilev) wrote on Sunday, commenting on the agreement on partial resumption of power supply to Crimea from mainland Ukraine.

<http://www.onlinenewsplanet.com/news/1539551/dzhemilev-crimea-should-be-named-part-of-ukraine-in-all-agreements.html>

Mogherini: EU committed to Ukraine's political association and economic integration, 07.12.2015

"We're both committed to Ukraine's political association and economic integration with the European Union. The provisional application of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area as of January 1, 2016, will still prove it once more," she said. According to Mogherini, the parties reviewed the progress since the first meeting of the Association Council a year ago, as well as priorities for the future. "Strong political commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to reforms is impressive, and we all agreed on that, as we agreed on the need to a swift implementation and enforcement of new policies and of new legislative frameworks, and further acceleration of political and economic reforms first and foremost in the interest of the Ukrainian people that were the first, the very first ones to demand those changes in Ukraine," she said. "The European Union stands by Ukraine to support it in its efforts in a very challenging situation, and we discussed common ways to face these challenges and to continue on the part of reforms in all these key areas," Mogherini said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1204903-mogherini-eu-committed-to-ukraines-political-association-and-economic-integration.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1204849-eu-continues-policy-of-non-recognition-of-crimeas-annexation-mogherini.html>

Russia Must Fulfil Ukraine Peace Deal, Hand Back Crimea: Joe Biden, 08.12.2015

US Vice President Joe Biden said during a visit to Kiev that Washington remained committed to its demands for Russia to adhere to a shaky Ukrainian peace agreement and hand back Crimea to Kiev. The broad February deal struck in the Belarussian capital Minsk "cannot succeed if Russia does not fulfill its commitments," Biden said. "The invasion by Russia of Crimea will not be accepted by us or by the international community. This attempted annexation is contrary to international law, is wrong, and will not be accepted in any circumstance," he said. Fighting has eased somewhat since the warring sides signed a new truce on September 1. But Ukrainian soldiers and civilians still die almost daily by stepping on landmines and getting caught in the occasional combat that breaks out across the war zone. "The US stands firmly with the people of Ukraine in the face of continued, I emphasise, continued aggression from Russia and Russian-backed separatists," Biden said. Biden also took the opportunity to urge Ukrainian authorities to do more to tackle the rampant graft that has plagued the county for much of its recent history, amid growing discontent among Ukrainians over Poroshenko's seeming inability to end the scourge. "It's absolutely critical for Ukraine... to root out the cancer of corruption," Biden stressed.

<http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/biden-says-russia-must-fulfil-ukraine-peace-deal-hand-back-crimea-1252198>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1205607-biden-forecasts-next-year-likely-to-determine-ukraines-future.html>

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/309780.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1205847-biden-ukraines-leaders-have-to-work-together.html>

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/us-vice-president-biden-urges-to-end-cancer-of-corruption-in-ukraine-549764.html>

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/1927251-us-will-never-recognize-russias-annexation-of-crimea-biden.html>

<http://www.afp.com/en/news/cost-russia-will-rise-if-ukraine-aggression-persists>

Poroshenko says aggression against Ukraine cannot justify failure of reforms, 08.12.2015

"This is absolutely wrong," he said at a joint press conference with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in Kyiv on Monday. "The most important reform, which has been launched and which has translated into an institutional structure, is the fight against corruption. We have managed to select an anti-corruption prosecutor, engaging an independent commission," he said. Another successful example of the reform is national police, he added.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1205604-poroshenko-says-aggression-against-ukraine-cannot-justify-failure-of-reforms.html>

Yanukovych: I want to be back in politics, 08.12.2015

"I want to return to politics. Today, I'm doing everything I can. Firstly, I help many people who are being persecuted in Ukraine, and those who have already left Ukraine. And not only to Russia. Here, in Russia, I communicate and help them," Yanukovych said in an interview. He also said that he had links with the current Ukrainian politicians. "Many of them are not so shy and aren't afraid as they were a year ago. They are comfortable when we meet and discuss the issues," Yanukovych said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1206079-yanukovych-i-want-to-be-back-in-politics.html>

Schulz warns EU faces disintegration. Norway is ready to pay for the refugees, if they leave, 08.12.2015

«We cannot say with certainty that the EU will continue to exist in this form in 10 years. If we want, we must fight,» said Schultz. According to the President of the European Parliament, the EU is not uncontested, and the rate of integration can be reversed. «The alternative is a Europe of nationalism, borders and walls», he said. «This will have catastrophic implications, because this Europe has repeatedly led our continent to disaster,» added Schultz. So, the migration policy of Norway has had an unexpected effect. Broadcaster NRK, which quoted NEWSru.com notes a sharp increase in the shelter of the asylum-seekers who actually hope to get in Norway, financial support and return home. While those who would like to stay in this Scandinavian country, experience frustration due to the mismatch of reality to their expectations.

<http://en.reporter-ua.ru/schulz-warns-eu-faces-disintegration-norway-is-ready-to-pay-for-the-refugees-if-they-leave.html>

EU May Grant Visa-free Travel for Ukraine and Georgia in Mid-2016, 09.12.2015

A visa-free regime may be introduced in both countries in mid-2016, according to the sources, Deutsche Welle reports citing Die Welt.

On December 15, the European Commission is expected to submit a report with a positive assessment of a visa liberalization action plan by Kyiv and Tbilisi, which will serve as a prerequisite for the approval of visa-free regime for Georgia and Ukraine by the EU member states. At the same time it is noted that Kyiv has to improve performance in some areas, in particular, fighting corruption, until the spring of 2016.

The lifting of visa regime will allow Georgian and Ukrainian citizens staying in the EU for 3 months during a 6-month period, while employment in one of the EU countries will be prohibited.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1206937-eu-may-grant-visa-free-travel-for-ukraine-and-georgia-in-mid-2016.html>

Chubarov warns Crimea blockade may resume in two weeks, 09.12.2015

Speaking in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, he said that on Wednesday the government would have to adopt the decision to terminate the movement of goods from mainland Ukraine to the Russian-occupied Crimean peninsula. Chubarov also reminded that power supplies to Crimea were terminated from November 22 until December 8. According to him, power supplies were partially restored on Tuesday due to the need to provide a number of areas of Kherson region with electricity, and based on humanitarian issues. The politician said that the power supplies had been resumed only "at one power transmission line, through which Crimea was receiving 220MW instead of 850MW that were provided as of November 22." At the same time, he said that "this will last for two weeks". Chubarov also said yesterday that a group of MPs, together with Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Oksana Syroid, registered a bill that prohibits supply of energy resources to the temporarily occupied territories. He called on the Parliament to adopt this bill by the end of December.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1207152-chubarov-warns-crimea-blockade-may-resume-in-two-weeks.html>

Leaving Ukraine, Biden calls on Poroshenko, Yatsenyuk, Groysman to work together, 10.12.2015

"I met with Speaker Groysman of the Rada, President Poroshenko, and Prime Minister Yatsenyuk. I've come to know these men, and I believe that, working together, they can create a truly free, united, democratic Ukraine," Biden wrote before leaving Ukraine. According to Biden, it's not enough to set up a new anti-corruption bureau and establish a special prosecutor fighting corruption. The Office of the General Prosecutor desperately needs reform. The judiciary should be overhauled.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1208148-leaving-ukraine-biden-calls-on-poroshenko-yatsenyuk-groysman-to-work-together.html>

Russia can't mend ties with U.S. while it backs sanctions: Lavrov, 10.12.2015

Russia wants to mend ties with the United States but cannot do so while Barack Obama's administration backs economic sanctions against Moscow for its role in the conflict in Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted on Thursday as saying. The United States and European Union imposed sanctions after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea peninsula last year. They also accuse Moscow of supporting a separatist rebellion in eastern Ukraine in which more than 9,000 people have been killed. "As long as Obama's deputy Joe Biden goes around Europe recommending continued sanctions against us without taking into account how Kiev is behaving under Western pressure, we will not be able to reach any understanding," Lavrov told Thursday's edition of the Italian newspaper La Repubblica in an interview. Lavrov and Russian President Vladimir Putin are due to meet U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry next week to discuss the conflicts in Ukraine and in Syria.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-usa-lavrov-idUSKBN0TT0YR20151210#gFstFxoX7Ou8L7sH.97>

Yatsenyuk: If Rada decides, I will resign, 11.12.2015

"I took full responsibility for the most unpopular steps in our country, which nobody has done for 20 years. And when I came to this post, I knew what would happen to my rating. I knew it. I did not come here for my own political rating, but to carry out reforms, and for the rating of our country," he said during the parliament's hour of questions to the government on Friday. Yatsenyuk said that the Parliament had full constitutional authority to vote on the decision on the resignation of the government. "Put this issue to the vote and vote. I will accept the decision of the Ukrainian parliament. I don't cling to this chair," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1209491-yatsenyuk-if-rada-decides-i-will-resign.html>

<https://en.eadaily.com/news/2015/11/08/slightly-deviated-when-will-arseniy-yatsenyuk-resign>

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/1926681-pm-yatsenyuk-in-brussels-ukraine-has-met-all-requirements-for-visa-free-travel-regime.html>

<http://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yatsenyuk-says-he-is-ready-to-resign-403978.html>

Russia resumes coal shipments in Ukraine, 11.12.2015

The RF resumed shipments of coal to Ukraine after the relevant decision was approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin. "Yesterday the president instructed to resume shipments. Shipments of coking coal have already started. Coking coal will be dispatched to Ukrainian enterprises specializing in production of the relevant goods," Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/russia-resumes-coal-shipments-in-ukraine-551861.html>

<http://www.onlinenewsplanet.com/news/1564762/russia-resumes-coal-shipments-in-ukraine.html>

<https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/business/donbas-resumes-shipping-coal-to-ukraine-403883.html>

Poroshenko unhappy with fight against corruption in Ukraine, 11.12.2015

"We must prove that the system we've been creating for the entire year has finally started functioning and bringing good results," Poroshenko said at the second meeting of the National Anti-Corruption Council. The president warned against soothing reports on the first phase of anti-corruption activities. "It seems that we are moving forward and certain progress has been achieved already. No, we are just creating the institutional structure and preconditions for the inevitability of punishment. I am not satisfied with the results at the moment, notwithstanding the fact that every week senior officials are being detained for bribes," the head of state said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/310620.html>

U.S. General: If U.S. provides Ukraine with Javelins, Russia to beef up military presence in Donbas, 11.12.2015

"Obviously, we've made very clear: we want Ukraine to be able to defend itself, to be able to protect itself. Adding, if the U.S. policy changed to provide say Javelins, for example, that would probably lead to increased lethality on the battlefield for the Ukrainians, it would not change the situation strategically in a positive way, because the Russians would double down, they would dramatically increase more violence, more death, more destruction," Hodges said. The U.S. General believes that "continue training, continue providing our support are get better by the day." "U.S. support for Ukraine has included open-armored Humvees, regular Humvees, helmets, body armor, night vision devices, radios, individual first aid kits (IFAK). Well, over \$250 million, I think, the U.S. aid. The Q-36 radar, of course, was delivered on November 9," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1209458-us-general-if-us-provides-ukraine-with-javelins-russia-to-beef-up-military-presence-in-donbas.html>
<http://www.voanews.com/media/video/hodges-talks-to-voa-russia-islamic-state-women-combat/3096724.html>

Klimkin tells UNSC how to control militants' arms withdrawal in Donbas, 11.12.2015

Klimkin said at a UN Security Council meeting in New York on Friday that way back in March 2015 Ukraine officially requested that the UN support the implementation of the Minsk agreement by deploying a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine. "This mission or the extension of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) will let implement such provisions of the Minsk agreement as the disarmament of illegal armed groups, the formation, monitoring and verification of the withdrawal of Russian troops and military hardware, ensure distribution of humanitarian aid, ensure proper conditions for local elections under the OSCE standards. I urge the Security Council once again to take the lead in establishing such a mission," Klimkin said.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/klimkin-tells-uns-council-how-to-control-militants-arms-withdrawal-in-donbas/>

Ukraine could again slip into cycle of calm giving way to savage fighting – senior UN rights official, 11.12.2015

A senior United Nations human rights official warned today that the fighting in Ukraine, which has recently decreased, could erupt again with a massive civilian toll in a conflict that has already left over 9,000 people dead and nearly 21,000 injured over the past two years. "We should not also forget that the current relative calm in the conflict area may be just another manifestation of the repeating pattern we have been observing in Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict," UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović told the Security Council. "A surge in hostilities accompanied by massive civilian casualties, which is followed by a ceasefire agreement, which is then followed by a decrease in hostilities and civilian casualties, and which is once again followed by a new escalation of hostilities," he said referring to the current reinvigorated ceasefire agreed on in August. "This must not happen again. The overall death toll of the conflict is already too high," he added, stressing that the current figure in eastern Ukraine of at least 9,115 people killed is a conservative estimate, with the real number considered to be higher. Implementation of the previous ceasefire accords is the only viable strategy for achieving a peaceful solution in the eastern Donbas region, which is key to resolving the human rights crisis in Ukraine, he said.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52798#.Vm7H9dKLTyI>

Dismissal of Ukraine's PM not on Rada's agenda – Lutsenko, 12.12.2015

"Our position at the end of this political year is to drop the political maneuvers, tricks and combinations and say directly: the first thing the MPs should do is form a policy, the next year's task of the government for the new Tax Code with decreased taxes, significantly reduced taxes over the next three years. The second thing is to adopt the budget of Ukraine ... And only after this task for the next year is shaped, we can start the talk about the reshuffles in the government," said Lutsenko. According to him, "we admit that we have to change the inefficient ministers in the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine."

