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STORY OF A CITY



STANYTTSIA LUHANSKA



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DOCUMENTATION CENTER



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Stanytsia

Luhanska

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INTRODUCTION



STANYTSIA LUHANSKA being one of the two Cossack villages founded by the Don Cossacks in late XVII century is situated on the banks of the Siverskyi Donets River.

The centuries-long Cossack history was reflected in the settlement's symbols. The yellow and blue state flag colors were added with purple, a symbol of the Don Cossacks, while the historic particulars were represented by the image of the Moskin Tumulus with a Cossack tower¹.

Stanytsia Luhanska or Stanytsia (abbreviated name) is an urban-type settlement and the capital of the same-name district, directly adjoining the city of Luhansk in the south-west. The distance between the boundaries of the two settlements is about 11 km. Due

to such a close neighborhood, there were formed strong economic relations between industrial Luhansk and agrarian Stanytsia. The town's industry is represented by the railroad maintenance companies and a sandpit, industrial and food production facilities, and a fish farm.

Stanytsia Luhanska is a railroad junction and a good transport hub that includes two railroad stations – Kindrashivska and Kindrashivska Nova, – and a regional motor way². As at January 2014, the town population was 13,774 people³.

In spring 2014, Stanytsia Luhanska together with other villages, cities, and towns in East of Ukraine turned out to be in the thick of action. The activists, who held pro-Russian meetings and other activities in support of referendum, appeared in the town in March-April⁴. There were attempts to seize office buildings.

Due to a close proximity to Luhansk (11 km) and the Russian Federation's border (23 km), and also because there are railroad and motor ways, Stanytsia Luhanska has always attracted the militants.

From April to August 2014, the town was a part of the areas not controlled by the Ukrainian government. On August 21, 2014, Stanytsia Luhanska was liberated from the terrorists; however, combat operations have been in progress in its outskirts up to date.

¹ The Stanytsia Luhanska district library's web-site [Electronic resource] – URL: http://stanlib.ucoz.ru/index/istorija_stanicy_luganskoj/0-18

² Ibid

³ The number of current Ukrainian population as at January 1, 2014//State Statistics Committee of Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/PXWEB2007/ukr/publ_new1/2014/publ2014.asp

⁴ The locals are afraid of the police station seizure [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.obzor.com.ua/news/miting35452>

APRIL “COUP D’ETAT”

The *Russian Spring* together with its supporters came to Stanytsia Luhanska in 2014. A close proximity to Luhansk became one of the reasons of the rapidly moving events in the town as the absence of political activism on the part of local representatives or its insufficiency was fully compensated by the “activists” from a neighboring city.

In late April, the control of Stanytsia Luhanska was taken by Oleksii Mozghovyi, commander of so-called Luhansk People’s Militia. He came to the town from Luhansk after the 23 April events – a failed attempt to take control of the SBU’s (*Security Service of Ukraine*) building. The leaders of the “people’s revolution” had different opinions as to further actions and Mozghovyi decided to leave the town and, together with his “militia”, start guerrilla operations⁵. A health camp on the bank of the Siverskyi Donets River, formerly known as Dubrava tourist camp, close to Stanytsia Luhanska, was chosen by the terrorists to station their base and military training camp there⁶.



“Where will you go?” – «To summer camps,» Oleksii told darkly, «we are going to establish people’s control over the region»⁷.

The very first signs of the *Russian Spring* showed up in the town simultaneously with the appearance of separatists and start of the meetings they organized. However, it is true that such meetings were not massive and, in general, were peaceful. As a rule, the voices from the platforms, decorated with tricolors and brown-and-black St. George’s ribbons, called to defend Luhansk region from the Kyiv-based “lawless” government⁸, while Stanytsia’s residents had their own claims against the authorities particularly, the local ones.

The truth is that people from agrarian Stanytsia sold their produce in the Russian border settlements, crossing the border in accordance with a simplified procedure (based on a special certificate from the district council). Accordingly, a tighter control of the Ukrainian-Russian border established in 2014, when the Antiterrorist Operation began, hindered the economic interests of the population. In addition, Dmytro Vynnyk, Head of the District State Administration newly appointed by Oleksandr Turchynov, failed to win support from both the administration employees and the local residents.

The disaffection caused a spontaneous mass meeting of local residents who gathered together on April 28 to discuss the problem of the border closure. When the crowd’s pressure had reached the required level, it was joined by Mozghovyi’s followers, the town Cossacks led by Valerii Lopin⁹. It was he who was preparing the crowd for 40 minutes for a drastic action and led them to the district state administration calling to set up people’s power in Stanytsia¹⁰. However, as it became clear later on, the leaders of the crowd had their own purposes, unrelated to the initial purpose of the meeting.

After a long discussion in the office of Dmytro Vynnyk, Head of Stanytsia Luhanska District State Administration, that ended with his refusal to resign, the activists pushed Vynnyk out his office and stripped him of his powers by the “people’s vote”¹¹. Subject to the proposal of

⁵ Mozghovyi Storm: a Split in the Ranks of Luhansk Militia // Komsomolskaya Pravda v Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26223/3106212/>

⁶ Aleksandr Retivov. Russian Spring in Stanytsia Luhanska. Part 1 // UNews.info [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.unews.info/2017/03/russkaya-vesnav-stanice-luganskoj-chast-1/>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ There is a pro-Russian meeting in Stanytsia Luhanska. The local residents are afraid of the police station seizure // Obzor.lg.ua [Electronic resource] - URL: <http://www.obzor.com.ua/news/miting35452>

⁹ The information of Myrotvorets Centre [Electronic resource] - URL: <https://myrotvorets.center/criminal/lopin-valerij-vladimirovich/>

