

Russia's Investigation into the Crimes Committed Against the People of Donbass

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Starting from 2014, Ukrainian forces have been conducting warfare in Donbass. Over all this time, for almost 8 years, Ukraine's authorities and representatives of militarized formations in fact have been exterminating the civilian population of the self-proclaimed People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk.

Unstopping fire from large-caliber artillery - mortar and grenade guns - as well as light weapons claimed thousands of lives. Among the victims, there are elderly people and children, whereas lives of others are destroyed by heavy injuries. For example, the story of little Vanya Voronov who survived the explosion of a projectile only by miracle. Those people, especially children, take no part in the armed conflict. It is just as obvious to Ukrainian military who carry high-precision firepower against residential buildings, schools, hospitals, culture facilities, critical infrastructure, public transit, etc. Nevertheless, official Ukrainian authorities pay no attention to these merciless attacks, and give no security guarantees to civilians. On the contrary, they basically ignore this problem and encourage the illicit activities of the military despite the effective international agreements on that matter.

Ever since 2014, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation has been legitimately investigating hundreds of crimes of terrorism and extremism against peace and security of mankind that have been committed during the armed conflict.

Based on the established facts, the Committee initiated 467 criminal cases with regard to the developments in Ukraine and Donbas. Those cases implicate representatives of Ukraine's military and political leadership, members of radical nationalist formations – "Right Sector", Ukrainian Volunteer Corps, Azov Detachment; and all those who are involved in these crimes.

The investigation ascertained that starting from April 2014, the Ukrainian side has operational missile complexes "Tochka- U", multiple rocket launchers "Grad" and "Uragan", unguided airborne rockets, and other types of heavy offensive weapons of indiscriminate action that have broad impact effect, as well as light firearms. As a result, thousands of civilians were wounded or killed, over 2,200 facilities of civil infrastructure were completely or partially destroyed.

Most casualties were caused by fire of Ukraine's governmental forces that used explosive weapons, small arms and light weapons.

During the proceedings, over 146,000 people were interviewed, more than 22,000 people were recognized as victims, including some 2,500 minors. By now, 103 individuals have been called to criminal liability in absentia – for crimes against the peace and security of mankind during an armed conflict. Among them Ukraine's former minister of the interior A.Avakov, former governor of the Dnepropetrovsk region of Ukraine I.Kolomoiskyi, brigade commanders and officers of Ukraine's armed forces who carried out the shelling that targeted peaceful population.

Ukrainian forces and authorities not only used banned techniques and methods of warfare, but also committed murders of Russian journalists, rights advocate A.Mironov, and Italian national A.Rocchelli. They are also responsible for kidnappings, impeding legitimate activities of journalists, tortures, incitement of hatred or enmity, public calls to start an aggressive war, and other crimes.

We have records about members of the criminal community kidnapping Russian nationals in Ukraine with involvement of the SBU. They intend to exchange them for members of the Ukrainian military, inflict heavy injuries on the prisoners, they also seek to mistreat, torment and torture peaceful population of southeastern Ukraine.

Earlier, court passed a sentence upon N.Savchenko who was condemned for killings of Russian journalists and the illegal crossing of the state border of the Russian Federation. Another convict, S.Litvinov, was found guilty of attacking a Russian national in Ukraine. Other individuals were convicted in absentia. We have record of 21 attacks on Russian diplomatic facilities in Kiev, Kharkov, Lvov. Besides, there were cases when Russian nationals were prevented from exercising their electoral rights on the territory of Ukraine. There are 25 individuals implicated in these crimes, among them former members of Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada A.Lofovoy and V.Parasyuk. Work is underway to identify others attackers involved in this case.

The evidence that we receive during the investigation is used to articulate Russia's position at various international judiciary bodies. The claim against Ukraine that Russia lodged at the ECHR is based on the copies of materials from criminal proceedings that the Investigative Committee of Russia submitted to the Court. Those are materials from cases regarding the genocide of the Russian-speaking population of Donbass, attacks on Russian diplomatic facilities, bombardments in the Rostov-on-Don region, murders and other acts of violence against journalists.

With the help of the Investigative Committee, Russian lawyers processed more than 39,000 files, prepared and submitted approximately 7,500 complaints to the ECHR on behalf of those who suffered from the acts of Ukrainian authorities. Under those complaints, the total amount of damage to be repaired stands at more than 350,000,000 EUR.

All the illicit actions will not go unpunished. Sooner or later the guilty will be held accountable for their crimes. If Ukrainian authorities and law enforcement think it is acceptable to criminalize the minds of their people, the Investigative Committee of Russia will not tolerate this lawlessness. We will continue keeping record of all evidence to prove the guilt of people involved in crimes against peace and security of mankind and against Russian citizens. The Investigative Committee is taking every measure to implement the principle of inevitability of punishment for those who committed crimes in Donetsk and Luhansk.

As a guarantor of criminal liability for the perpetrators, the Investigative Committee of Russia will keep reacting to all illegitimate actions - proportionately to the menace that those actions pose to society.

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