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1210541-dismissal-of-ukraines-pm-not-on-radas-agenda-lutsenko.html>
<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/dismissal-of-ukraines-pm-not-on-radas-agenda-lutsenko/>

Biden condemns attack on Ukraine's PM Yatsenyuk in parliament, 12.12.2015

US Vice President Joe Biden has condemned the attack on Ukraine's Prime Minister in parliament on Friday. He urged MPs to stop the dividing rhetoric which impedes "the reforms the Ukrainian people deserve." The fight came several days after Biden's visit to Kyiv. Scuffles erupted after Yatsenyuk was picked up from the podium by MP Oleh Barna. The lawmaker from Petro Poroshenko's bloc had been collecting signatures for a motion of no confidence in the government. Footage from the brawl hit news headlines worldwide, becoming potentially embarrassing PR for the country.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/biden-condemns-attack-on-ukraine-s-pm-yatsenyuk-in-parliament-552551.html>

President: Our core value is the prospect of joining the EU and NATO, 12.12.2015

At the forum of members of local parliaments from BPP Solidarity, President Petro Poroshenko noted that the key value for his party was European and Euro-Atlantic choice. "You can say it directly - the prospect of joining the EU and NATO," Petro Poroshenko said adding that the level of support for the Euro-Atlantic integration among Ukrainians had raised from 16% to 70%. The second core value is unitarity of Ukraine, which should provide for the Ukrainian language as the only state language. It should also facilitate free development and use of other languages, first of all, Russian and English. "Our priority is to perceive the nation as a political union of all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin, language or faith," the President noted. Another important ideological basis is decommunization. "Not only in the form of demolition of monuments, but first of all in the form of rejection of social hatred, populism and communist state interference with economic processes," the President said. The Head of State emphasized that the inviolability of private property and free market were the basis of economic progress and social welfare.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/nashi-klyuchovi-cinnosti-v-perspektivi-vstup-do-yes-ta-nato-36483>

Ukraine may need new constitution – EU Ambassador Tombinski, 14.12.2015

Head of the European Commission's Delegation to Ukraine Jan Tombinski has said that Ukraine needs a new draft of the fundamental law. When speaking at the forum entitled "Constitution: Public Trust and New Justice" in Kyiv on Monday, Tombinski said that Ukraine needs to constantly work on drafting the new fundamental law in terms of the justice system. Perhaps, it is necessary to create a constitution that will live up to the wishes to create a parliamentary republic, so that it has a clear-cut allocation of function, distribution of responsibilities between different branches of government, he added.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/311143.html>

Arseniy Yatsenyuk: We manage to preserve the unity among the President, the Prime Minister and the Ukrainian Parliament, 14.12.2015

"Our enemies hoped that the new Ukrainian government would not be able to overcome the eternal curse of the Ukrainian Democrats which is discord and conflicts. Yes, it's rather difficult for us. But we still preserve unity among the President, the Prime Minister and the Ukrainian Parliament", said Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk. He stressed that the following year the reforms in Ukraine would be prolonged: "Now we hear that next year they will fail, they will collapse, and the country won't be implementing any reforms. Arseniy Yatsenyuk emphasized that the government would endorse the law on the state budget, a new tax reform: "We will implement the reform of secondary education and will change the quality of Ukrainian medicine". "We have been intimidated all this time. They want to instill fear in us. John Paul II said: "Have no fear..." So, do not be afraid, do not give up, but together, having faith and confidence, we go to 2016, into the year of economic stability, into the year of our advancement and the year of our future success," said the Prime Minister of Ukraine.

http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=248705389&cat_id=244314975

Tusk wants sanctions against Russia to be considered as early as Friday, 15.12.2015

“Finally, let me also take this opportunity to inform you that I have asked the Presidency to put on the agenda of COREPER this coming Friday the proposal to roll over sanctions on Russia for another six months,” Tusk wrote in an invitation letter. The EC President stressed that “this will be the direct consequence of the March European Council conclusion, according to which the duration of the restrictive measures against the Russian Federation should be clearly linked to the complete implementation of the Minsk agreements.”

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1213125-tusk-wants-sanctions-against-russia-to-be-considered-as-early-as-friday.html>

Italy clarifies position on Russia sanctions, 15.12.2015

Paolo Gentiloni told press after a ministers’ meeting in Brussels on Monday: “The roll-over of the sanctions will be taken on the basis of Minsk implementation, and this is what will happen.” “They [sanctions] last until the end of January, so there’s no urgency to talk about this matter [today] ... we believe the summit is the best place for the discussion.” He spoke after Italian prime minister Matteo Renzi, last week, blocked a plan for EU ambassadors to extend the measures by so called written procedure, prompting speculation of a veto. But Gentiloni’s reference to the Minsk ceasefire accord in Ukraine, which Russia has failed to implement, according to EU and UN assessments, indicates Renzi will follow the herd. Gentiloni said he was “surprised” by the swirl of media questions on Russia, adding there’s “no ground” to say Italy is blocking the sanctions.

<https://euobserver.com/foreign/131514>

Russia FM admits US influence could be "good thing" for Ukraine settlement, 15.12.2015

According to Sergey Lavrov, the United States could influence Kiev in promoting the work of the Normandy format. The United States could influence Kiev in promoting the work of the Normandy format, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Tuesday at talks with US State Secretary John Kerry. "Of course, we would like to continue the discussion of our presidents about US' possible contribution to the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis," Lavrov said. "Taking into account Washington's influence on Kiev, it could be a good thing for the work in the Normandy format," he added. "We will discuss those issues of bilateral relations that you consider necessary. We will later report about the talks at the meeting with Russian President (Vladimir Putin," the foreign minister noted.

<http://tass.ru/en/politics/844072>

Poroshenko and Duda agree sanctions against Russia must be prolonged, 15.12.2015

In a press statement after the meetings, Poroshenko expressed gratitude to Poland for the firm support for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. He said that special attention had been paid to the situation in the east of Ukraine and coordination of actions on the non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea. “We are content with the resolute position of our Polish partner,” Poroshenko emphasized.

The Head of State informed that President Duda had reaffirmed the position of Warsaw in support of the prolongation of sanctions against Russia for illegal occupation of Crimea and non-implementation of the Minsk agreements. “I am really hopeful that the given decision would be adopted at the coming session of the European Council. I was pleased to hear the firm position of Poland on this issue,” Poroshenko said. “I am confident that we must stop the shameful policy of Russia – repressions based on political and ideological grounds against Crimean Tatars in Crimea and representatives of Ukrainian community that are persecuted just for being Ukrainians,” the President of Ukraine noted.

<http://www.ukrainebusiness.com.ua/news/16494.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1212925-poroshenko-demands-russias-repressions-against-crimean-tatars-stop.html>

Comment by the President on the incident at the session of the National Council of Reforms, 15.12.2015

As President, guarantor of the Constitution, rights and freedoms of citizens, I cannot keep silent about the infamous incident, which occurred on Monday at the National Council of Reforms. The discussion at this platform often becomes tough and heated. Different points of view are expressed there, ideas are produced, compromises are found and reforms are born. But coarse language and insults are inadmissible at the National Council of Reforms. Especially with xenophobic overtones that affect national dignity, call into question Ukrainian patriotism and offer somebody to "get out of Ukraine". It was me who invited the international team of reformers to Ukraine, which has already become a truly Ukrainian team not only in terms of passports, but also in terms of spirit. I do not regret about this decision. On the other hand, struggle against corruption is not a show business. I would like people's deputies and public servants to avoid participation in such "shows". Not those who speak better, but those who provide evidence base to the National Anti-Corruption Bureau will be more convincing. It is a new, independent government body formed on the basis of transparent and rigorous selection of director, detectives and prosecutors. It is high time to switch from the anti-corruption show to the anti-corruption cases.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/komentar-prezidenta-shodo-incidentu-na-zasidanni-nacionalnoy-36500>

Dzhemilev: invaders accuse Crimean Tatars of working for with Turkish intel, 15.12.2015

Leader of the Crimean Tatar people, MP Mustafa Dzhemilev, said that the occupation authorities in the Russian-annexed Crimea began to accuse the Crimean Tatars of working for the Turkish intelligence service, correspondent reported from the annual meeting of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people with heads of diplomatic missions to Ukraine.

<http://www.onlinenewsplanet.com/news/1586311/dzhemilev-invaders-accuse-crimean-tatars-of-working-for-with-turkish-intel.html>

Replacement of Ukrainian prime minister not on agenda - joint statement by Poroshenko, Yatseniuk and Groyzman, 16.12.2015

Replacement of the Ukrainian prime minister is not on the table, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk and Verkhovna Rada Speaker Volodymyr Groyzman said in a joint statement. "Unity, mutual support and further joint work of the president, the Verkhovna Rada and the government are now needed as never before. The question of replacement of the prime minister is not on the agenda," the leaders of the country said in the joint statement posted on the presidential website on Tuesday evening.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/311710.html>

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/311724.html>

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/311737.html>

Italy PM Renzi says Russian sanctions to be reviewed in coming months, 16.12.2015

Europe and other Western countries are likely to review and revise their economic sanctions against Russia in the coming months, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said. Italy has significant economic ties with Russia that have been damaged by tit-for-tat sanctions over the Ukraine crisis and has pushed for Western nations to engage with Russia to overcome differences. Last week it unexpectedly blocked an automatic rollover of sanctions by the European Union, saying the matter required further discussion. Renzi, who attends an EU summit later on Wednesday, made clear in an interview with Italian radio that he did not intend to prevent a further six-month extension to the sanctions as already agreed. But he repeated he expected a full debate next year. "It's clear that we have the same position as the entire international Western community... but I think that this package of sanctions will be reviewed, not in the next few hours but in the coming months," Renzi said. European leaders are likely to discuss the matter at a meeting in Brussels on Thursday, and EU and Italian officials have said they do not expect problems in renewing the sanctions that expire at the end of the year for another six months.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-eu-sanctions-italy-idUSKBN0TZ0UQ20151216?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

Russia, U.S. support Minsk agreements, 'Normandy format' – Lavrov, 16.12.2015

"In development of the agreements reached between Presidents Putin and Obama, both Russia and the United States support the Minsk agreements and the 'Normandy format' and will use their capacities to achieve the complete fulfillment of the Minsk agreements," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said after a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/311722.html>
<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/311747.html>

Russia Deployed Nuclear Weapon in Occupied Crimea, – Dzhemilev, 16.12.2015

He stated this in his interview to 'Focus'. When asked to comment on the possibility of the return of Crimea to Ukrainian control, Dzhemilev said that the strategy of return should be based on Ukrainian opportunities, though they are rather limited at the moment. "The military option to return the annexed territory of Crimea is excluded. Besides, as various sources report, Russia has deployed nuclear weapons in Crimea", said Dzhemilev. At the same time, according to Dzhemilev, the invaders have almost completely restored the nuclear storage facility in the Kyzyltash stow near the Black Sea resort of Yalta. The facility has been closed up, devastated after the signing of the Budapest Memorandum in 1994 as Ukraine gave up on its nuclear weapons. In addition, Dzhemilev said that the Russian Federation had brought to Crimea missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Finally, Dzhemilev is convinced that strengthening of Ukrainian defense capability is one of the steps towards the return of Crimea.

<http://ukraineunderattack.org/en/48800-russia-deployed-nuclear-weapon-in-occupied-crimea-dzhemilev.html>

Yanukovych, his entourage may be put as leaders in "DPR," "LPR", 16.12.2015

"Plotnitskiy [self-styled leader of the Luhansk People's Republic – LPR] and his counterpart from the "DPR" Zakharchenko, once completing the cleansing, will also fall under it. And they will be replaced politicians and businessmen from the inner circle of Yanukovych who fled to Russia. It's no coincidence that "the president who is alive and legitimate" has recently announced publically his intention to return to politics," Novaya Gazeta wrote citing its "well-informed sources." It is noted that "such a scenario sounds weird, but what has been happening in "certain areas" of Donbas has long ceased to fit into the normal logic, while Yanukovych and his cronies, unlike Plotnitskiy and Zakharchenko, at least, did not take part in military operations against the Ukrainian army."

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1214344-yanukovych-his-entourage-may-be-put-as-leaders-in-dpr-lpr.html>

Juncker: Ukraine, Russia get last chance to agree on Ukraine-EU free trade, 17.12.2015

"As you all know, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area between Ukraine and the European Union will provisionally enter into force on the 1st of January 2016. This is not only a symbol of our closer ties, it is an opportunity for our trade exchanges to increase and foster job creation and economic development. Together with the Ukrainian authorities we have engaged in trilateral talks with Russia to address concerns that have arisen in the context of the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. Solid progress has been made but not all differences have been solved yet. The three parties have already met more than 20 times, both at technical and political level. The ministerial meeting scheduled to take place here in Brussels on the 21st December is the last chance, the last chance, to find a common understanding," he said prior to the Ukraine-EU mini-summit in Brussels.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1214689-junker-ukraine-russia-get-last-chance-to-agree-on-ukraine-eu-free-trade.html>

Putin suspends free trade deal with Ukraine from Jan 1, 2016, 17.12.2015

Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent a bill on suspending a free trade agreement with Ukraine for consideration by Russia's State Duma, Duma First Deputy Chairman Ivan Melnikov told reporters.

<http://www.onlinenewsplanet.com/news/1595943/putin-tables-bill-in-russias-duma-to-suspend-free-trade-with-ukraine.html>

Stoltenberg: Putin's statement underlines Russia's special responsibility, 17.12.2015

"Regarding the Russian presence in eastern Ukraine, we have stated again and again that Russia is present with military personnel. And it is based on our own intelligence sources, it's based on open sources, it's based on reports in the media, it's based on reports from non-governmental organizations... But today that's also confirmed by President Putin," said the NATO Secretary General. "He [Vladimir Putin] stated that Russia has personnel in eastern Ukraine, and that this personnel – they have conducted military activities, and that's what we normally call soldiers. So I think that it once again underlines a special responsibility of Russia when it comes to the full implementation of the Minsk agreements," said Stoltenberg.

<http://ukrnews.today/stoltenberg-putins-statement-underlines-russias-special-responsibility/>

<http://www.unian.info/world/1215171-putin-eventually-admits-russians-in-donbas-solving-military-issues.html>

http://www.fm-tv.kiev.ua/main_news/69414/view/

Duma speaker describes NATO as "cancer tumor" of Europe, 17.12.2015

"I have a special attitude toward this organization which I consider to be a cancer tumor of the entire European continent," Russian State Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin said at the meeting with representatives of the Serbian parliament. "It would have been better if the organization was disbanded," he added. "This could be done in several stages. First of all, it is needed to expel the United States of America from the Organization. After this, the Organization in general could be painlessly disbanded," the speaker said. "This could serve as a good step on the way to strengthening security and stability on the European continent," he said.

<http://tass.ru/en/politics/844835>

Poroshenko says number of agreements with NATO to be signed, to enhance Ukraine's defenses, 17.12.2015

President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko announced at joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg that a number of documents are to be signed with NATO in the near future, which will strengthen Ukraine's defense capacity.