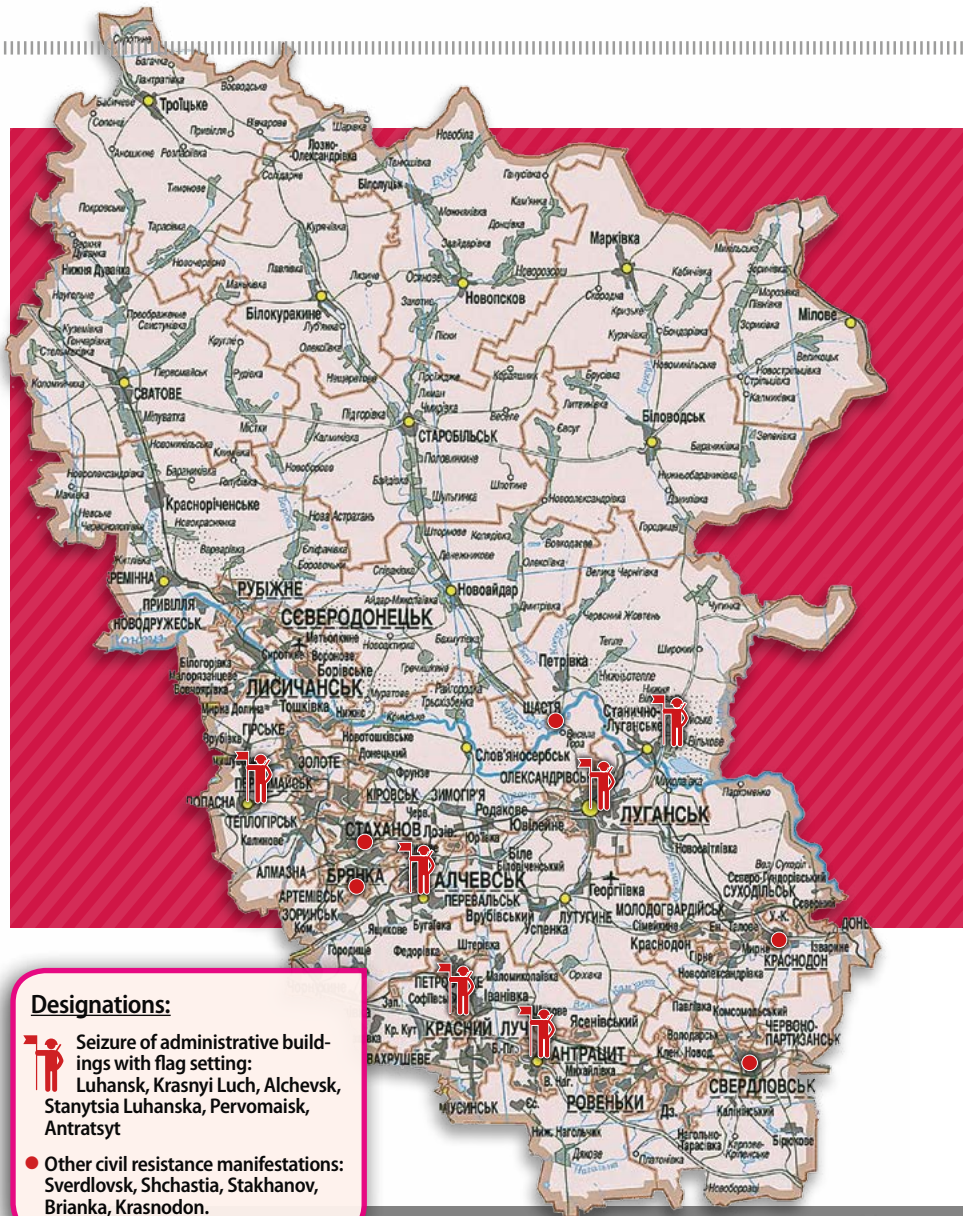
¹⁰ Pro Russian Activists Make Their Ways to the Police Station, Activist // 0642ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/524644>

¹¹ The Police Refuted Information about the Takeover of the Stanytsia Luhanska District State Administration // 0642ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/524982>

the leader of the People’s Militia of Luhansk Region, Oleksii Mozghovyi, Mykhailo Bolhov, Deputy to Vynnyk, was appointed acting head¹². And, by tradition of the *Russian Spring*, the Russian flag was hang up on the local administration¹³. All those events were documented by the Russian journalists who had “incidentally” happened to be near the district state administration¹⁴. And then, the footage¹⁵, supported by a nice “picture” was massively shown in the main RF news programs¹⁶.

“The “outraged people” took over the administration’s building for “a nice picture” (similar to the takeover of the Luhansk Regional State Administration on March 9). They simply barged into and clamored for several hours. Nobody of the “rebels” remained there.”

Kostiantyn Reutskyi,
human rights activist



Designations:

-  Seizure of administrative buildings with flag setting: Luhansk, Krasnyi Luch, Alchevsk, Stanytsia Luhanska, Pervomaisk, Antratsyt
-  Other civil resistance manifestations: Sverdlovsk, Shchastia, Stakhanov, Brianka, Krasnodon.

Situation in Luhansk region on April 30, 2014
Source: <https://lugansk-ig.ua/livejournal.com/157843.html>

In response to the inquiry of the UHHRU’s Center for Documentation regarding the takeover of the District State Administration in April 2014, the official local authorities of Stanytsia Luhanska replied: “there was no takeover of the District State Administration’s building by any unknown or other individuals.” There is a question: what was the purpose of a fake takeover of the District State Administration’s building?

The most obvious answer is – to have support of the official authorities during preparations for the referendum. Stanytsia Luhanska is a gate to the very center of the LPR and the one who takes control of it will have a jumping-off-ground for moving to Luhansk. Being aware of this, the representatives of illegal armed formations set up their first checkpoint at a motor bridge over the Siverskyi Donets River¹⁷.

¹² New Activists Make the Head of Stanytsia Luhanska District State Administration to step Down from Office, Oleksii Mozghovyi // YouTube [Electronic resource] - URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxMzyZ52gYw>

¹³ Luhansk. Opposition Chronicles, April 28, April 29, 2014 // Nasha Hazeta.net [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://nashagazeta.net/56966-lugansk-hronika-protivostoyaniya-28-29-aprelya-2014-g.html>

¹⁴ New Activists Make the Head of Stanytsia Luhanska Raion State Administration to step Down from Office, Oleksii Mozghovyi // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxMzyZ52gYw>

¹⁵ What is Going on in Stanytsia Luhanska – has There been Any Administration Takeover or not // vgorode.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://lg.vgorode.ua/news/sobytyia/220977-chto-proyshkodyt-v-stanytse-luhanskoi-byl-zakhvat-admynstratsyy-ily-net>

¹⁶ A Meeting of Federalization Supporters has been Held in One of the District Centers in Luhansk region // the First Channel [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.1tv.ru/news/2014-04-29/49149-v-odnom-iz-rayonnyh-tsentrov-luganskoy-oblasti-proshyol-miting-storonnikov-federalizatsii>

¹⁷ Report on the violations of human rights in the active combat zone in Luhansk Region, Stanytsia Luhanska sector // Y. Azev, Y. Smeliansky, et al. // The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, NGO – P. 9 [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://khp.org/files/docs/1530865045.pdf>

The river is a natural barrier that separates Stanytsia from Zhovtnevyi district of Luhansk. There are 4 bridges over it: a pedestrian, a railroad and two motor ones. The district center and the city are only joined by them. In addition, the right bank of the river is high, whereas the left one is low. The checkpoint was set up on the right bank, on the side of vehicular entrance to the city. From the tactical point of view, the location on this bank is more effective since it is higher, and the bridge and the opposite bank are better seen from it.



Bridges connecting Stanytsia Luhanska and Luhansk

Meanwhile, active preparations were conducted in the district center for so called referendum¹⁸. The local activists worked at full capacity intimidating the town residents by the stories of all sorts about dreadful “atrocities of Banderites” who “killed because of the Russian language”. Such stories were not believed in by everyone; some Stanytsia residents saw their future with Ukraine¹⁹.

БЮЛЛЕТЕНЬ
ГОЛОСОВАНИЯ НА РЕФЕРЕНДУМЕ 11 МАЯ 2014 ГОДА
ПЛЯ ГОЛОСУВАННЯ НА РЕФЕРЕНДУМІ 11 ТРАВНЯ 2014 РОКУ

Отметьте любым знаком в квадрате тот вариант ответа, за который вы голосуете:
Відзначте будь-яким знаком у квадраті той варіант відповіді

Поддержк
Акт о государственн
Луганской Нар
Чи підт

Акт про державну самостійність
Луганської Народної Республіки?

да/так нет/ні

BULLETIN
[The text below is written in both Russian and Ukrainian languages]
For voting at the referendum on May 11, 2014.
Using any sign, tick a box opposite that variant of the answer you vote for:
Do you support the Act of the State Independence of the Luhansk People's Republic?
Yes No

Бюллетень, в котором оставлены неотмеченными или отмечены два варианта ответа, считаются недействительными
Бюллетень, в якому залишені невідзначеними або відзначені два варіанти відповіді, вважається недійсним

Bridges connecting Stanytsia Luhanska and Luhansk

The population’s attitude dramatically changed following the events which took place in Odesa in early May²⁰: the propagandistic slogans were sounding and perceived quite differently and pro-Russian convictions were dominating. On May 11, there was a festive mood in Stanytsia – people together with their families, hand in hand, were going to the polling stations²¹.

However, such festive mood had not lasted for long – it disappeared when an active phase of the Anti-terrorist operation began and there appeared first casualties and would not return for several years.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ A car rally Luhansk-Stanytsia Luhanska. (for inseparable Ukraine) // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a09UreqIJ9g>

²⁰ The Tragedy in Odesa on May 2. What has Actually Happened in Kulikovo Field // The Novoe Vremia [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://nv.ua/publications/tragediya-2-maya-v-odesse-cto-na-samom-dele-proizoshlo-na-kulikovom-pole-44935.html>

²¹ Aleksandr Retivov. Russian Spring in Stanytsia Luhanska. Part 1 // UNNews.info [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.unews.info/2017/03/russkaya-vesna-v-stanice-luganskoj-chast-1/>

ESCALATION OF THE EVENTS

In the second half of May, unknown but very well-armed individuals tried to break through the Ukrainian-Russian border outside checkpoints²². Immediately thereafter there was an attack with a storm on the Stanytsia Luhanska border post²³. The goal of the unidentified individuals was to join local separatists, but they have never reached it: the Ukrainian armed forces personnel successfully retained control of the border.

The situation escalated following a two-day siege of the Luhansk border base on June 2 – 4. The energetic actions of the illegal armed formation members and high probability of losing control of the country's Eastern border made the Armed Forces of Ukraine (*hereinafter, the "AFU"*) to take decisive actions. Staying ahead, on June 6, the Ukrainian Air Force raided the groups of illegal armed formations stationed at *Dubrava* tourist camp²⁴, not far from Stanytsia Luhanska. As a result, according to the Russian mass media, two militants were wounded²⁵. Notwithstanding minor losses among the illegal armed formation's personnel, it was most important that a tactically advantageous place for stationing on the Siverskyi Donets River had been destroyed. Thus, the militants had no other alternative but to leave it.

They "moved" to the school facilities in Makarove village, not far from the bridge and, accordingly, the checkpoint. However, on June 13, the AFU's artillery reached them at their new station. Since the school had directly been located in a residential area and quite literally surrounded by the houses, as a result of the damages²⁶, the militants had to look for a new base.

The rumors about air attacks spread very fast around whole Stanytsia. Indeed, nobody knew for sure what had happened in *Dubrava* and Makarove, but the people readily believed in the narrations about "atrocities" of Ukrainian soldiers. The attitudes of the local population changed dramatically.

Recent levity had disappeared and instead there came a recognition that a real war was approaching Stanytsia.

Civilians were in a rush to leave their homes and moved outside the town, the streets had become deserted as well as the office buildings²⁷. The militants took advantage of such situation – they occupied the abandoned office buildings to set up their bases there, using a "live" human shield to hide themselves. It was then that a known base was set up in the "Bridge construction train", which approached very close to Kindrashivska station.

Following several battles in the outskirts of Luhansk, including those near Stanytsia Luhanska²⁸, the town had passed "from hand to hand" for sev-



²² Border Patrol in Luhansk Region was Attacked by People with Automatic Grenade Launcher // Komsomolskaya Pravda v Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://kp.ua/politics/453742-na-pohranychnykov-luhanschyny-napaly-vooruzhennyye-luidy-s-hranatometamy>; 5 Border Patrol Members Wounded: Stanytsia Waits for the National Guard Reinforcements to Arrive // Vgorode.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://lg.vgorode.ua/news/sobytyia/223620-5-pohranychnykov-raneny-v-stanytse-zhdut-podkrepleny-ot-natshvardyy>

²³ The Border Patrol Repelled the Attack in Luhansk Region // Mediaport [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.mediaport.ua/pogranichni-otrazili-ataku-v-luganskoy-oblasti>

²⁴ The Ukrainian Troops Raided a Tourist Camp in Stanytsia Luhanska // Ostrov [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.ostrov.org/lugansk/society/news/446452/>

²⁵ The Ukrainian Warplanes Covered a Luhansk-Based Tourist Camp with Bombs // NTV [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.ntv.ru/video/847700/>

²⁶ Aleksandr Retivov, Russian Spring in Stanytsia Luhanska. Part 2 // UNews.info [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.unews.info/2017/04/russkaya-vesna-v-stanice-luganskoj-chast-2/>

²⁷ Aleksandr Retivov, Russian Spring in Stanytsia Luhanska. Part 2 // UNews.info [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.unews.info/2017/04/russkaya-vesna-v-stanice-luganskoj-chast-2/>

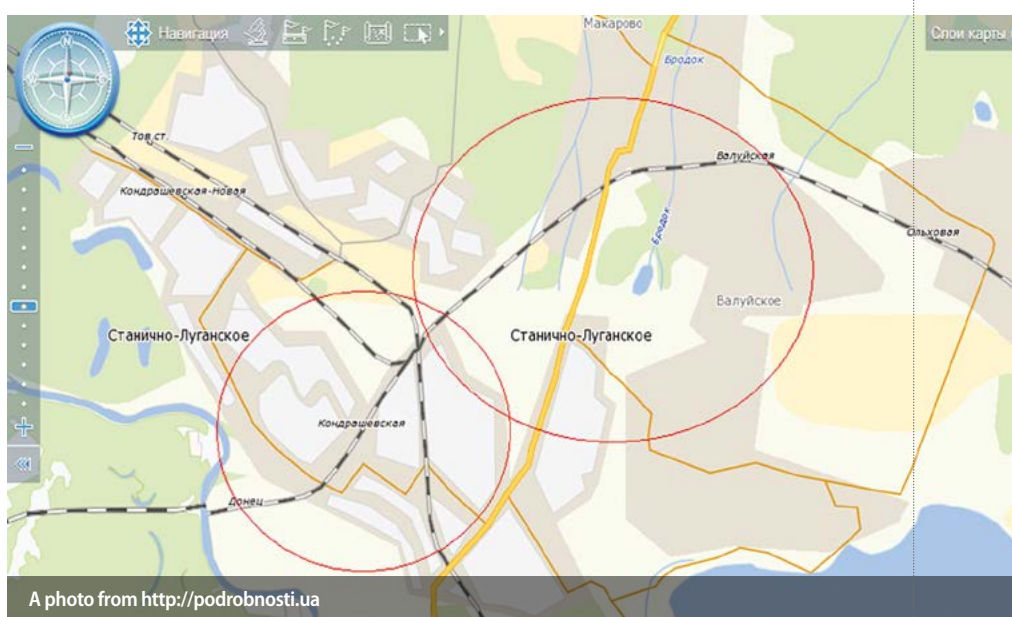
²⁸ The Rebels Say They Stopped 40 Tanks near Luhansk and Fight Battles // RIA Novosti [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://ria.ru/world/20140612/1011754826.html>