<http://www.newstime365.com/headlines/1283917/poroshenko-says-number-of-agreements-with-nato-to-be-signed-to-enhance-ukraines-defenses.html>

Turchynov: Putin entangled in own lies, 17.12.2015

Ukraine's NSDC Secretary said that Vladimir Putin, while responding to a question during today's press conference about the arrested Russian GRU officers captain Yerofeyev and private Alexandrov detained in Donbas, Putin contradicted his own last year's statement. "I want to remind you that for two consecutive years, Putin has been saying the same thing: there are no Russian troops in the east of Ukraine. You may as well recall his last year's "hotline," when he said the following: "This is all nonsense. In eastern Ukraine, there are no Russian troops, no special services, no trainers. It's all the locals." Today, these 'local residents' are turning into the Russian military, under the pressure of indisputable arguments. So, without batting an eye, the Russian president's is lying, confident that no one will stop him in his lie," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1215690-turchynov-putin-entangled-in-own-lies.html>

<https://meduza.io/en/feature/2015/12/18/putin-s-lies>

General Wesley Clark: West Should Arm Ukraine, 17.12.2015

Retired US Army General Wesley Clark, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, has campaigned since 2014 to convince Western governments to provide lethal aid to Ukraine to fend off Russia's occupation of 9 percent of its territory. In a wide-ranging interview, he talked about why this hasn't happened and about Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine and Europe, his Syrian strategy, and his overall game plan. "We should have given defensive lethal weapons to Ukraine," he said. "If we'd given them defensive weapons, many lives could have been saved. There are major human consequences here." Overall casualties now mount to 9,100--up from 6,200 in spring 2015--according to a United Nations report issued December 9. Russia denies direct military involvement but no one believes that. Moscow claims separatists are in charge, but NATO, Clark, and the UN have evidence to the contrary. Russia's involvement is direct and murderous.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/diane-m-francis/general-wesley-clark-west_b_8819918.html

The European Commission confirmed that Ukraine is ready for visa-free regime with the EU, 18.12.2015

"Taking into account the results of monitoring and reporting, which took place after the start of visa dialogue in October 2008, the European Commission considers that Ukraine has fulfilled all the criteria set out in the four blocks of the second phase of the VLAP", – said the EC statement. The document stresses that has been granting Ukraine with a visa-free regime was possible because of the special political relations between Kyiv and Brussels. "Taking into account the relations between Ukraine and the EU, the European Commission at the beginning of 2016 will give (the EU Council), a legislative proposal to amend the regulation No 539/2001," – concludes the EC. It should be noted that the EC report does not contain any conditions or criteria for the abolition of visas for Ukrainians. Although the report states that Ukraine fulfilled the requirements of the VLAP, it implicitly recognized that Ukraine has not yet completed some requirements of the plan with regard to the fight against corruption. However, the EC confirmed the launch of the process of abolishing visas, based on the promise of the Ukrainian authorities to complete the work.

http://joinfo.com/world/1012824_the-european-commission-confirmed-that-ukraine-is-ready-for-visa-free-regime-with-the-eu.html

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/365743/visafree_travel_to_europe_here_you_go_poroshenko_comments_on_ukraines_meeting_of_vlap_criteria

<http://eap-csf.eu/en/news-events/articles-analytics/european-commission-publishes-progress-reports-confirming-that-georgia-and-ukraine-meet-the-criteria/>

Russia sees court fight after Ukraine 'defaults' on \$3 billion bond, 18.12.2015

Ukraine and Russia appear all but certain to take their dispute over a \$3 billion Eurobond to court after Ukraine said it would not repay the bond when it matures next week, prompting Russia to cry default and say a legal battle was now on the cards. Ukraine has included the two-year bond which matures on Dec. 20 in external commercial debt it is restructuring to shore up its war-torn economy. But Russia, whose political relations with Ukraine are at rock bottom, has refused to accept these terms, insisting the bond is an official country-to-country loan, not commercial debt. Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk said that Ukraine would not repay the Eurobond when it matures and that Kiev was geared to fight the issue in court. A moratorium on repayments would be in place "until the acceptance of our restructuring proposals or the adoption of the relevant court decision ... We are prepared for court action from the Russian side," he said. The finance ministry in Kiev said it was still committed to negotiating a restructuring agreement in good faith with Russia, but the Kremlin said the moratorium sent a clear message.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-debt-russia-idUKKBN0U11A820151218>

Putin: Russia can't abandon Russians in Donbas to "nationalists to eat them up", 21.12.2015

The West continues to believe that "it is necessary to put some pressure on Russia so that it gives concessions, somehow and on some issue." "It is not our job to go on an offensive anywhere, or insist on anything, we only believe that we cannot leave at the mercy of nationalists those people who live in the south-east of Ukraine," Putin said, adding that it is about all the Russian-speaking population of Donbas, "which focuses on Russia."

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1217945-putin-russia-cant-leave-russian-speakers-of-donbas-at-mercy-of-nationalists.html>

<http://ukrnews.today/putin-says-will-not-abandon-russians-in-ukraine-to-nationalists/>

Russia says Donbas elections under Ukraine laws "unacceptable", 21.12.2015

"It is simply unacceptable to talk about the application of the imperfect legislation to the electoral process in Donbas, how it is emphasized by the Ukrainian negotiators in the contact group. Moreover, a specific task has been written in a complex of measures that must be solved in cooperation between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk – it is about a special law on local elections," Lukashевич said at a Moscow-Vienna video conference.

"The current Ukrainian legislation suffers from a number of conceptual flaws." "As for the monitoring of the forthcoming elections in Donbas, we are talking about monitoring rather than preparations. These elections must be prepared by the parties to the conflict, i.e. Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk, practicing modalities of these elections, practicing law, which will specifically stipulate procedures for these local elections," Lukashевич said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1218708-russia-says-donbas-elections-under-ukraine-laws-unacceptable.html>

Ukraine not to ask Kremlin's permission when choosing its development vector – Poroshenko, 21.12.2015

Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko has assured that the authorities will not take into account the interests and wishes of the Russian leadership when choosing a vector of the country's development. "We will agree our European integration choice exclusively with the Ukrainian people. It is not Kremlin's business, no one is going to ask them for permission, nor consult with them as to how we should develop our state," he said in an interview with the Inter TV channel aired on Sunday evening. Poroshenko stressed that the Ukrainian people will decide for themselves which development vector they should choose.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/312769.html?>

Russia waits repayment of \$3 bln by Ukraine until year end, 22.12.2015

"Ukraine chose to default on its debt rather than negotiate on the basis of an offer made by Russian President during the meeting of G20 leaders in Antalya in November 2015," the Ministry said. The due date for settling \$3 billion and the coupon was Sunday, December 20, which means that the relevant payment to Russia should have been carried out on the next business day, December 21, as reported. The Russian Finance Ministry noted formal default would occur on December 31 after expiration of the so-called "grace" period, during which Kyiv is still able to make a payment. "Russia's Finance Ministry expects that Ukraine will fulfill its debt obligations in full by the mentioned date," minister stated. The Finance Ministry also reminded that the International Monetary Fund had recognized Ukraine's debt to the Russian state. "If Ukraine fails to make payments under the bonds in full within the grace period, the Russian Federation will seek to recover the funds owed, using appropriate legal mechanisms," the ministry warns.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/russia-waits-repayment-of-3-bln-by-ukraine-until-year-end/>

Russian FSB tortures Crimean Tatar, trying to recruit him – Dzhemilev, 22.12.2015

"On December 16, 2015, a resident of Dzhankoy, Ehnver Krosh, born in 1991, was illegally taken to the district police station of Dzhankoy and handed over to the FSB officers, who were present in the same building. The officers then tried to force the man into signing an agreement on secret cooperation with the FSB," he said. According to Dzhemilev, the detainee was tortured with electric shocks. "The FSB did not get the expected results and subjected Ehnver Krosh to electric shocks," he said.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/russian-fsb-tortures-crimean-tatar-trying-to-recruit-him-dzhemilev/>

Kuchma regrets official Kyiv keeps silent over militants' actions in Donbas, 24.12.2015

Second president of Ukraine and Ukraine's representative in the Contact Group on the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Donbas, Leonid Kuchma, believes Ukrainian party must respond to the active shell attacks of the militants in the east of the country. "That party violated. Where is the response of the Ukrainian side? We don't have it, we still keeping silent. Why? I don't understand," he told the journalists in Kyiv on Thursday.

Kuchma reminded that on December 22 the agreement on ceasefire was reached in Minsk in late December 23, but the militants broke this agreement: "We must cry to the whole world that another party violates these agreements, moreover, if this agreement was reached under presence of the Russian representatives. It means that Russia was a guarantor in this regard".

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/313633.html>

Russia says DPR and LPR want back to Ukraine, 24.12.2015

According to the report of the Russian Center for Current Politics, which was presented at the round table "Minsk agreements. Results-2015," in spite of the intention to "reintegrate" into Ukraine, the militants can hold elections in the region under their "laws" if Ukraine "gives a reason." "No changes in the position are expected now. At the same time, the republics will recognize the importance of the Minsk agreements," the center said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1221378-russia-says-dpr-and-lpr-want-back-to-ukraine.html>

Russia's Federation Council ends free trade with Ukraine, 25.12.2015

The Federation Council, which is the upper house of the Russian parliament, endorsed unanimously the bill "On the suspension by the Russian Federation of the Treaty on the free trade area in respect of Ukraine,". Russian President Vladimir Putin submitted to the State Duma on December 17 the relevant draft law. According to the explanatory memorandum, preferential trade regime with Ukraine shall be suspended in order to prevent threats to the economic security of Russia. Putin has also signed a decree suspending the Treaty on a free trade area with Ukraine. The memo states that in connection with the introduction of Ukraine-EU DCFTA from January 1, 2016, "there has been a fundamental change in circumstances, essential for Russia at the conclusion of the Agreement." "The Ukrainian side has actually abandoned the development of trade and economic cooperation within the CIS and chosen the path of progress toward the comprehensive integration with the European Union," reads the explanatory memorandum. It also says that the tariff liberalization, provided by the integration agreement between Ukraine and the EU "will cause significant damage to the economy of Russia."

<http://uatoday.tv/news/russia-s-federation-council-votes-to-end-free-trade-with-ukraine-561119.html>

Yatsenyuk says budget spending on defense, security grows to almost \$5 bln, 27.12.2015

The Ukrainian premier says that UAH 74 million had been allocated for the anti-corruption prosecutor's office, and almost UAH 500 million would be given to the National Anti-Corruption Bureau. The largest amount of the budget funds in 2016 will be spent on national security and defense, "on our soldiers who have been fighting against Russian military aggression, on our new police officers, on our National Guards – all those who are defending Ukraine, safeguarding our sovereignty and territorial integrity."

<http://world.korupciya.com/2015/12/28/yatsenyuk-says-budget-spending-on-defense-security-grows-to-almost-5-bl/>

Former Right Sector Party Leader Yarosh to Create New Opposition Movement, 28.12.2015

"Now it is time to concentrate on issues of national importance. Our movement has grown, become stronger and is now entering a new stage of its development. Now we want to appear not as a movement that has narrow functions, but as a national patriotic one in order to unite all patriots of Ukraine. Without radicalism typical of peripheral social groups and without liberal empty rhetoric. Building an independent Ukrainian state remains our goal. We've got a dual task – to preserve the existing state as a springboard for building national statehood and to conduct revolutionary change in it to ensure the freedom, justice and well-being of the Ukrainian nation," the statement said.

<https://charter97.org/en/news/2015/12/28/184660/>

Foreign Minister Steinmeier concerned about the fragile ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, 29.12.2015

The fact that the number of ceasefire violations increased again in eastern Ukraine over the Christmas period, rather than decreased, is a worrying development as the year ends. I thus welcome the initiative taken by the Trilateral Contact Group and moved forward by Ambassador Martin Sajdik to renew the ceasefire over Christmas and the New Year. I urgently call on all sides to now adhere strictly to the ceasefire in the interests of the people in the conflict areas. All of this shows that although the situation in eastern Ukraine is no longer in the headlines, there is no reason to rest on one's laurels. It is true that at the start of this year, we were close to the outbreak of war. Thanks to the Minsk agreements, it was possible to prevent this. Over the course of the year, significant progress has been achieved on military de-escalation and the withdrawal of weapons. At the meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group and its four working groups in Minsk, headway is being made on a difficult but now sustainable political process. There has also been concrete progress on economic and social affairs.

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2015/151229_Ukraine.html

Poroshenko says Russia resorts to new forms of hybrid warfare, 29.12.2015

Speaking at a meeting of the Security Service of Ukraine on the results of 2015, the president stressed that resolute actions on resisting the aggression forced the enemy to resort to the new forms of hybrid warfare against Ukraine – subversive and terrorist activity, the use of agents of influence and dramatic intensification in the information field.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/poroshenko-says-russia-resorts-to-new-forms-of-hybrid-warfare-563617.html>

Poroshenko says EU peacekeepers needed for security at Donbas elections, 30.12.2015

“With a view to maintain order and security of the electoral process, the Ukrainian President offered to deploy the EU’s special peacekeeping mission in the framework of the Common Security and Defense Policy of the European Union, the press service reported with reference to Poroshenko who proposed this during a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, December 30.

The parties to the “Normandy Four” talks also called for the intensification of the Trilateral Contact Group’s work in early 2016 over “the modalities of holding local elections” in certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) should be involved in these activities.

In this context, Poroshenko emphasized the need for abolishing fake elections scheduled by Russian-backed militants in eastern Ukraine. “Once again, he noted that the elections in Donbas should be held with participation of Ukrainian political parties, media, the Central Election Commission, international observers and in full compliance with the OSCE/ODIHR standards,” the presidential press service said.