eral times. The probability that the AFU could establish themselves in Stanytsia prompted the militants to block the ways connecting the town and the city. As a result, on June 5, 2014, there were already two blasted bridges in Stanytsia Luhanska: the one that was a pedestrian bridge, near the monument to Prince Ihor – its remnants blocked a passage through a new motor bridge – and the second one which was a motor bridge that previously connected the banks of the Siverskyi Donets and was a part of the P22 motorway from Luhansk to the border with the Russian Federation²⁹. Furthermore, unknown persons blasted a railroad haul Kindrashivska Nova – Horodnii³⁰. The routes of approach to the city got beefed-up security.

In the second half of June, the Ukrainian troops lost ground to the militants in the outskirts of Stanytsia Luhanska. The town turned out to be between the warring parties and was shelled from time to time. There had already been no gas, electricity, water or a quiet night in Stanytsia...

However, real horrors of war took place in the mid-summer 2014.

On July 2, Stanytsia Luhanska and the adjacent Kindrashivska station were shelled. As a result, according to different information sources 9³¹ to 12 people³² were killed and 11 people were wounded³³. According to the Memorial Map of the Human Rights Abuse Documentation Center of the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union (UHHRU) on <http://memorialmap.org/map>³⁴, 12 people were killed on July 2, 2014 as a result of the shelling.



A photo from <http://podrobnosti.ua>



The police station after shelling

Two areas suffered most of all – they were directly shelled. The first attack had been on Moskva-Donbas street; it seriously damaged or completely destroyed 6 residential houses, a district police department and the court building, and also caused damages to the adjacent quarters.

The second one – with a small time lag – was on Ostrovskoho street of Kindrashivska station. Materially damaged or completely destroyed were 9 one-storied residential houses, 4 blocks of flats, and household structures, garages, etc.³⁵.

²⁹ Two Bridges Blasted in Stanytsia Luhanska (photo) // 0642ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/556525>

³⁰ Unknown Persons Blasted a Railroad Track in Luhansk Region // TSN [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://tsn.ua/politika/u-luganskiy-oblasti-nevidomipidirvali-zaliznichnu-koliyu-356026.html>

³¹ The ATO Forces Destroyed the Militants' Positions on the Zmeinaia Mountain on the Way to Stanytsia Luhanska // UNIAN [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.unian.net/politics/935531-silyi-ato-razbili-pozitsii-boevikov-na-zmeinoy-gore-na-podyezde-k-poselku-stanitsa-luganskaya.html>

³² An open letter to Petro Poroshenko, President of Ukraine, from Valerii Holenko, Head of the Luhansk Regional Council [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://oblrada.lg.ua/content/otkrytoe-pismo-prezidentu-ukrainy-petru-poroshenko>

³³ As a Result of an Air Attack on Stanytsia Luhanska, 10 Civilians Killed Including One Child, - the District council // 112.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://112.ua/obshchestvo/v-rezultate-aviadara-po-stanice-luganskoj-pogibli-10-mirnyh-zhiteley-sredi-nih-rebenok-oblsovet-83222.html>

³⁴ Memorial Map [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://memorialmap.org/map>

³⁵ Report on the violations of human rights in the active combat zone in Luhansk Region. Stanytsia Luhanska sector. /Y. Aseiev, Y. Smelianska, etc. //The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, NGO – P. 9 [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://khp.org/files/docs/1530865045.pdf>

The video shot immediately after the shelling recorded the burning houses which had been destroyed, a mix of the structures' wreckage and parts of human bodies, and dead bodies covered with blankets...³⁶.



A photo from <http://podrobnosti.ua>










“Following the events of July 2, 2014, nobody smiled in Stanytsia. Everybody, who previously perceived such situation as some kind of surrealism, began, though reluctantly, to understand the reality of the developments”³⁷.

Oleksandr Retivov

The information reported by mass media about shelling was very controversial. The Russian party blamed the AFU's Air Force for the air attacks on Stanytsia, while the Ukrainian party in its turn blamed the militants of the illegal armed formations and the Russian Federation³⁸.

Based on the testimonies of the witnesses who mentioned about the airplane sounds, and bearing in mind the damage scales, found remnants of the projectiles, and craters, it can be assumed that it is a case of the air attack³⁹. However, keeping in mind that the *Human Rights Abuse Documentation Center* is not in possession of the information about these events, reviewed will be the main versions published in both Ukrainian and Russian mass media.

 Ukrainian Mass Media	 Russian Mass Media
 “With due account for the found wreckage, the settlements had been shelled from the automatic grenade launchers” ⁴⁰ .	 “The AFU made an air strike on Stanytsia” ⁴¹ .
 “The Russian militants shelled residential quarters of Stanytsia Luhanska town. The attack was conducted using heavy weapons, probably Grad rocket systems. The terrorists try to blame the ATO for the shelling. However, the Ukrainian aircraft has not flown in that direction today” ⁴² .	 The Armed Forces of Ukraine made an air strike on Stanytsia Luhanska District and blame the RF for that” ⁴³ .
 “A day before, all radar stations were willfully destroyed in Luhansk region. The prints left by the mortar gunners lead to Russia. Immediately upon destruction of the last radar station, the pro-Russian mass media reported on shelling bombs on Kondrashivka” ⁴⁴ .	

³⁶ Stanytsia Luhanska – an air attack on a residential sector on July 2, 2014 // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTHBU5ZxMJo>

³⁷ Aleksandr Retivov, Russian Spring in Stanytsia Luhanska. Part 3 // UNews.info [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.unews.info/2017/03/russkaya-vesna-v-stanice-luganskoj-chast-1/>

³⁸ Shelling of Stanytsia Luhanska: the Parties Blame Each Other // BBC Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2014/07/140702_lugansk_attack_az

³⁹ Stanytsia Luhanska: a Day After the Tragedy // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8qouuvvJBw>

⁴⁰ The Ukrainian Military Personnel Insist They have Shelled Neither the Stanytsia Luhanska District nor Severodonetsk // CityNews [Electronic resource] - URL: <http://www.citynews.net.ua/polit/34914-ukrainskie-voennye-utverzhdajut-cto-ne-obstrelivali-stanichno-luganskiy-rayon-i-g-severodoneck-foto-vid-eo-18.html>

⁴¹ Stanytsia Luhanska – an air attack on a residential sector on July 2, 2014 // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTHBU5ZxMJo>

⁴² The Russian militants shelled residential quarters of Stanytsia Luhanska town // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRYiFKaJLlg>

⁴³ The Armed Forces of Ukraine made an air strike on Stanytsia Luhanska District // TASS [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/1293380>

⁴⁴ Luhansk Region might be Bombed by the Russian Military Air Forces // Presa Ukrayny [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://uapress.info/uk/news/show/29953/>

The tragic events of July 2, 2014 are one of a few episodes of the Russian-Ukrainian war, continuing to be disputed, while neither party to the conflict recognizes its involvement therein. Notwithstanding this, Stanytsia Luhanska and Kindrashivska station shelling cannot be justified by any military reasons. They contradict the rules of International Humanitarian Law and unequivocally constitute a military offense.

The warfare around the district center had not ceased. During two months the control of Stanytsia passed from one war party to the other, and the battles continued both daily and at nights. From August 18 to August 21, the Ukrainian military kicked the illegal armed formations out Stanytsia Luhanska and on August 21, the Ukrainian flag was waiving over the district center.⁴⁵

Upon liberation of the town in August 2014, the local population was mainly hostile to the Ukrainian soldiers. All what happened to them they blamed for Ukrainian soldiers. At the same time, their loyalty to the representatives of the illegal armed formations has also disappeared.



“From time to time you meet some individuals who spit in our direction. We do our best to help them i.e., to bring something or help there on site, but they continue saying “junta” and “killing squads”. Though there are still some people who thank us and ask to finish all these as soon as possible, but they are a minority⁴⁶.

During a certain period of time, the ideological opposition was manifested in painting the posts in the national flag colors. The local residents referred to it as a “graffiti battle”⁴⁷. However, nobody openly expressed his pro-Ukrainian attitudes in neither 2014 nor early 2015, because Ukrainian positions in Stanytsia were unstable and locals understood: if the militants come back, they would conduct “purges”⁴⁸. The situation in the town remained to be difficult however, for the first time in a long period, Stanytsia’s residents were able to fall asleep without hearing the sound of shelling.

⁴⁵ The Ukrainian Flag has been Run up over Stanytsia Luhanska // 0642.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/602855>

⁴⁶ Stanytsia Luhanska: first days after war (photo) // 0642.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/602930>

⁴⁷ The Report of the International Monitoring Mission about the Trip to Luhansk and Donetsk Regions; Periods Covered: March 28 to April 2, and June 20 to June 26, 2016 // Information portal of the Kharkiv Human Right Protection Group [Electronic resource] – URL: http://khpg.org/ru/index.php?id=1475581147#_Toc463056301

⁴⁸ Aleksandr Retivov. Russian Spring in Stanytsia Luhanska. Part 3 // UNews.info [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://www.unews.info/2017/03/russkaya-vesnav-stanice-luganskoj-chast-1/>

CRIMES OF *TORNADO* AND *CHERNIHIV* BATTALIONS



Tornado battalions

Tornado and *Chernihiv* battalions arrived at Stanytsia Luhanska on January 1, 2015. *Tornado* company of the special militia patrol service and *Chernihiv* unit of the MVS special police patrol service had been sent to the ATO zone in the East of Ukraine⁴⁹, where they were expected to perform their task on counteracting separatism and the enemy's sabotage, and reconnaissance forces in the flashpoints. However, so called purges by the *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* members touched the locals as well. The local residents of Stanytsia Luhanska had been treated by *Tornado* battalion with extreme violence.



“Chernihiv [battalion] stationed in Krupskoi street, Makarove village. In fact, Lviv battalion had also been stationed there, but local population has never had any claims against them. They had even helped. Tornado had mainly occupied the railroad hospital”⁵⁰.

The units' members started with searching pedestrians while being of duty and seizing their mobile phones, and then it became known about the occurrences of illegal detentions and “preventive” talks⁵¹. Odd were also the searches started in private houses, flats and office buildings. The armed men wearing camouflage smashed the door down, barged into the house and turned everything upside down, beat and humiliated the hosts. Detained had been men, women and elderly people; they were brought to basements where they were subjected to violent treatment and tortures⁵². The property seized during the searches, including telephones, jewelries, furniture and equipment, was misappropriated by the *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* members⁵³.

The wrongdoings of the representatives of these battalions, specifically those of *Tornado*, provoked indignation of the town residents and undermined respect to the military personnel stationed in Stanytsia. However, the repeated complaints to the abuse of power by the *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* members had remained without response from the law enforcement bodies. The tidal wave of discontent had been growing and it was supported by Hennadii Moskal, Head of Luhansk Regional Military and Civil Administration, who applied to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Chief of the General Staff of the AFU, and Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. In his application, he noted there was a need for the disarmament, disbandment of *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* battalions, and their withdrawal from Luhansk region⁵⁴.



Chernihiv battalions

⁴⁹ Tornado (ex-Shakhtersk) battalion was presented in Zaporizhzhia // Tezis TV [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilhZNFph8PY>

⁵⁰ Report on the violations of human rights in the active combat zone in Luhansk Region. Stanytsia Luhanska sector / Y. Aseiev, Y. Smelianska, etc. // The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, NGO – P. 15 [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://khpg.org/files/docs/1530865045.pdf>.

⁵¹ Tornado and Chernihiv Battalions Conducted an Anti-Separatist Raid in Stanytsia Luhanska // Antikor [Electronic resource] – URL: https://antikor.com.ua/articles/23288-bataljony_tornado_i_chernigov_ustroili_v_stanitse_luganskoj_oblavu_na_separatistov

⁵² Tornado company: rapes, tortures, and robberies // YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=41&v=TJ1kScCiyC4

⁵³ Report on the violations of human rights in the active combat zone in Luhansk Region. Stanytsia Luhanska sector / Y. Aseiev, Y. Smelianska, etc. // The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, NGO – P. 15 [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://khpg.org/files/docs/1530865045.pdf>

⁵⁴ The communication of the Luhansk Regional Military and Civil Administration dated 06/18/2015 // Facebook [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.facebook.com/odalug/posts/438602799655359>



“Instead of concentrating their efforts and standing up to the enemy, some of the units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine stepped in the way of committing offences and, in order to cover their contemptible conduct, pretend they are fighting with a “fabricated” smuggling”. It, first of all, concerns Tornado and Chernihiv battalions”⁵⁵.

In March 2015, the Military prosecutor’s office instituted criminal proceedings and brought charges against the representatives of *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* battalions, accusing them of building a criminal organization, commission of violent actions, and murdering. On June 17, Ruslan Onyshchenko, *Tornado* company commander, and other members of the unit were detained. The battalion was withdrawn from Stanytsia Luhanska district and Luhansk region, and disbanded. On April 7, 2017, the court pronounced sentence to 12 former *Tornado* members. Eight ex-soldiers, accused of violence and tortures, were sentenced from 5 to 11 years of imprisonment. Three soldiers were released of serving a penalty on a 2 year trial basis⁵⁶.