<http://ukrain.timesofnews.com/poroshenko-says-eu-peacekeepers-needed-for-security-at-donbas-elections/>
<http://sputniknews.com/europe/20151230/1032505043/poroshenko-donbass-eu-peacekeepers-elections.html>

OSCE Chief Monitor in Ukraine: “The people of Ukraine seek peace and normalization”, 31.12.2015

Ambassador Ertugrul Apakan, expressed strong hope that the coming year will be pivotal in de-escalating the violence and taking concrete steps towards a comprehensive solution to the conflict in Ukraine. “The people of Ukraine seek peace and normalization of the country,” he said. “We recognize the devastating impact of the humanitarian crisis that confronts so many in eastern Ukraine, and the need to put an end to the violence that perpetuates this crisis,” said Apakan. In anticipation of the upcoming holidays that are celebrated by people across the country and beyond, “we are mindful of the many who have lost, or are separated from, family and friends with whom they would otherwise celebrate,” added the Chief Monitor.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/214056>

DCFTA creates new opportunities for Ukraine: Commissioner Malmström, 31.12.2015

“The entry into force of this trade area on 1 January 2016 creates unique opportunities for Ukraine to stabilise, diversify and develop its economy to the benefit of all its citizens.

Assistance from the EU will be made available to help Ukrainian SMEs seize these new opportunities, to grow, and thereby create jobs,” reads the Thursday’s press release of the European Commission quoting Malmström as saying. The Commissioner adds that the EU businesses will benefit as well by gaining improved access to a market of 45 million people.

“The change will not occur over night, it will require work and investment. Gradually, the DCFTA will contribute to a prosperous Ukraine and to stronger economic integration with the EU,” the official said. Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn added that the DCFTA also opens opportunities for Ukraine beyond the European Union, as the EU standards are often international standards.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/dcfta-creates-new-opportunities-for-ukraine-commissioner-malmstrom/>

Actions of Ukrainian Authorities

Poroshenko, Merkel discuss ceasefire violations in Donbas, anti-corruption reform, 01.12.2015

The parties expressed concern over significant increase of ceasefire regime violations that takes place recently. The leaders emphasized the necessity of full and strict implementation of the Minsk agreements by the Russian party. The parties stand for the intensification of process of elaboration of modalities on the preparation of elections in Donbas under the Ukrainian legislation, OSCE standards and OSCE/ODIHR monitoring. Poroshenko and Merkel urged the Russian party to comply with the logic of the Minsk agreements fulfillment clearly. This logic has been confirmed at the meeting in the Normandy format in Paris on October 2, 2015. The parties discussed the course of reforms in Ukraine, particularly struggle against corruption and judicial reform. The two Heads of State confirmed the irreversibility of DCFTA establishment between Ukraine and the EU on January 1, 2016.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1198786-poroshenko-merkel-discuss-ceasefire-violations-in-donbas-anti-corruption-reform.html>
<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/nimechchina-ye-nadijnim-partnerom-ukrayini-petro-poroshenko-36398>

Mariupol elections: Independent becomes mayor, opposition wins council, 02.12.2015

Another independent candidate Yuriy Ternavskiy ranked second with 10,207 votes. The third place was taken by Maksym Borodin from the Syla Lyudey [People Power] party with 7,595 votes. According to the report, four members of the commission refused to sign the protocol on the final results of the vote, saying that they would later provide "another opinion" on this issue. One member abstained. At the same time, Mariupol Territorial Election Commission announced the results of voting for candidates for Mariupol City Council members. The new City Council consists of 54 deputies. Three political parties have won the elections with the majority of votes, namely the Opposition Bloc, the Syla Lyudey Party and the Nash Kray Party.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1200135-mariupol-elections-independent-becomes-mayor-opposition-wins-council.html>

Ukraine's General Prosecutor requests parliament to authorize the arrest of MP and tycoon, 04.12.2015

Ukraine's General Prosecutor's Office has submitted a request to the Parliament to issue the consent for detention and arrest of Serhiy Kliuyev – an MP from former Party of Regions and ex-official of former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's regime.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/ukraine-s-general-prosecutor-requests-parliament-to-authorize-the-arrest-of-mp-and-tycoon-547443.html>

Shokin appoints Lviv prosecutor Hryshchuk as first deputy anti-corruption prosecutor, 04.12.2015

Viktor Shokin has appointed prosecutor from Lviv and ATO participant Maksym Hryshchuk as First Deputy Chief of Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office. According to PGO press service, the commission dealing with the selection of the candidates for this post has nominated Maksym Hryshchuk, Oleksandr Novikov and Volodymyr Kryvenko for Anti-Corruption Prosecutor Nazar Kholodnytsky to choose. The latter after job interviewing and studying personal files chose Hryshchuk and suggested this candidate to Shokin.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/308892.html>

Poroshenko: Emergency power supplies to Crimea through one transmission line to be restored soon, 07.12.2015

"An accident had occurred resulting in significant difficulties with energy supply for Kherson and Mykolaiv region. This has led to a threat of technogenic disaster," Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said.

The President addressed the Government to establish an emergency regime because of the critical situation in coal supply. "I think that the emergency supply on one line will be soon restored in consultation with Crimean Tatars," Poroshenko said.

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1204496-poroshenko-emergency-power-supplies-to-crimea-through-one-transmission-line-to-be-restored-soon.html>
<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/309431.html>

Ukraine's special services prevent over 200 terrorist acts, 07.12.2015

"Our special services have safeguarded Ukraine against over 200 terrorist acts, which were to be committed in Kyiv, Zaporizhia, Odesa, Kharkiv, Lviv and many other cities and towns. The key position is that neither we nor world can be intimidated by terrorist threats," Poroshenko said. "We clearly declared that states supporting terrorism cannot take part in the struggle against terrorism. There cannot be bad terrorists and acceptable terrorists. They are all terrorists. One cannot conceal violations of international law and receive international indulgence under the slogan of struggle against terrorism. It is our clear position," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1205387-ukraines-special-services-prevent-over-200-terrorist-acts.html>

SBU slams sabotage group in special operation, 10.12.2015

"Two citizens of the Russian Federation and three citizens of Ukraine have been detained. Another member of the group resisted arrest, opening fire from an automatic weapon and wounding two employees of Alpha special force. The man was neutralized. The condition of one of the wounded officers is critical; at this moment, doctors are fighting for his life. Under hostile fire, the Alpha team first evacuated from the apartment where the saboteur resided the owners of the apartment and their seven-year child, and only then completed the raid on the armed criminal," press secretary SBU Olena Gitlyanska wrote in an initial report. "In one of the [raided] Kyiv apartments alone, eight charged IEDs were seized at the moment, as well as four kilos of TNT, automatic weapons, more than forty grenades and two thousand rounds of ammunition, an also components of explosive devices and weapons," said the spokesperson.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1208072-sbu-slams-sabotage-group-in-special-operation.html>

<http://www.unian.info/society/1208526-busted-subversive-group-believed-to-have-operated-for-long-time.html>

<http://www.unian.info/society/1209099-russias-embassy-notified-of-russians-detention-in-kyiv-anti-terror-raid.html>

<http://www.breakingnewsheadlines24.com/headlines/1263680/unian-ukrainian-media-reveals-identity-of-sabotage-groups-leader-killed-in-kyiv-raid.html>

Grad, Uragan rocket launchers deployed to Odesa, beef up coastal defense, 10.12.2015

A number of Uragan and Grad multiple rocket launchers were deployed in Ukraine's southern port city of Odesa from the Donbas conflict zone, according to media reports.

<http://www.newsreality.com/post/grad-uragan-rocket-launchers-deployed-to-odesa-beef-up-coastal-defense.html>

Ukraine increases power supplies to occupied Crimea, 10.12.2015

Ukraine has increased power supplies via a single operating transmission line to the annexed Crimea to 180 MW after restoration of the peninsula's power grid, the press service of Kherson Regional State Administration reported.

<http://www.businessnewsworld.com/news/ukraine-increases-power-supplies-to-occupied-crimea.html>

Rada urges world parliaments to impose personal sanctions against Russian, 11.12.2015

The Verkhovna Rada's appeal to the parliaments of foreign countries, the European Parliament and international parliamentary assemblies on the extension and tightening of sanctions against the Russian Federation for the organization of terrorist acts in Ukraine, also calls on the parliaments to demand Russia stop the aggression against Ukraine. The document refers to the need "to continue and strengthen sanctions against the Russian Federation; impose personal sanctions against the ruling elite of the Russian Federation, which established a regime of state terrorism." The appeal contains a request to activate international monitoring of the situation in the Russian-occupied territories in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms and immediately respond to any violations; to support Ukraine's efforts aimed at the release of the Ukrainian citizens, who are illegally detained in Russia.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1209531-rada-urges-world-parliaments-to-impose-personal-sanctions-against-russian-leaders.html>

Poroshenko announces reload of Cabinet, 12.12.2015

"The reload of the government will happen, because not all ministers today meet and comply with the criteria the society expects from them," he said. In addition, the President stressed: "Maintaining this coalition as the main political structure for the implementation of reform and political stability is a determining factor for the decision making, including decisions on personnel, by the way," he said.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/poroshenko-announces-reload-of-cabinet/>

President supports proposal on revocation of Ukrainian citizenship for separatism, 14.12.2015

President Petro Poroshenko endorsed the petition on deprivation of Ukrainian citizenship for separatism. However, as stated by the President, this issue requires legislative amendments. "As President, I believe that the country should have this instrument at its disposal in war conditions. I would like people's deputies to support this petition," Petro Poroshenko said answering the questions of journalists in the course of his visit to State Enterprise "Polygraph Combine "Ukraine". The President informed that he had forwarded the petition to the Parliament. Answering respective e-petition submitted by I.M. Lazavenko, the President noted: "Thank you for active civil stand. I share your opinion regarding the inevitability of strict punishment for persons who commit crimes against foundations of national state security.

<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-pidtrimuye-propoziciyu-pozbavlyati-gromadyanstva-u-36487>
<http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/prezident-dav-start-novomu-pasportu-gromadyanina-ukrayini-36488>

Chief of Netpolice Kiev appointed Andrey Krishchenko, 15.12.2015

«Based on the submission of the head of the National police of Ukraine Khatia Dekanoidze, the order of the Minister appointed today as the Deputy head of the National police of Ukraine — the head of the Main Directorate of the National police in the city of Kiev — Andrey Krishchenko», — said Avakov on his Facebook page on Tuesday. According to the head of the Ministry of internal Affairs, the appointment Krishchenko is «the right choice». The Minister said that 9 months ago he appointed Krishchenko the head of militia of Kharkov and in all that time, work Krishchenko met its trust.

<http://en.reporter-ua.ru/chief-of-netpolice-kiev-appointed-andrey-krishchenko.html>

Ukraine to halt trade with Crimea by mid-January, 16.12.2015

The Ukrainian prime minister says his country will halt some trade with Russian-occupied Crimea by mid-January. Arseniy Yatsenyuk said that Ukraine will halt all trade with Crimea except for the deliveries of humanitarian aid and "socially important foodstuffs." Unknown attackers last month blew up electricity pylons leading to Crimea, leaving the region of 2 million with no power. Activists who are advocating a blockade of the region had hampered repair works until Ukraine resumed the supplies last week. Yatsenyuk said there was no decision yet on whether Ukraine would want to supply electricity to Crimea.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/ukraine-to-halt-trade-with-crimea-by-mid-january/2015/12/16/27f58334-a3eb-11e5-8318-bd8caed8c588_story.html

Ukraine Cabinet adopts decree banning trade with Crimea, 17.12.2015

The decree specifies some exemptions, allowing citizens to carry personal items in hand luggage or baggage, socially important goods in the amount not exceeding UAH 10,000 (or equivalent) and with a maximum weight of 50 kilograms per citizen. Exceptions also concern food, if a citizen transporting it enters the temporarily occupied territory no more than once a day, according to the report. In addition, the Ukrainian government made it clear that the decree does not apply to the supplies of power and deliveries of humanitarian aid. "The decree comes into force in 30 days," the press service reported.

http://www.fm-tv.kiev.ua/main_news/69418/view/

New programme in Ukraine will send Donbas natives back to region to defend border with occupied area, 20.12.2015

At this centre in Ukraine's Cherkasy region, some 50 men and women are trained to be border guards in a new pilot programme. They will be deployed to east Ukraine, to areas which border territories under the control of Russian-backed militants. They know the area well – it's where they grew up. Many of them fled the region because of the fighting. Their teachers were officers who served over the past 18 months in Ukraine's conflict zone. These newly-certified servicemen and women will now be deployed in the Donetsk region of east Ukraine on the country's de facto border.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/new-programme-in-ukraine-will-send-donbas-natives-back-to-region-to-defend-border-with-occupied-area-557648.html>

SBU goes on a massive raid in Avdiyivka: detains 100, three saboteurs among arrested, 21.12.2015

"In the town of Avdiyivka in Donetsk region, near the demarcation line, the representatives of the Interior Ministry, the Defense Ministry, as well as the SBU officers conducted preventive and anti-sabotage operation. They worked in the areas of possible location of the militants and members of illegal armed groups. As a result of a special operation, about 100 people have been detained, three of them are suspected of illegal activities as part of sabotage and reconnaissance groups. One more person is suspected of involvement in the activities of foreign intelligence services," he said.

According to Tandyt, similar special operations will take place "in those places where it is needed." "We are doing everything so that our preventive actions have the result," he added. The illegal weapons were seized from the detainees, they were interviewed and "certain measures" were carried out regarding them, Tandyt said. "Most of these people were released after those measures have been completed. Several people remained in detention. Of course, criminal proceedings will be opened with respect to their detention," he said..

<http://conspiracy-cafe.blogspot.com/2015/12/sbu-goes-on-massive-raid-in-avdiyivka.html>

Poroshenko dismisses three regional and 15 district heads, 21.12.2015

The presidential website published a number of decrees dated December 19 which enforce dismissal of Khmelnytsky State Regional Administration Head Mykhailo Zahorodny, Kherson State Regional Administration Head Andriy Putilov, and Zaporizhia State Regional Administration Head Hryhoriy Samardak. The president also issued decrees to dismiss 15 heads of state district administrations.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/312763.html?>

Scandal on Bankova Street, Cabinet's retreat, and farewell to Communist Party, 22.12.2015

An ugly skirmish between Arsen Avakov and Mikheil Saakashvili may have serious political repercussions. Firstly, the scandal at a meeting of the National Council of Reform has been widely broadcast on the Russian TV channels, jumping happily at any slightest opportunity to discredit Ukraine. Secondly, the conflict in the presence of the Head of State has become so massive that even a "Statement of the Three" (a long forgotten form of demonstrating the unity of the president, prime minister and speaker of parliament) has not been able to smoothe it.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/weeks-milestones-scandal-on-bankova-street-cabinets-retreat-and-farewell-to-communist-party/>

Interior Minister Avakov requires urgent NSDC meeting: pro-Russian terrorists seized three villages, 24.12.2015

"By night it became clear this was not a single case... First we surrendered Kominternove, then Zaichenkove and Vodiane? What's next? A Ukrainian village per day? The Minsk process you say? HQ knows better? Houses of thousands of Ukrainian citizens have been occupied, and we are bantering about distribution of free candies at anti-corruption PR shows? Accustomed to war? Tired? Something is really wrong with us..," he wrote. He also noted an urgent response should be elaborated: "It is necessary to convene the National Security and Defense Council."