It is difficult to tell a correct number of the persons who had suffered as a result of the actions of the *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* battalions because most victims refused to provide information being anxious about their safety⁵⁷. It is known that from the summer 2014 to the end of 2016, at least 11 persons were reported missing⁵⁸. According to Oleksii Havrysh, Head of Staff at Stanytsia Luhanska Administration, almost 40 individuals had been detained and gone through the ‘basements’ in the hospital bomb shelter⁵⁹.

It is indisputable that the offenses committed by *Tornado* special unit amount to violations of International Humanitarian Law. All submitted complaints must be considered and just sentences must be rendered to the criminals. The actions of the soldiers from *Tornado* and *Chernihiv* volunteer battalions had eroded local population’s trust to the military personnel and adversely affected the attitude toward the State of Ukraine in general.

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ The Justice Ministry fired all senior officers of Lukianivske SIZO – MP // Ukrinform [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/2519451-minusti-zvilniv-use-kerivnictvo-lukanivskogo-sizo-deputat.html>

⁵⁷ Tornado Soldiers Wrecked a Hospital in Stanytsia Luhanska (video) // Podrobnosti-TV [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://podrobnosti.ua/2042055-batalon-tornado-s-uzhasom-vspominajut-v-stanitse-luganskoj-video.html>

⁵⁸ Report on the violations of human rights in the active combat zone in Luhansk Region. Stanytsia Luhanska sector / Y. Aseiev, Y. Smelianska, etc. // The Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, NGO – P. 15 [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://khpg.org/files/docs/1530865045.pdf>

⁵⁹ Tornado Soldiers Wrecked a Hospital in Stanytsia Luhanska (video) // Podrobnosti-TV [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://podrobnosti.ua/2042055-batalon-tornado-s-uzhasom-vspominajut-v-stanitse-luganskoj-video.html>

LIFE UNDER BULLETS

The shelling of Stanytsia Luhanska was continuous in nature and it was the main cause of the civil deaths and damages of the town infrastructure. Most damages were suffered by the town as a consequence of shelling and air attacks in 2014. It was at that time when the electricity station, transmission towers, water – and gas supply systems were damaged. The district center was left without the essentials for a certain time. The remedial work was postponed because of a high level of danger and Stanytsia's residents required to create "a green corridor" for their conduct⁶⁰.

Because of continuous threat to the life and health of their personnel, the banks, pension fund and treasury, enterprises and organizations shut down. The population was left without any facilities for conducting money transactions, receiving their pensions, wages, salaries, subsidies etc. For many Stanytsia's residents, such benefits were the only revenue; therefore, resumption of operations by public institutions and banks became a burning question. In late 2014, it was resolved to open outlets of Oshchadbank in the Donbas' near-front zones⁶¹. It was then that Oshchadbank came back to Stanytsia. There were too many people who wanted to receive their payments and every morning they made up very long lines – they had to stand in 3 queues and then, they could at best receive their payments per one month⁶².



Photo: pauluskp.livejournal.com



"Pension tourists"
Photo: pauluskp.livejournal.com

According to Ukrainian law, citizens residing in the occupied areas are entitled to receive their pensions, and social benefits, and for this purpose, they shall come to the controlled area and register⁶³. This is how the concept "pension tourism" has appeared. This is why, in 2015, when a checkpoint was open in Stanytsia, the queues near the bank were joined by the "pension tourists" from Luhansk. The queues started being formed at 4 a.m. and counted for up to 600 people a day. Those who were un-

⁶⁰ Stanytsia Luhanska Requires Urgent Electricity Supply // 0642.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/577093>

⁶¹ Oshchadbank Transfers its Donetsk, and Luhansk Branches to Kramatorsk, and Severodonetsk, and Concurrently Enhances Operations of its Outlets in Donbas Near-Front zones // Oshchadbank [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.oschadbank.ua/ua/press-service/news/3018408/>

⁶² Stanytsia Luhanska. People. Attitudes. Part 2 // Hromadske Telebachennia [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnkF-9kiITc>

⁶³ The Report of the International Monitoring Mission about the Trip to Luhansk and Donetsk Regions. Periods Covered: March 28 to April 2, and June 20 to June 26, 2016 // Information portal of the Kharkiv Human Right Protection Group [Electronic resource] – URL: http://khpg.org/ru/index.php?id=1475581147#_Toc463056292

able to complete all required procedures in time had to stay in town for a night, and come back to the queue in the morning again.

Difficult situation had also created in other areas of life. In winter 2014, the Central district hospital had to stop its work in extreme conditions⁶⁴. The shelling resulted in the damage of a long-term health care facility, and broken windows; heating radiators broke because of frosts. The medical personnel kept the temperature in the hospital using heaters and furnaces⁶⁵.

After the work resumption, it was obvious that there was a lack of medications, equipment, and medical personnel. For example, as at the end of 2016, the hospital lacked an anesthetist, and gynecologists; a resuscitation department, a blood transfusion department and maternity hospital did not work. Some of the staff members live in Luhansk and have to go through the checkpoint every day⁶⁶. The situation with pharmaceuticals has improved: they are brought by the volunteers and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The salary payments are often delayed and doctors complain because they are paid same salaries as their colleagues in other regions of Ukraine, notwithstanding that they have to work in very difficult conditions being sometimes dangerous for life.

There are 3 eleven-year study schools operating in Stanytsia today: Kindrashivska Comprehensive Secondary School, Stanytsia Luhanska Secondary School #2 and Stanytsia Luhanska Comprehensive Secondary School #1. In summer, School #2 was burnt due to shelling. The staff and schoolchildren were temporarily relocated to the buildings of a printing house (forms 7 to 11) and a kindergarten (forms 1 to 6). The children studied by distance learning during the periods of high danger. Some part of students that were enrolled in school live in Luhansk and undertake school externally⁶⁷.

Unlike the hospital, all of the three schools are sufficiently staffed, so the education is provided uninterrupted. School supplies and textbooks are replenished through donations from other Ukrainian schools, volunteers, and military personnel. In order to protect children from injuries, parents, volunteer organizations and



Central district hospital, Stanytsia Luhanska.
<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28111545.html>



"Pension tourists".
Photo: pauluskp.livejournal.com

⁶⁴ The LPR's Militants Carried the Hospital in Stanytsia Luhanska // NSDC // 0642.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.0642.ua/news/573068>

⁶⁵ Stanytsia Luhanska District Hospital has been Working without Windows for over a Year Already // Radio Svoboda / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JqIQh-xkL8>

⁶⁶ The Report of the International Monitoring Mission about the Trip to Luhansk and Donetsk Regions. Periods Covered: March 28 to April 2, and June 20 to June 26, 2016 // Information portal of the Kharkiv Human Right Protection Group [Electronic resource] – URL: http://khp.org/ru/index.php?id=1475581147#_Toc463056292

⁶⁷ "Window to Europe": How the Life of Stanytsia Luhanska Has Changed over Three Years of War // Ukrainska Pravda [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2017/04/20/7141737/>

school staff install extra protections. For example, protective shields were installed on classroom windows at School #1⁶⁸. Since 2015, when most enterprises in Stanytsia Luhanska resumed their operations, people have begun slowly returning to their homes and pupils – to their schools.

The opening of the checkpoint prompted thousands of people from temporarily uncontrolled territories to go to Stanytsia Luhanska as it was more profitable and cheaper for them to buy food in the village than in the occupied territories. Vegetables were twice more expensive in the occupied territories⁶⁹. That is why locals willingly brought their goods to sell in the uncontrolled territory as this was their only way to earn a living. There is, however, no automobile access thereto, with a pedestrian bridge offering no chance to carry much baggage. Local authorities made concessions to entrepreneurs and farmers from Stanytsia by setting up a small market near the checkpoint⁷⁰. Still, this appeared to be not enough, since Luhansk has always been a place where they sold their products, which is why restrictions imposed by war hit their businesses hard⁷¹. Therefore, farmers are turning to local and central authorities, hoping that the latter will listen to them and change existing regulations.

Life is undoubtedly hard in Stanytsia Luhanska. Villagers admit that they are scared, they do not know how they are going to survive the next winter, and they fear for the lives of their children. The locals have no faith in the Ukrainian government's help, nor do they believe in the sympathy of the society. Those who left in the spring and summer of 2014 have also returned to their homes under shelling – people who faced rejection and found themselves unable to find shelter and work in safe regions of Ukraine chose to live in a half-ruined village under cross-fire⁷². When asked by journalists why they did not leave the conflict zone, locals answer shortly: "Where can we go? Who is waiting for us there?"⁷³. They stay here and try to rebuild Stanytsia on their own and with the help of international humanitarian missions.

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Vegetable Selling Business in the Near-Front Zone. Who Is Besieging the Checkpoint and Why? // Radio Svoboda [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28699682.html>

⁷⁰ A Road to the "Luhansk People's Republic" | Stanytsia Luhanska // Hromadske Telebachennia / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNBwNQDaTF4>

⁷¹ Vegetable Selling Business in the Near-Front Zone. Who Is Besieging the Checkpoint and Why? // Radio Svoboda [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/28699682.html>

⁷² Stanytsia Luhanska. People. Attitudes. Part 1 // Hromadske Telebachennia / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaoUd2Bp8NU>

⁷³ "No Way to Live and Nowhere to Leave. Stanytsia Luhanska" // Hromadske Telebachennia / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoUI7HQPqLk>

STANYTSIA LUHANSKA CHECKPOINT



In 2015, most of public and private institutions resumed their activities. Stanytsia had its once-forfeited benefits restored, with shops opening up and repair works starting there. In late October, the first pedestrian crossing between the territory controlled by Ukrainian authorities and the temporarily occupied territories of the region was unveiled in Stanytsia Luhanska⁷⁴. The checkpoint faced difficulties from the first days of its operation: the flow of traffic at the checkpoint was much higher than its throughput capacity. Such a large number of people wishing to cross the checkpoint can be explained by three factors: first – close family ties between residents of Luhansk and Stanytsia Luhanska, second – lower prices and wider product range in the village compared to the city. And a third, very important, factor is that residents of occupied regions could apply for and receive their Ukrainian pensions and other entitlements in the Ukrainian government-controlled territory only.

However, the ongoing shelling of the entry-exist checkpoint and Ukrainian road blocks caused the military to close the checkpoints from time to time in order to avoid civilian casualties. Such days were sheer terror for both the military and the civilians: soldiers were blamed for suspending and resuming the operations of the entry-exist checkpoint without prior notice, for making people constantly wait in lines to get passes and for lack of any amenities. People who have already crossed the checkpoint often could not get back and waited for hours or even days until the crossing points open⁷⁵. The military men, in response, say that the militants also started shooting without sticking to any schedule but rather whenever they wanted to, which is why setting a regular schedule of opening and closing hours of the checkpoint is out of the question. They blame civilians for lining up in dangerous areas exposed to shelling where they can be easily wounded.

⁷⁴ The First Pedestrian Crossing to the Occupied Territory to Be Opened in Stanytsia Luhanska // Inforesist [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://inforesist.org/v-stanitse-luganskoy-otkryit-perviy-perehod-na-okkupirovannuyu-territoriyu/>

⁷⁵ “We Had to Sleep Sitting up, Luckily after Getting Some Porridge: How People Who Have not Crossed the Checkpoint Are Spending Their Night” // Radio Svoboda [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/donbass-realii/28927461.html>



Things got worse from year to year. In 2015, when the checkpoint was opened, its initial throughput capacity was 1.5 thousand people a day. However, in 2017 the checkpoint was crossed by 9 to 10 thousand people daily⁷⁶. In order to unload the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint, it was decided to build a new checkpoint in Zolote. The initial arrangements were,

however, violated by the representatives of illegal armed formations, resulting in the refusal of the militants to allow people to cross the checkpoint after its construction was over. Therefore, the newly-built checkpoint has been standing idle for 1.5 years now. According to the Deputy Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, the problem is that the parties cannot reach an agreement.



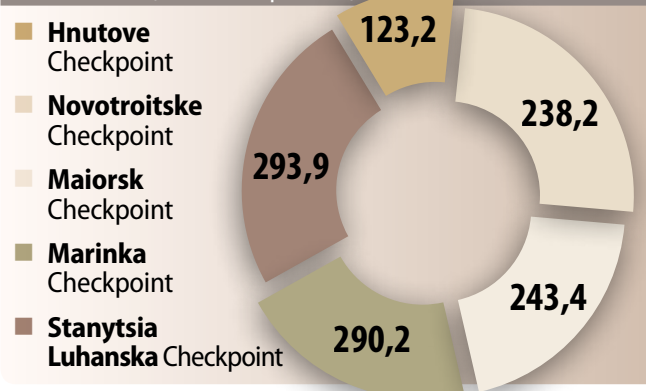
“There is no problem there from a technical viewpoint. It is necessary for the parties to sit down at the negotiating table and reach an agreement to open this checkpoint so that people can cross it. The same concerns the bridge in Shchastia and essentially any road across the contact line⁷⁷.”

Ultimately, considering the existing situation, the Ukrainian party undertook to refurbish the checkpoint in Stanytsia Luhanska. Little by little, they installed shelters, corridors⁷⁸ (with separated passages) and set up first aid posts of the Red Cross⁷⁹, canopies and warming centers⁸⁰, and a marketplace for local entrepreneurs⁸¹. Additionally, the authorities prolonged the checkpoint working hours: from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. in summer and from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in winter. As the twilight falls, shelling begins and it is especially dangerous to cross the one-kilometer distance between the two road blocks through the ruined bridge in the dark.

As of today, centralized water supply and sanitation systems, an internal electric grid and a children’s playground have already been installed at the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint. The construction of a shelter, canopies for the checkpoint visitors is nearing completion. A motor road is being rebuilt. Additionally, suburban bus stops and public bus parking areas have been installed⁸².