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/366507/interior_minister_avakov_requires_urgent_nsdg_meeting_prorussian_terrorists_seized_three_villages

NBU decides to liquidate bank of Yanukovich's son, 24.12.2015

The National Bank of Ukraine on Dec. 21 decided to revoke a banking license and liquidate PJSC All-Ukrainian Development Bank, owned by a son of Ukraine's ex-president Viktor Yanukovich, the NBU reported on its website.

<https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/unian-nbu-decides-to-liquidate-bank-of-yanukovichs-son-404885.html>

Rada adopts 2016 budget with deficit set at 3.7% of GDP, 25.12.2015

The Verkhovna Rada has passed a bill on the national budget for 2016 as a basis and as a whole document (unlike voting article by article) with a deficit set at 3.7% of GDP and revenue planned at UAH 595 billion.

<http://www.digitalnewsjournal.com/news/1867131/rada-adopts-2016-budget-with-deficit-set-at-37-of-gdp.html>

<http://rada.gov.ua/en/news/News/122510.html>

The Council adopted a law on denationalization of printed media, 25.12.2015

With the enactment in 1123 voted 260 people's deputies. The author of the law are MPs Mykola Tomenko and Oleksandr Abudlin. The law defines ways of reforming the print media and editors.

<http://ukrainiancrisis.net/news/15385>

Poroshenko signs law abolishing additional import tax, 28.12.2015

A total of 268 lawmakers voted in favor of the document. The law abolished additional import tax, which was temporarily introduced in Ukraine for a period of 12 months.

"The implementation of the law will ensure the fulfillment of the terms of the Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies between Ukraine and the International Monetary Fund and the Memorandum of Understanding between Ukraine as the Borrower and the European Union as the Lender dated May 22, 2015," the presidential press service said. The law comes into force on January 1, 2016.

<http://www.unian.info/economics/1224270-poroshenko-signs-law-abolishing-additional-import-tax.html>

http://en.censor.net.ua/news/353244/poroshenko_instructs_pm_to_consider_removal_of_customs_clearance_and_import_tax_for_cars

Court rules to remand UKROP leader Korban in custody for two months, 28.12.2015

Judge of Kyiv's Dniprovsky district court Mykola Chaus has satisfied a claim filed by prosecutors for remanding UKROP Party leader Hennadiy Korban in custody for 60 days.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/court-rules-to-remand-ukrop-leader-korban-in-custody-for-two-months-405136.html>

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1224726-court-rules-to-remand-ukrop-leader-korban-in-custody-for-two-months.html>

Middle East voyage, Minsk prolongation and Kremlin sublimation, 28.12.2015

Petro Poroshenko paid a visit to Israel, where he tried to make the most of the Knesset's podium for political statements. Minsk process is by default extended throughout 2016. Russia responded to the extension of European sanctions and a new batch of the U.S. economic restrictions by suspending the free trade area with Ukraine. The Ukrainian-Israeli relations are definitely going uphill, while the state visit of Petro Poroshenko to the Promised Land is the best evidence for such assumption. In addition, the Ukrainian leader tried to use the political environment for the development of relations with Israel, as the talks on a free trade zone between the two countries has dragged for years.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1224763-ukrainian-interest-middle-east-voyage-minsk-prolongation-and-kremlin-sublimation.html>

SBU refutes Russian cyberattack on Ukraine's power companies, 29.12.2015

The Security Service of Ukraine has successfully refuted the attempt of the Russian secret services to damage computer networks of a number of facilities of Ukraine's energy industry, according to the SBU press center. The SBU has revealed malicious software in the networks of individual regional power companies, the press center reported. The virus outbreak was accompanied by flooding the power companies' tech support hotlines. It is reported that the threat from malicious software has been eliminated. The investigation continues.

<http://en.vnews.agency/news/accident/14892-sbu-refutes-russian-cyberattack-on-ukraines-power-companies.html>

Ukraine court frees ex-minister of justice, returns bail, 29.12.2015

Olena Lukash, who was accused of unauthorized interference in work of the ministry's electronic computing systems and who was placed on EU and US sanction lists, got her travelling passport back under a court ruling. Lukash was fully repaid the sum of bail set at UAH 5.1 million, or about USD 214,000 at the current official forex rate.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/ukraine-court-frees-ex-minister-of-justice-returns-bail-563416.html>

Ukraine introduces moratorium on payment of Russian debt, 30.12.2015

"We have halted the Russian military aggression, and now we put a stop to the economic, financial and diplomatic aggression. The government has decided to impose a moratorium on the billion that we had not taken. It was nothing but a bribe of the Kremlin to the former president for failure to sign the agreement on a free trade area with the European Union." said Yatsenyuk. "The government has introduced a moratorium on the payment of billion, and this is due to the fact that Russia refused to restructure these debts. The Kremlin will not get any other conditions but the ones offered to other creditors. Therefore, the moratorium will be introduced until the moment when Russia either accepts Ukraine's offer, or there is a court ruling. We are fully prepared for legal war with Russia."

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/ukraine-introduces-moratorium-on-payment-of-russian-debt-564163.html>

Arseniy Yatsenyuk: Government takes countermeasures against Russian embargo, 30.12.2015

The Government of Ukraine approves two resolutions of countermeasures against the illegal actions of the Russian Federation, which caused substantial damage to the Ukrainian economy and Ukrainian entrepreneurs: "We will act the same way every time. Each Russian action will get an operational response," stated Prime Minister of Ukraine Arseniy Yatsenyuk at a government meeting on Wednesday, 30 December.

http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=248747243&cat_id=244314971

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1225994-poroshenko-greenlights-retaliatory-sanctions-against-russia.html>

<http://www.breakingnewspoint.com/story/2331091/ukraine-okays-antirussian-trade-sanctions-effective-after-russian-embargo.html>

Emergency failure stops power supply from mainland Ukraine to Crimea, 31.12.2015

The power supply from mainland Ukraine to the Russian-occupied Crimea via the only operating Kakhovska-Titan transmission line has completely stopped, causing a power blackout in Yevpatoria and other parts of the peninsula. «The power is at the zero level. We've got no notifications – this is all I can tell you now,» Crimea's de facto Fuel and Energy Minister Svetlana Borodulina said. Five districts in the peninsula's northwest – Krasnoperekopsky, Razdolnensky, Pervomaisky, Chernomorsky, Saksy, partly Dzhankoisky district, and the large city of Yevpatoria were cut off the power grids. According to official data, Ukraine was providing Crimea with 150 megawatts, which was about 10% of the peninsula's demand.

<http://www.gclub.org.ua/en/news/postachannya-elektroenerhiji-z-ukrajiny-v-okupovanyi-krym-povnistyuu-prypyneno/>

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/crimea-blackout-police-say-pylon-blown-up/>

Terrorism / Separatism

Latest from OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine, 01.12.2015

Despite the relative calm, the SMM recorded ceasefire violations in Donetsk and Luhansk regions[1]. The SMM, positioned at "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled Donetsk railway station (6km north-west of Donetsk city) between 09:00 and 15:00hrs, heard 12 undetermined explosions, several bursts and shots of small-arms and heavy-machine-gun, at locations ranging from 3-10km in areas to the south-west, west, north-west and north[2]. The SMM heard 15 rounds of small-arms fire near "Lugansk People's Republic" ("LPR")-controlled Kalynove-Borshchuvate (61km west of Luhansk). In government-controlled Trokhizbenka (33km north-west of Luhansk), the SMM heard small-arms fire and explosions, assessed as live fire training exercises.

In relation to the implementation of the Addendum to the Package of measures, the SMM revisited one Ukrainian Armed Forces permanent storage site, the location of which corresponded with the withdrawal lines and observed that all previously recorded weapons were present. The SMM revisited an "LPR" permanent storage site whose location corresponded with the withdrawal lines, where all previously recorded weapons were present.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/205866>

Militants fire in Donetsk sector until midnight, followed by quiet night, 01.12.2015

"The militants fired grenade launchers and small arms on the towns of Maryinka, Krasnohorivka and Avdiyivka, as well as the village of Pisky. At about 18:00 Kyiv time, they used small arms once to attack the town of Maiorsk in the Artemivsk sector," the report says. From 23:40 to 06:00, the situation in the Donbas conflict zone was calm.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1198872-militants-fire-in-donetsk-sector-until-midnight-followed-by-quiet-night.html>

One Ukrainian soldier killed, three wounded in Donbas in past 24 hours, 02.12.2015

One Ukrainian serviceman has been killed and another three have been wounded in the Ukrainian army operation area in the country's eastern regions over the past 24 hours, Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council Secretary Oleksandr Turchynov has said.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/ukraine/one-ukrainian-soldier-killed-three-wounded-in-donbas-in-past-24-hours-401984.html>

Ukraine border guards report relocation of Russian paratroopers in occupied Crimea, 02.12.2015

"At the moment we do not observe military equipment amassed directly at the administrative border with the temporarily occupied territory. However, we have evidence that there, in fact, has been a relocation of in the rear of the occupied territory, and certain units of Russian paratroopers have been deployed," he said.

<http://www.unian.info/politics/1200925-ukraine-border-guards-report-relocation-of-russian-paratroopers-in-occupied-crimea.html>

Militant attacks in east Ukraine show no sign of stopping, 03.12.2015

The militants fired automatic grenade launchers and small arms on the villages of Opytne and Pisky, as well as areas near the town of Avdiyivka. In addition, they used grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms to attack the towns of Maiorsk and Artemove, the spokesmen said.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/militant-attacks-in-east-ukraine-show-no-sign-of-stopping-546771.html>

Militants continue shell attacks on ATO forces in Donetsk direction – HQ, 03.12.2015

"The terrorists continue to violate the Minsk agreements, the same as they have been doing practically every day. They are firing on our servicemen mostly in the Donetsk sector and are trying to provoke Ukrainian defenders," the press center wrote.

The enemy "conducted provocative shelling of our positions by use of small arms and automatic grenade launchers in the area of Avdiyivka and Opytne" on Tuesday evening, the press center said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/301209.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1200026-20-militants-attack-ukrainian-forces-near-avdiyivka-on-tuesday-evening.html>

Kyiv accuses militants of firing at Ukrainian positions in Donbas 14 times overnight, 04.12.2015

The press center of the Ukrainian army operation reported on its Facebook account on Friday morning that the militants had fired grenade launchers and small arms at Avdiyivka, Opytne, Novhorodske and Pisky. Kyiv also claims that the strikes on Novhorodske continued for almost two hours and involved grenade launchers, small arms and 82mm mortars. Militants also used different types of grenade launchers and small arms to shell Luhanske, Zaitseve and Shyrokyne. The strikes continued from 6 p.m. on Thursday to 6:00 a.m. on Friday.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/308818.html>

Five Ukrainian servicemen hit mine near Mariupol, one killed, 04.12.2015

"A mine explosion killed one serviceman and three servicemen sustained injuries. One serviceman is in a serious condition. All victims have been taken to a military hospital,".

The publication said the press center for the M sector has refused to comment on this information, saying that only the headquarters of the military operation can comment on this matter.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/308931.html>

MILITANTS FIRE ON UKRAINIAN STRONGHOLD NEAR SHYROKYNE, 05.12.2015

The combined Russian-separatist forces attacked Ukrainian army positions in eastern Ukraine 11 times from 18:00 to 06:00 on December 5, one of the attacks lasted for half an hour near Shyrokyne, the press center of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) wrote:

"From 20:20 to 20:50, the enemy was firing on our fortified position near the village of Shyrokyne," the report says. It is noted that the militants also fired rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and small arms on the Ukrainian positions near the villages of Maiorske, Luhanske, Pisky, as well as the towns of Avdiyivka and Krasnohorivka. "Since the enemy was at a considerable distance from our positions and made no attempt to approach the Ukrainian fortified positions, our soldiers didn't open fire in response," the press center said.

<http://www.lifeinvest.com.ua/?p=5514>

One Ukrainian soldier killed, three wounded in Donbas in last day, 05.12.2015

"The last twenty-four hours didn't pass without losses. One Ukrainian serviceman was killed, three another were wounded," Lysenko said.

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/1925828-lysenko-one-ukrainian-soldier-killed-three-wounded-in-donbas-in-last-day.html>

Spot report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 05.12.2015

An SMM patrol comprised of four SMM monitors and the SMM medical officer in two armoured vehicles arrived at a field in the vicinity of "Lugansk People's Republic" ("LPR")-controlled Yurivka (26km south-west of Luhansk), where the SMM had observed 12 towed howitzers (D-30, 122mm) during previous visits – in violation of the relevant withdrawal line (see SMM Daily Report 26 November 2015 and SMM Daily Report 1 December 2015). The SMM drove towards 12 howitzers (D-30, 122mm) and at 100-150m distance, it spotted three armed individuals standing near one of the howitzers. When the SMM further continued driving towards the howitzers and was at 80-100m distance, one of the armed individuals released a burst of fire into the air with an automatic rifle and another individual pointed his automatic rifle at the SMM. The armed individuals shouted at the SMM. As a consequence, the SMM immediately left the area. There were no injuries to SMM members or damage to SMM vehicles.

Subsequently, the SMM addressed the incident with senior "LPR" members, who acknowledged the seriousness of the incident, and said that they would examine it and inform the SMM accordingly.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/207071>

One Ukrainian soldier killed in Donbas in last day, 06.12.2015

"In the past 24 hours, one Ukrainian soldier died in hostilities. This happened in the village of Zaitseve," Motuzianyuk said at a briefing in Kyiv on Sunday. In his words, the enemy commenced a series of provocative attacks near the village of Luhanske, not far from the town of Svitlodarsk on Saturday. Militants would open fire there during the daytime. "Despite the significant losses they sustained during a fight near the village of Mayorsk on December 4, the occupiers continued shelling Ukrainian troops on the outskirts of the militant-held town of Horlivka. In particular, they used an 82mm mortar to shell Zaitseve for 10 minutes, while the village of Novhorodske was under sniper fire. What is more, several minor provocative attacks were launched along that stretch of the front line," he said. During the fight near Mayorsk, which happened in the morning of December 4, Ukrainian troops destroyed two units of the enemy's military hardware and one mortar detachment. Up to 20 militants were killed, another 30 were wounded, according to Motuzianyuk. The situation on the western outskirts of the militant-occupied city of Donetsk remained tense. In particular, Ukrainian troops near the village of Opytne were shelled from an 82mm mortar, antitank guided weapons, and different types of grenade launchers.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1204115-one-ukrainian-soldier-killed-in-donbas-in-last-day.html>

OSCE SMM deputy chief monitor on fact-finding mission in Donetsk airport zone, 07.12.2015

OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) Deputy Chief Monitor Alexander Hug has arrived in the Donetsk airport zone to assess security levels, an Interfax correspondent reported from the location. Representatives of the Joint Center for Control and Coordination and the Defense Ministry of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) are accompanying Hug on his mission. Eduard Basurin, a senior official of the DPR Defense Ministry, said on Sunday that the primary objective of Hug's visit to the DPR was to install surveillance cameras in Shyrokyne. Hug told Interfax earlier that the OSCE SMM was ready to expand its presence in DPR-controlled territory and was expecting security guarantees to be provided.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/309403.html>

Militants intensify attacks on ATO forces overnight, fire 82mm mortars, 07.12.2015

The militants fired 82mm mortars in the direction of the villages of Novhorodske, Verkhniotoretske, and Zhovte, as well as the town of Krasnohorivka, the report says. In addition, they fired different types of grenade launchers, heavy machine guns and small arms on the towns of Avdiyivka, Krasnohorivka and Maryinka, and the villages of Verkhniotoretske, Opytne and Pisky. In the Artemivsk sector, the occupiers opened fire on the villages of Zaitseve, Leninske, Maiorske, Zolote and Luhanske. In general, there were 51 attacks of the Russian-backed militants on ATO forces overnight.

<http://ukrnews.today/militants-intensify-attacks-on-ato-forces-overnight-fire-82mm-mortars/>

Another unit of Russian troops enters Donbas, 07.12.2015

"There is still a group of Russian troops in the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which is not recognized by Russia. Although they walk around wearing insignia and move on their military vehicles," he said. In addition, Muzhenko said that the General Staff had been informed about the entering of another Russian unit into the territory of Ukraine. "I will not name this unit, but it is part of the Russian armed forces," he said. Earlier, Muzhenko said that the possibility of another wave of mobilization would depend on the situation in Donbas. "As of today, there are no prerequisites regarding the seventh wave of mobilization. Although, certain measures are carried out, and the decision will be made. If we have the seventh wave of mobilization, it will be less in numbers – the number of personnel doesn't influence the reduction or the increase of [combat] capacity of military units," Muzhenko said.

http://www.fm-tv.kiev.ua/main_news/69081/view/

Ukrainian military repel militant attack near Zaitseve, 08.12.2015

The militants fired rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and small arms on the town of Avdiyivka, as well as the villages of Pisky, Novhorodske and Novoselivka. They also fired 82mm mortars on the town of Krasnohorivka. In the Artemivsk sector, the mercenaries fired the same types of weapons on the villages of Mayorsk, Zaitseve, Kirove and Luhanske. They fired 82mm mortars on Leninske and Luhanske. The terrorists opened fire from heavy machine guns and small arms on the village of Starohnativka in the Mariupol sector. In the Luhansk sector, they fired rocket-propelled grenades on the village of Triokhizbenka. At about 18:00 on December 7, a military clash took place near Zaitseve. A group of 10 militants tried to attack our fortified position, but received an adequate response and traditionally had to retreat.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1205790-ukrainian-military-repel-militant-attack-near-zaitseve.html>

ATO infantry combat vehicle hits landmine in Donbas, deaths reported, 09.12.2015

"Unfortunately, the Ukrainian forces suffered casualties as a result of the [landmine] explosion," the ATO press service wrote on Facebook on Wednesday. An investigation is under way to find out the causes and circumstances of the incident, which took place at 15:30 local time on Wednesday.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1207931-ato-infantry-combat-vehicle-hits-landmine-in-donbas-deaths-reported.html>

Russian proxies attack ATO forces 39 times overnight: aimed fire on Shyrokyne, Grads near Zoriane, 09.12.2015

"The pro-Russian gangs once again violated the Minsk agreements in the last day. The militants fired small arms, heavy machine guns, automatic grenade launchers and 120mm mortars several times on the Ukrainian positions in the village of Pisky," the press center said. In addition, the Kremlin mercenaries opened aimed fire from rocket-propelled grenades and small arms on the village of Shyrokyne. In addition, snipers were working there. Last night, the occupiers fired Grad multiple rocket launchers twice on the village of Zoriane in Donetsk region. They also fired 120mm and 82mm mortars near the villages of Luhanske, Verkhniotoretske and Zaitseve, as well as near the town of Krasnohorivka. Furthermore, they fired tank missiles in the direction of Verkhniotoretske.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1206909-russian-proxies-attack-ato-forces-39-times-overnight-aimed-fire-on-shyrokyne-grads-near-zoriane.html>

Fighting in Donbas continuing, not all heavy weapons withdrawn - OSCE deputy chief monitor, 10.12.2015

The fighting in Donbas is continuing, and the conflicting parties have still not withdrawn all the heavy weapons from the line of contact, OSCE Deputy Chief Monitor to Ukraine Alexander Hug said at a Skype-briefing in Kyiv on Thursday. The area surrounding the Donetsk airport still remains one of the centers of the fighting; OSCE monitors have recorded 91 explosions and firing there since Tuesday, Hug said. While it is hard for the monitors to assess the type of weapons used in exchanges of fire between the parties, they have learned to do this based on the distance, weather conditions, and the speed at which ammunition rounds fly, he said. Six 82-mm mortar rounds were fired on Tuesday alone, while the use of this type of mortar, as well as other weapons, including 120mm mortars, tanks, and artillery guns smaller than 100mm, is banned, the parties have signed an annex to the Minsk agreement which stipulates this, and these weapons must be withdrawn, Hug said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/310503.html>

Terrorists opened fire 30 times at night, clash occurred near Mariupol, - ATO press center, 10.12.2015

"Last night, the bandits opened fire many times from large-caliber machine guns, grenade launchers, and small arms at Pisky, Novhorodske, and Opytne, at the Donetsk direction. Same weapons, as well as ant-aircraft mounts, tanks, 82-mm and 120-mm mortars were used by invaders to shell Krasnohorivka. Southern vicinity of Kurakhivka village were shelled by the enemy with MLRSes," the message reads. It is also noted that Luhanske was fired at with grenade launchers and IFV weapons. "Near Novhorodske village, Mariupol vicinity, a short combat engagement occurred with a sabotage and reconnaissance group of invaders; the enemy retreated," the HQ informed. The press center also added that Shyrokyne was covered by the enemy fire several times: "In the evening, Kremlin mercenaries were firing grenade launchers, large-caliber machine guns, and 82-mm mortars, and after midnight they used 122-mm artillery systems two times." Besides, according to the HQ, bandits got more active in the Luhansk region: "Our army positions were shelled with 82-mm mortars near Triokhizbenka, and with grenade launchers near Shchastia and Zhovte village."

<http://en.censor.net.ua/news/364500/terrorists-opened-fire-30-times-at-night-clash-occurred-near-mariupol-ato-press-center>
<http://world.korupciya.com/2015/12/11/russian-proxies-attack-ukrainian-troops-25-times-thursday/>

Another explosion hits Kharkiv overnight, 11.12.2015

"Police officers have established that the explosion took place near one of the buildings. The blast wave damaged windows, blinds and plastic ceiling. There were no casualties as a result of the incident," the report says. Police are carrying out the necessary measures to establish the circumstances of the incident. As reported earlier, on December 9, the Kyiv police department of the city of Kharkiv received a message about the explosion in the "Roshen" candy store.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1209309-another-explosion-hits-kharkiv-overnight.html>
<http://uatoday.tv/politics/blast-in-ukrainian-city-of-kharkiv-being-treated-as-a-criminal-act-551903.html>

Russian-backed forces fire GRAD rockets at east Ukraine village, 11.12.2015

In another sign of the failing ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, a Grad rocket has landed just a kilometer away from a residential area in the eastern village of Zoryane.

As per the Minsk ceasefire agreement, the Soviet-era Grad rocket systems were supposed to be pulled back over a dozen kilometres away from the line of contact between government troops and combined Russian-insurgent forces. International observers from the OSCE have visited the scene. They confirmed that the warhead, which can weigh up to nearly 40 pounds and travel a distance of up to 13 miles, came from territory controlled by the Russian-backed militants. One representative said, "The joint control center determined the Grad came from Staromuhaylivka. This territory is currently under the control of the militants from the Donetsk region."

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/russian-backed-forces-fire-grad-rockets-at-east-ukraine-village-551977.html>

Another militant leader assassinated in "LPR", 12.12.2015

A commander of the "sixth separate motorized rifle Cossack regiment of People's Militia," Pavel Dryomov, has been assassinated, the LPR media report with reference to the so-called "prosecutor general of the LPR." The online resources claim that he was allegedly killed near the town of Stakhanov. "On December 11, Dremov married a St. Petersburg resident, and today (December 12) he was killed after wedding celebrations at Nika restaurant... On the way out of the city of Pervomaisk to Stakhanov his car got blown up near the gas station, the driver of a chieftain was seriously wounded and died without regaining consciousness," the report reads.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1210553-another-militant-leader-assassinated-in-lpr.html>

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/another-militant-leader-assassinated-in-lpr/>

Russian proxies open aimed fire on ATO forces near Mariupol overnight, 13.12.2015

The combined Russian-separatist forces attacked Ukrainian army positions in eastern Ukraine more than 20 times overnight, the press center of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) wrote.

<http://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/unian-russian-proxies-open-aimed-fire-on-ato-forces-near-mariupol-overnight-404109.html>

Militants planning to conduct conscription in Donbas – Ukraine intel, 13.12.2015

"Because of bad conditions of service in Russian occupation troops, it is worsened the manning issue. Considering the decreasing of a number of Russian mercenaries and increasing a number of servicemen who wish to rip up a contract with Russian command, it is planned to conduct conscription on the occupied territories of Donbas in spring of 2016," the report says. According to intelligence reports, cash security of the Russian servicemen in some units in the occupied territory of Donbas is five times higher than the salary of local militants.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1210874-militants-planning-to-conduct-conscription-in-donbas-ukraine-intel.html>

Russian-backed militants continue shelling in Donbas, 14.12.2015

Russian-backed illegal armed groups continued provocative shelling of the Ukrainian positions in the Donbas conflict zone overnight, the press center of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) wrote. In particular, "at night, mercenaries from pro-Russian hybrid gangs used 82mm mortars, which are banned under the Minsk agreements, to shell the town of Krasnohorivka seven times," the ATO press center said in its update.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/russian-backed-militants-continue-shelling-in-donbas-553310.html>

ATO HQ: Intensity of militant provocative shelling reduced to 11 attacks overnight, 15.12.2015

It is noted that the militants fired small arms and rocket-propelled grenades on the Ukrainian positions in the villages of Pisky, Opytne, and the town of Avdiyivka.

In the vicinity of the town of Horlivka, the terrorists fired small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns on the village of Luhanske. They also launched two anti-tank guided missiles in the direction of the Ukrainian troops near this settlement.

According to the press center, the Ukrainian military didn't open fire in response.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1212221-ato-hq-intensity-of-militant-provocative-shelling-reduced-to-11-attacks-overnight.html>

Night in ATO zone: 20 provocative attacks on Ukraine troops, 16.12.2015

Around midnight, militants started firing 82mm mortars in the direction of the Ukrainian positions. They also fired small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns on the villages of Pisky, Opytne, as well as the town of Avdiyivka not far from the temporarily occupied city of Donetsk. In the Luhansk sector, the village of Novhorodske was under militant fire at night.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1213573-night-in-ato-zone-20-provocative-attacks-on-ukraine-troops.html>

One Ukrainian soldier killed, another wounded in Donbas in last day, 16.12.2015

"Over the last day, one Ukrainian soldier was killed and another one was wounded as a result of military clashes," Colonel Oleksandr Motuzianyk said. He added that the dead soldier was an intelligence officer, and another soldier was injured in a booby-trap blast.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/one-ukrainian-soldier-killed-another-wounded-in-donbas-in-last-day-555218.html>

Russian proxies target areas around Donetsk all night, 17.12.2015

The combined Russian-separatist forces attacked Ukrainian army positions around the militant-held city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine about 20 times overnight, trying to provoke Ukrainian troops into firing back, but they did not use heavy weapons, the ATO press center wrote.

<http://www.businessnewsworld.com/news/russian-proxies-target-areas-around-donetsk-all-night.html>

OSCE: Situation in Donbas remains unpredictable, 18.12.2015

The development of situation in Donbas remains unpredictable, Alexander Hug, the deputy chief of the OSCE SMM in Ukraine has said. "The situation in Donbas, as well as last week, remains tense and unpredictable. Although we registered fewer cases of ceasefire violations in and near Donetsk airport, we noticed the signs showing that violence is spreading," he said. Hug also stressed that heavy weapons had not been fully withdrawn from the line of contact.

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/1932964-situation-in-donbas-unpredictable-osce.html>

Russian proxies continue shelling, fire 82mm mortars, 18.12.2015

The militants fired small arms, heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades on ATO forces near the villages of Pisky, Zaitseve, Novhorodske, Luhanske, Kodema and the town of Maryinka. Until midnight, using 82mm mortars, the occupiers resorted to armed provocations against ATO forces in the town of Krasnohorivka and twice in Novhorodske. The enemy snipers were active near Novhorodske, Luhansk and Pisky in the evening. In addition, at about 22:00 on December 17, the Ukrainian military recorded a reconnaissance overflight by enemy drone in the Donbas conflict zone. According to some data, a military clash with a small group of invaders erupted near Luhanske in the afternoon. The ATO forces were forced to open fire from small arms. The enemy retreated.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1215896-russian-proxies-continue-shelling-fire-82mm-mortars.html>

RUSSIAN PROXIES ATTACK ATO FORCES 59 TIMES OVERNIGHT, SITUATION TENSE, 19.12.2015

"The situation in the Donbas conflict zone remains tense. Around noon on December 18, the pro-Russian illegal armed groups fired Grad multiple rocket launchers twice on ATO forces. They launched seven unguided rocket missiles on the Ukrainian defenders near the village of Troyitske in Luhansk region," the press center said. The intensity of armed provocations by the Russian-backed hybrid gangs increased significantly in the evening. From 18:00 until now, the Ukrainian armed forces have recorded 40 attacks in the direction of their fortified positions, while six of them were carried out after midnight. The militants fired 82mm mortars twice in the direction of the village of Zaitseve and the town of Krasnohorivka. In addition, the Ukrainian positions near the towns of Maryinka and Krasnohorivka were under intense fire from the small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft guns. For the sake of their own lives and safety of local residents, the Ukrainian soldiers were forced to open fire in response from the allowed weapons, after which the invaders stopped firing.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1217076-russian-proxies-attack-ato-forces-59-times-overnight-situation-tense.html>

Militants secretly deploy "withdrawn" weapons in Sloviansk direction – intelligence data, 20.12.2015

The combined Russian-separatist forces have secretly deployed weapons prohibited under the Minsk agreements in Sloviansk direction, as noted in the report of the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry on the situation in the Anti-Terrorist Operation zone as of December 20.

<http://www.breakingnewsbasket.com/story/3185798/militants-secretly-deploy-withdrawn-weapons-in-sloviansk-direction-intelligence-data.html>

RUSSIAN PROXIES ATTACK ATO FORCES 63 TIMES IN LAST DAY, SITUATION ESCALATES, 20.12.2015

"From 18:00 yesterday evening till midnight militants had used small arms to open aimed fire on Ukrainian positions in Krasnohorivka. They also fired rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns on positions near the village of Hranitne. Ukrainian soldiers in the area of Luhanske, which is 15 kilometers from Horlivka, were shelled by militants from automatic mounted grenade launchers and sniper weapons," according to a statement. In addition, the militants opened unaimed provocative fire with small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns on Ukrainian positions in the direction of Pisky, Opytne, near Avdiyivka, Maiorsk, Zaitseve, and Luhanske.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1217496-russian-proxies-attack-ato-forces-63-times-in-last-day-situation-escalates.html>

Ukrainian military report two armed clashes and shelling by militants in Donbas, 21.12.2015

The headquarters of Kyiv's military operation in Donbas recorded two armed clashes with militants and 39 strikes conducted by the militants on Dec. 21, the HQ press center said .

<http://www.breakingnewsheadlines24.com/headlines/1318332/ukrainian-military-report-two-armed-clashes-and-shelling-by-militants-in-donbas.html>

Ukraine intel reports about 7,700 Russian regular troops in Donbas, 21.12.2015

"According to the data the GUR has obtained, there are about 7,700 regular soldiers of the Armed Forces of Russia in Donetsk and Luhansk regions," GUR Chief Vadym Skybytsky said. In his words, there has been no drastic change in the strength of Russian military personnel recently – their number remains steady, and redeployment and buildup, especially in the attacking echelon, are most active in the first and second army corps of Russia's armed forces. The Ukrainian intelligence service also reports about the constant regrouping of the Russian forces, preparations, combat drills, and training on the shooting ground. Thus, Skybytsky said, the enemy continues its routine battle training and exercises possibly for a new offensive against Ukraine.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1218748-ukraine-intel-reports-about-7700-russian-regular-troops-in-donbas.html>

More casualties among Russian troops in Donbas – Ukraine intel, 21.12.2015

"Another fact of the deaths of Russian soldiers has been established: two Russian staff officers were killed in an explosion in the village of Bezimenne (Novoazovskiy district). They acted as military advisers in the 9th Separate Motorized Rifle Regiment (Novoazovsk) of the 1st army corps," the report says. The intelligence said that in order to investigate the circumstances of the incident, the Commission headed by Commander of the 1st army corps of the Center for Territorial troops of the Southern Military District of the Russian Armed Forces had arrived in the regiment. Personnel are restricted from leave the military base. In addition, as reported by the Ministry of Defense, a "friendly" shelling of one of the units of the 1st army corps resulted in four soldiers being killed and another six wounded (including a major of the Russian Armed Forces). Eight servicemen of the 3rd Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade [headquartered in Horlivka, Ukraine] of the 1st army corps were killed during the sabotage and reconnaissance missions.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/more-casualties-among-russian-troops-in-donbas-ukraine-intel-558350.html>

Ukrainian military report two armed clashes and shelling by militants in Donbas, 22.12.2015

According to the press center, militants have fired small arms and grenade launchers eight times since 6:00 p.m. on Monday targeting positions of the Ukrainian army near the village of Maryinka. An armed clash with a unit of some 30 militants occurred in the same area as well. The militants' unit suffered losses and was forced to retreat, the press center said. Another armed clash broke out near the town of Schastia in the Luhansk region, where a unit of ten militants also had to retreat after suffering losses, the press center said. In a separate development, checkpoints of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in Krasnohorivka and Zaitseve came under 82mm mortar fire, the press center said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/312985.html>

Ukrainian troops, militants clash near Schastia and Maryinka overnight, 22.12.2015

"A military clash with the enemy combat unit of at least 30 militants took place in the same sector. The Ukrainian troops took the fight and repelled the enemy. The militants had to retreat, suffering losses," the report says. Another military clash took place near the town of Schastia in Luhansk region. "The group of at least ten militants suffered the same outcome of the battle. The attackers had to retreat to their starting line, taking their dead and wounded," the press center said. In addition, the press center said that the armed provocations against the Ukrainian military had become longer in other sectors of the demarcation line. "In particular, the enemy continued shelling near the villages of Pisky, Opytne, and to the south of the town of Avdiyivka. On Monday, the occupiers fired anti-aircraft guns and 82mm mortars on the town of Krasnohorivka," the report reads.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/ukrainian-troops-militants-clash-near-schastia-and-maryinka-overnight/>

Militants attack several Ukrainian positions in Donbas overnight, 23.12.2015

The militants fired small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns on ATO forces near the villages of Luhanske, Mayorsk, Zaitseve, Lozove and Novhorodske. The occupiers also fired an automatic mounted grenade launcher on the Ukrainian military in Luhansk region, while in the Mariupol sector, they fired small arms on the western outskirts of the village of Shyrokyne. "Near the temporarily occupied city of Donetsk, the Kremlin-backed mercenaries provoked ATO forces to return fire near the town of Krasnohorivka and to the south of Avdiyivka, using small arms. They fired heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades several times on the village of Pisky," the report says.

<http://ukrnews.today/militants-attack-several-ukrainian-positions-in-donbas-overnight/>

Russian army unit invades Kominternove: InfoResistance, 24.12.2015

In particular, in the "Kominternove zone" (Vodiiane-Kominternove-Zayichenko) the militants are expanding their presence, transferring additional forces and fortifying positions in the area. They relocate forces and means to the right flank: from the town of Novoazovsk toward the village of Zayichenko, in addition to the previously deployed weapons, they relocated another six units of armored combat vehicles (mainly BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, two MT-LB light multi-purpose armored towing vehicles with ZU-23-2 anti-aircraft twin-barreled autocannons). Another armored group is moving from the Khomutovskiy steppe – three MBTs, two MT-LBs (with two MT-12 towed antitank guns), four BTR-80 amphibious armored personnel carriers and a BRDM-2 amphibious armored patrol car. "Together with the enhanced "motorized infantry company" of militants, a unit of the Russian armed forces invaded Kominternove. There were attempts of the Russian servicemen to restrict multiple acts of looting by the DPR militants in this settlement," the Information Resistance Group said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1221214-russian-army-unit-invades-kominternove-inforesistance.html>

<http://www.newshubspot.com/update/979670/def-ministry-says-russian-military-officers-in-jccc-ordinary-foreigners.html>

<http://www.searchnews.com/update/1659819/russias-48th-humanitarian-convoy-invades-donbas.html>

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/1936030-rebels-leave-village-of-kominternove-avakov.html>

Russian proxies attack ATO forces near Donetsk airport overnight, 24.12.2015

"From 18:00 to midnight on December 24, the militants were firing small arms thrice on our positions near the village of Zaitseve, as well as automatic mounted grenade launchers and heavy machine guns near the village of Lozove. The occupiers fired small arms and rocket-propelled grenades in the direction of our defenders near the village of Opytne, south of the town of Avdiyivka, and near the Donetsk airport. They also fired on our defenders north of the town of Horlivka – near the villages of Mayorsk, Novhorodske, Zaitseve, Lozove and others," the report says. From midnight, the militants have already violated the ceasefire five times.

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/russian-proxies-attack-ato-forces-near-donetsk-airport-overnight/>

Lysenko suggests militants in Kominternove red herring, 24.12.2015

Having occupied the village of Kominternove, the militants may be trying to divert attention of the Ukrainian military from something more meaningful, presidential administration spokesman for the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) Colonel Andriy Lysenko said.

<http://www.onlinenewsplanet.com/news/1629644/lysenko-suggests-militants-in-kominternove-red-herring.html>

OSCE visits reportedly occupied Kominternove, limited to main street only, 25.12.2015

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine arrived in the reportedly occupied village of Kominternove (92km south of Donetsk, 23km north-east of Ukrainian-held Mariupol) at 10:25 local time on December 24, and an SMM patrol was escorted by armed "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR") members, who did not let the OSCE monitors go beyond the main street of the village, according to a sport report by the OSCE SMM.

<http://www.searchnewsline.com/update/1662655/osce-visits-reportedly-occupied-kominternove-limited-to-main-street-only.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1222199-osce-visits-reportedly-occupied-kominternovo-limited-to-main-street-only.html>

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/313953.html>

Militants fire 82mm mortars on Vodiane in "grey zone" near Mariupol, 25.12.2015

At about 12:00 on Friday, the militants of the pro-Russian illegal armed groups shelled Vodiane (16km north-west of Donetsk), located in the "grey zone" of ATO area near Mariupol. This is reported by the ATO press center. "The militants used 82mm mortars to open fire from part of Shyrokyne village, controlled by them. Five mortar shells hit the outskirts of Vodiane. The casualties among the local residents are possible," reads the statement.

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/1936840-militants-use-82mm-mortars-to-shell-vodiane-in-donbas.html>

No peace in Donbas at Christmas: over 35 attacks on Ukraine reported, 25.12.2015

Russian proxies have mounted more than 35 armed attacks on the Ukrainian forces participating in the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) in Donbas, eastern Ukraine, on Friday, according to the ATO Headquarters' press service. "Russian-backed gangs have violated all existing ceasefire agreements. The actions of their gang leaders defy logic. The combined Russian-separatist forces are not only firing 82mm and 120mm mortars on the village of Vodiane, which is located in the so-called grey zone near the Ukrainian-controlled city of Mariupol, but have also become active in other sectors," the press service wrote. In particular, they used large-caliber machine guns, various types of grenade launchers and small arms to shell the Ukrainian positions near the villages of Novhorodske, Zaitseve, Mayorsk, Luhanske, Pisky, Opytne, the town of Maryinka, and others.

<http://ukrainianlaw.blogspot.com/2015/12/no-peace-in-donbas-at-christmas-over-35.html>

Militants increasing fire activity: 61 attacks in last day, 26.12.2015

The occupiers continue to fire small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns on our positions near the villages of Novhorodske, Zaitseve, Mayorsk, Luhanske, Opytne and Pisky, the press center said. The evening of December 25, the militants fired 120mm mortars twice on our soldiers in Pisky. The invaders also fired 82mm mortars on the Ukrainian positions near Zaitseve, as well as anti-tank systems near Luhanske. In addition, they fired twice on the village of Vodyane not far from the port city of Mariupol.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/militants-increasing-fire-activity-61-attacks-in-last-day-561822.html>

Militants preparing another propaganda show in Kominternove, 26.12.2015

"Yesterday, the pro-Russian illegal armed groups returned to the village of Kominternove. They are preparing another propaganda show," the report says.

According to HQ, the so-called "leaders of the DPR" are now in the village. The media have already disinformated that yesterday, the Ukrainian military fired mortars on Kominternove and the village of Vodiane, which is 2.5 km to the south. "The insinuations are being prepared for Russian journalists, the representatives of the OSCE SMM to Ukraine and JCCC of the Ceasefire and Stabilization of Parties' Demarcation Line in order to discredit the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The militants are withdrawing military equipment and heavy weapons from the settlement. In addition, they are preparing the relevant statements on the shelling of the village by the Ukrainian side, looting and acts of violence against the local population," the headquarters said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1223379-militants-preparing-another-propaganda-show-in-kominternove.html>

One Ukrainian soldier killed, another three wounded in Donbas in last day, 27.12.2015

"The last twenty-four hours didn't pass without losses. One Ukrainian serviceman was killed, three another were wounded," Presidential Administration Spokesman on ATO related issues, Colonel Andriy Lysenko said.

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-defense/1925828-lysenko-one-ukrainian-soldier-killed-three-wounded-in-donbas-in-last-day.html>

Poroshenko's administration: No threat of Russian proxies' attacks on OSCE in Donbas, 27.12.2015

"Currently, there is no threat to them – they're working as usual, but we're closely monitoring the situation and in case we've got any information that the militants have been preparing a provocation, we're ready to report this to the OSCE SMM. We'll also do our best to prevent any provocation," Presidential Administration's Press Secretary for ATO issues Oleksandr Motuzianyuk said at a briefing in Kyiv on Sunday. In his words, an OSCE SMM patrol visited the village of Kominternove in Donetsk region on December 24 to check if militants' heavy weaponry was there. And after the OSCE monitors left the village, the militants opened fire on Ukrainian positions.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1223840-poroshenkos-administration-no-threat-of-russian-proxies-attacks-on-osce-in-donbas.html>

Spot Report by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 27.12.2015

At 10:53hrs on 27 December, a SMM patrol comprised of six SMM members in two armoured vehicles arrived at 3.5km south-south-west of the centre of Kominternove village (92km south of Donetsk, 23km north-east of Mariupol) from "Donetsk People's Republic" ("DPR")-controlled Zaichenko (90km south of Donetsk), escorted by armed "DPR" members and a Russian Federation representative of the Joint Centre for Control and Co-ordination (accompanied by a media representative). There, the SMM started monitoring on foot and found three craters in an agricultural – not cultivated – field.

At 11:20hrs, while conducting analysis of the third crater, the SMM heard three single shots of small arms, outgoing 150-200m north-north-west of its position, and saw the third shot impact on the ground 5-7m north-east of its position. The SMM left the area immediately. On its way to its vehicles, the SMM heard a burst of small-arms fire originated from the same location. There were no injuries to SMM members or damage to its vehicles; the SMM returned safely to its base in Donetsk city at 14:39hrs.

<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/212736>

<http://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/unian-osce-confirms-militants-present-in-kominternove-405209.html>

<http://en.vnews.agency/news/politics/14914-osce-confirms-militants-present-in-kominternove.html>

Russian proxies violate Donbas truce 35 times in last day, 28.12.2015

From 18:00 local time on Sunday (December 27) to midnight on Monday (December 28), militants used weapons 13 times to shell Ukrainian troops, the military press center wrote.

<http://uatoday.tv/politics/russian-proxies-violate-donbas-truce-35-times-in-last-day-562632.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1224928-militants-quoted-as-ukraine-troops-spotted-in-zaiteseve.html>

Ukraine intel reports 7 Russian KIA's, 12 WIA's in last fights in Donbas, 28.12.2015

"Losses among Russian military personnel have been confirmed. Seven killed in action (KIA) and 12 wounded in action (WIA) during fights near Mayorsk and Maryinka were brought to Donetsk on December 25," the intelligence department said. In addition, the Defense Ministry informs that DPR leader Alexander Zakharchenko and de facto secretary of the so-called DPR Security Council Alexander Khodakovsky reportedly left for Moscow on December 26 to receive further instructions from their Kremlin supervisors.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1224583-ukraine-intel-reports-7-russian-kias-12-wias-in-last-fights-in-donbas.html>

<http://www.unian.info/war/1225559-ukraine-intel-another-six-russian-regular-troops-killed-in-donbas.html>

Ukrainian troops in Donbas face 31 attacks on Wednesday, 31.12.2015

The enemy used small arms, sniper rifles and anti-tank hand grenades twice on Wednesday evening to shell the Ukrainian positions near the town of Maryinka, the ATO press center wrote. The Russian proxies do not stop firing on the northern areas near the temporarily occupied town of Horlivka. They used 82mm mortars twice to fire on Ukrainian troops near the village of Zaitseve. Areas near the village of Novhorodske saw about 10 attacks when militants used small arms and heavy machine guns. "The combined Russian-separatist forces located at the border between Donetsk and Luhansk regions along the contact line had been firing on the Ukrainian army with the use of heavy machine guns, small arms and guns of infantry combat vehicles," the ATO headquarters said.

<http://www.unian.info/war/1227042-ukrainian-troops-in-donbas-face-31-attacks-on-wednesday.html>

Ukraine army intelligence detects 220-mm Uragan missile batteries in demilitarized zone, 31.12.2015

The OSCE mission and Joint monitoring mission representatives were notified about the detection. The crime rate in the rebel-held territories remains high and mounting further. Most of the crimes (illegal seizures of cars, use of arms) are committed under the influence of alcohol and drugs, leading to many civilian victims. The crimes are committed both by rank-and-file servicemen and their officers. The rebels usually cover up the crimes.

http://zik.ua/en/news/2015/12/31/ukraine_army_intelligence_detects_220mm_uragan_missile_batteries_in_659431

<http://www.unian.info/war/1227181-osce-spots-militant-tanks-mprs-uragan-in-kominternove.html>

Crimea blockade activists dismantle checkpoints on border with occupied Crimea – Islyamov, 31.12.2015

Coordinator of the so-called Crimea blockade, Lenur Islyamov, said roadblocks barring passage from Ukraine to the Republic of Crimea would be dismantled.

<http://nyuzer.com/12312015-1740>

Pilot Savchenko

Verdict in Ukraine ex-pilot Savchenko case expected by yearend, 04.12.2015

The verdict in the case of former Ukrainian pilot Nadezhda Savchenko may be announced until the end of this year, Russia's Investigative Committee official spokesman Vladimir Markin said. The case has been heard by the Donetsk court in Russia's Rostov region since September 22. "Its consideration is in the final stage. I think, the verdict will be by the yearend. I guess it will be tough," Markin told the Vesti. FM radio station.

<http://tass.ru/en/politics/841527>

Lawyer Feygin in Kiev will study the prospects of exchange Savchenko, 08.12.2015

The lawyer of the Ukrainian pilot, people's Deputy of Ukraine Hope Savchenko, who is imprisoned in Russia, mark Feygin arrived in Kiev, where he plans to learn about the prospects of an exchange. «Arrived in Kiev. And, for the first time after the cancellation of direct flights. I hope not in vain. Try to learn about the prospects of sharing Savchenko», he wrote in Twitter.

<http://en.reporter-ua.ru/lawyer-feygin-in-kiiev-will-study-the-prospects-of-exchange-savchenko.html>

Savchenko prepares for new hunger strike, 08.12.2015

Nadiya Savchenko is planning to start another hunger strike. Her sister Vira told Ukrainian news outlet TSN the protest method was difficult but effective. Here is what her sister Vira told reporters: "We understand that the court process will be completed on December 24. The sentence could be before or after the New Year. Anyway, after the verdict, Nadiya will go back on hunger strike. In the first ten days she will only drink water, and after that she will even stop drinking. She will only breathe. Nadiya knows that it works."

<http://uatoday.tv/society/savchenko-prepares-for-new-hunger-strike-549814.html>

Savchenko declares hunger strike until trial end — lawyer, 17.12.2015

Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko declared a hunger strike at a meeting of the Donetsk city court in the Rostov region. Savchenko's lawyer Nikolai Polozov tweeted. "Nadiya Savchenko has gone on a hunger strike until the end of the trial. She will go on a 'dry' hunger strike after the sentence. She demands to be released," he wrote. Lawyer Mark Feygin said that Russian court extended custodial term of Nadiya Savchenko for 3 months till April 16, 2016.

<http://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/1932426-savchenko-declares-hunger-strike-until-end-of-her-trial.html>

Poroshenko signs first law initiated by Savchenko, 23.12.2015

The official website of the Verkhovna Rada reports that the document has been returned to the Parliament, having been signed by the president. According to the bill, one day spent in a detention facility before the conviction shall be counted as two days of imprisonment. The law will enter into force after its official publication.

<http://ukrnews.today/poroshenko-signs-first-law-initiated-by-savchenko/>

SAVCHENKO'S ARREST EXTENDED UNTIL APRIL: APPEAL OF DEFENSE OVERRULED, 25.12.2015

"Rostov Regional Court left Nadia Savchenko in custody. Russia has once again violated the PACE resolution," he tweeted. Polozov also noted that today was the second week of Savchenko's hunger strike.

<http://x-news.com.ua/savchenkos-arrest-extended-until-april-appeal-of-defense-overruled-100688/>

Mass Media

SBU DEPORTS RUSSIA'S FIRST CHANNEL JOURNALIST FOR ANTI-UKRAINIAN ACTIVITY, 01.07.2015

Cherepnina will be denied entry to Ukraine for the next three years, according to the SBU press service. The SBU officials add that the journalist has been filming anti-Ukrainian videos and even used schoolchildren in her clips.

<http://x-news.com.ua/sbu-deports-russias-first-channel-journalist-for-anti-ukrainian-activity-42492/>

Elzara Islyamova's house searched, 09.12.2015

This morning, police searched the house of Elzara Islyamova, CEO of Kara Deniz Production LLC, said Lilya Budzhurova, Deputy CEO of Kara Deniz Production LLC. It was reported earlier that Sergey Aksyonov, the so-called Head of the Crimean Government, said after the final of Tatly Es talent show that Lale TV Channel, a Crimean Tatar TV Channel for children, would soon be granted a broadcasting license.

<http://gha.com.ua/en/events-incidents/elzara-islyamova-s-house-searched/135232/>

Ukraine Worldwide

On Ukraine's front lines, U.S.-supplied equipment is falling apart, 01.12.2015

The United States has delivered more than \$260 million in nonlethal military equipment to help the government of Ukraine in its fight against a Russian-backed insurgency, but some of the U.S.-supplied gear meant to protect and transport Ukrainian military forces is little more than junk. On the outskirts of the separatist-controlled city of Donetsk, for example, one Ukrainian special forces unit is using U.S.-supplied Humvees dating from the late 1980s and early 1990s, based on serial numbers on the vehicles. Three of the Humvees had plastic doors and windows — barely any protection at all. The tires on one of the trucks blew apart after driving only a few hundred kilometers, the result of sitting in a warehouse too long, said one mechanic.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2015/11/30/on-ukraines-frontlines-u-s-supplied-equipment-is-falling-apart/>

Crimean authorities threaten to fire in response to naval blockade, 02.12.2015

Russian-occupied Crimea's de facto First Deputy Prime Minister Mikhail Sheremet has warned against plans to stage a naval blockade of the peninsula and asked not to carry out ill-advised acts, Russian information agency RIA Novosti has reported.

In his words, all the strategic facilities of Crimea, including the Kerch Strait ferry line, are being guarded. "Everything is under control, and heavily guarded, so they have no chance," Sheremet said. In turn, the so-called Deputy Prime Minister of the Crimean government Ruslan Balbek claims that the naval blockade of Crimea will end with the first meeting with Russian ships. "A naval blockade will end as soon as they first see the Russian border ships. [Crimea blockade coordinator Lenur] Islyamov's gang will not act as pirates in the Russian economic zone," he said.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/crimean-authorities-threaten-to-fire-in-response-to-naval-blockade-546300.html>

Crimean Tatars form new organization to de-occupy Crimea, 04.12.2015

Crimean Tatars from the Mejlis and other human rights organizations have formed a new group to free the peninsula from Russian occupation and promote the restoration of an autonomous Crimean Tatar republic. The organizers say that they will use the status of the Crimean Tatars as the legitimate indigenous people of Crimea to put pressure on international organizations and on the Ukrainian government to take steps to end the Russian occupation and restore their autonomy. "The 22 months of the occupation of the peninsula of Crimea have shown," the organizers say, "how indifferent the Ukrainian authorities are to the problem of its return under their jurisdiction." Only the Crimean Tatars have been other than "indifferent" and taken real steps to oppose "the occupiers and the collaborationists," including by the blockade. "We are concerned by the fact that despite the declarations of the authorities that Crimea is not forgotten, practically nothing is being done for its liberation," according to Sinaver Kadyrov, a representative of the Crimean Tatar rights organization *Azattyk*. That is especially bad because the residents of Crimea are suffering ever more with each passing day.

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2015/12/04/crimean-tatars-form-new-organization-to-de-occupy-crimea/#arvlbdata>

Organization "Right Sector" completes part in the blockade of the Crimea and leaves the roadblocks, 13.12.2015

Speaker of the organization "Right Sector" Alex Bull said that the operational headquarters of the "SS" to "civil blockade" of Crimea has decided to end the participation of representatives of the movement in shares. "PS" removes duty at all the checkpoints on the administrative border between Ukraine and Russia occupied the Crimean peninsula. He said, "Right Sector" completes part in the blockade of the peninsula, leaving checkpoints. "The operational headquarters of the "Right Sector" on the blockade has decided that due to the fact that our partners have allowed the blockade to let electricity actually removed us from the decision-making, we are changing the format of the presence on the border with the Crimea", - said the Bull.

<http://newsme.com.ua/en/society/3223243/>

<http://ukrainianwall.com/english-news/repairs-on-russia-crimea-energy-bridge-power-transmission-suspended/>

Aksyonov wants control of water wells in Crimea amid wartime regime, 14.12.2015

Aksyonov announced the decision had been taken as part of emergency needs to provide the local population with drinking water, FlashCrimea wrote. "We're opening criminal proceedings against those who impede [the local government's decision] according to the rules of a wartime regime for having caused harm to the Republics of Crimea. An interim administration shall be immediately introduced and the wells shall be transferred to the municipalities. If the decision of the emergency situations staff has not been executed, I ask the law enforcement agencies to post guards around these wells and take control of them," Aksyonov said.

<http://www.unian.info/society/1211254-media-aksyonov-wants-control-of-water-wells-in-crimea-amid-wartime-regime.html>

EU envoys agree extension of Russia sanctions until mid-2016, 18.12.2015

Dec 18 European Union envoys on Friday agreed a six-month rollover of the bloc's economic sanctions on Russia, diplomats said, extending the measures on energy, banking and defence sectors until the end of July 2016. The decision will become final at midday (1100 GMT) on Monday unless any member state changes its position and raises an objection in writing.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-eu-sanctions-idUSL8N1471KA20151218>

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/eu-to-prolong-sanctions-against-russia--parliament-member/553206.html>

Medvedev signs decree on measures against Ukraine in response to its joining anti-Russian sanctions, 21.12.2015

Russian Prime minister Dmitry Medvedev has revealed he signed a decree on responsive sanctions against Ukraine following Kyiv's joining the anti-Russian sanctions. "Ukraine will come under responsive economic measures over its joining anti-Russian sanctions of the European Union and the States starting from January 1, 2016," Medvedev said at a meeting with his deputies on Monday. "I have just signed the respective government order," he said.

<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/312802.html>

<http://tass.ru/en/politics/845807>

Kremlin appoints new representative to Contact Group on Ukraine, 26.12.2015

Permanent member of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Boris Gryzlov has been appointed plenipotentiary representative of the Russian Federation in the Contact Group on settlement of the situation in Ukraine, says an order by Russian President Vladimir Putin posted on the official website of legal information. The Russian delegation also comprises Russia's special representative in the Contact Group Azamat Kulmukhametov and representatives in working subgroups: Yaroslav Moskalik in the security subgroup, Vladimir Stepanov in the humanitarian subgroup, Sergey Nazarov in the economic subgroup and Maxim Polyakov in the political subgroup.

<http://uatoday.tv/news/kremlin-appoints-new-representative-in-contact-group-on-ukraine-562137.html>