The overloading problem of this checkpoint still remains unresolved. According to the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons, the Stanytsia Luhanska checkpoint remains the most loaded crossing point on the contact line as of June 2018⁸³.

The Contact Line Crossing in the East of Ukraine
in June 2014 (thousands persons)



⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Stanytsia Luhanska Checkpoint: What Is Going on the Contact Line // Channel 5 [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.5.ua/suspilstvo/kpvy-stanytsia-luhanska-shcho-vidbuvaetsia-na-linii-rozmezhuвання-156038.html>

⁷⁹ A Medical Module is Installed at the Stanytsia Luhanska Checkpoint at the Expense of the Red Cross // LOT [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://lot.uadonbas.com/news/u-punkti-propusku-stanicya-luganska-oblasthuvali-medichnij-modul-koshtom-cherwonogo-xresta>

⁸⁰ Stanytsia Luhanska Checkpoint: A One-and-a-Half Kilometer Gap (Photo Gallery) // Krym. Realii [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://ru.krym.com/a/checkpoint-stanytsia-luhanska/27624577.html>

⁸¹ A Road to the “Luhansk People’s Republic” | Stanytsia Luhanska // Hromadske Telebachennia / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNBwNQDaTF4>

⁸² Stanytsia Luhanska Checkpoint to Be Closed for Repairs in Late August // RBC - Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/kontse-avgusta-kpvy-stanitsa-luganskaya-zakroyut-1533222449.html>

⁸³ Data of the Ministry for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons of Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: <http://mtot.gov.ua/u-cherwni-liniyu-rozmezhuвання-na-shodi-ukrayiny-peretnulo-1-188-900-osib/>

DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES

Civilians finding themselves in a trap between the opposing sides in the East of Ukraine often became casual victims of regular shelling. Therefore, this gave rise to the need to provide conditions that would protect the civilian population from the effects of the hostilities: first of all, it was necessary to create areas for disengagement of forces and weapons, preventing the penetration of the sabotage and reconnaissance groups, around settlements.



The meeting against withdrawals of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, October 2016.

Following the meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group, on September 21, 2016, a document was agreed upon for disengagement of forces along the contact line in Donbas. It provided for the establishment of three disengagement areas including Zolote, Petrivske and Stanytsia Luhanska. According to the Framework Decision, the disengagement of the forces and hardware was to be carried out through withdrawal from their current positions with a view to creating disengagement areas that were at least 2 km wide and 2 km deep. Moving forward into disengagement areas was prohibited. The OSCE SMM verified adherence to a comprehensive seven-day ceasefire must precede the disengagement⁸⁴.

The Framework Decision sparked a wave of discussions among the experts as to its expediency, instrumentality, methods of control and prevention of further movement of the illegal armed formations to the west⁸⁵. However, the news about separation of the forces were met by the residents of Stanytsia Luhanska district center with resolute opposition⁸⁶. Demonstrating its position, the local activists arranged meetings and the deputies of the district council wrote their addresses⁸⁷ and demanded that Ukrainian forces not leave their positions⁸⁸.

“*Quotation: “Bandits from that side will immediately come to our place. Those who sign framework agreements must understand that there are people here whose lives are in danger. Because those children who celebrated the Day of Peace in the square and came in vyshyvankas, who will defend them? The State. In addition to the territory, there are people”⁸⁹. Nataliia Zhurbenko.*

The town residents were restoring the houses and infrastructure ruined by bombs, whereas a potential disengagement of the forces could have made the district center to be undefended. People still remembered the consequences of Stanytsia being in the “grey zone” and did not

⁸⁴ Framework Decision of the Trilateral Contact Group on Disengagement of Forces and Hardware // OSCE [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.osce.org/ru/cio/266271?download=true>

⁸⁵ Desintegration of the Forces in Donbas: What Security Zones Have Been Created in the ATO (map) // Depo.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.depo.ua/rus/war/rozvedennya-storin-na-donbasi-shcho-za-tri-zoni-bezpeki-stvorili-22092016090000>, Separation of the Parties in the ATO. Regular Army will Move Away When Ordered, Volunteer Battalions are Prepared for a New Wave // Strana.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://strana.ua/articles/analysis/34829-razvedenie-storon-v-ato.html>, The Future of Donbas. We Approached too Close to the Materialization of the Yugoslav Scenario – Murayev // RIA Novosti Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://rian.com.ua/columnist/20160925/1016810106.html>, Expert: Separation of the Forces in the ATO Zone is unfortunately an experiment on human beings // Donetskii Novosti [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://dnews.dn.ua/news/521285>

⁸⁶ Why does the Military Disengagement Disrupt in the Donbas “Security Zones” // Depo.ua [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.depo.ua/ukr/war/chomu-zrivaetsya-rozvedennya-ozbroen-v-zonah-bezpeki-23112016090000>.

⁸⁷ The Deputies of Stanytsia Ask Harbuz not to Comply with the Minsk Resolutions - document // Hromadske Telebachennia [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://hromadskeradio.org/ru/news/2016/10/03/deputaty-stanyci-prosyat-garbuza-ne-vykonuvaty-rishennya-minska-dokument>

⁸⁸ We will lie down under Tanks, but will not let the AFU out: Residents of Stanytsia Luhanska // 057.ua / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19mcYg2wy6E>

⁸⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INiYVejuj7c>



Photo: UNN

want to be there⁹⁰. They were supported by the military personnel who regained the town meter by meter and now refused to give that area back to the militants⁹¹.

The demands of the residents of Stanytsia, and adjacent villages and towns were supported by the official statement of Yuriy Harbuz, Head of Luhansk Military and Civil Administration: on October 9, it was informed about the decision of the high-ranked officials of the country to withdraw Stanytsia Luhanska from the list of the settlements where a disengagement of forces had to take place⁹².

Thus, since October 2016, Stanytsia has been under permanent defense of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

⁹⁰ Why is Disengagement of Forces Unwanted in Stanytsia Luhanska // BBC Ukraine [Electronic resource] – URL: https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/politics/2016/11/161110_stanytsya_luganska_sd

⁹¹ Stanytsia Luhanska: A Protest Action Against Withdrawal of the AFU's forces [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INiYVeju7c>, Disengagement of the Forces in Donbas: The OSCE inspectors came to check Stanytsia Luhanska // 5 channel / YouTube [Electronic resource] – URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI9INqumJVA>

⁹² Address of Yuriy Harbuz, Head of Luhansk Regional State Administration – Head of Luhansk Military and Civil Administration, to the President of Ukraine and Minister of Defence of Ukraine // Luhansk Regional State Administration [Electronic resource] – URL: http://loga.gov.ua/oda/press/news/zvernennya_golovi_luganskoyi_oblasnoyi_derzhavnoyi_administraciyi_kerivnika_0

CONCLUSIONS

For over 4 years now Stanytsia Luhanska, a town and administrative center of same name rayon, has been living on the line of fire. The proximity to city of Luhansk put it right in the middle of pitched battles between Ukraine's Armed Forces and illegal armed groups that resulted in large-scale destruction, most of which happened in the summer of 2014. Totally, 31 residents were killed over the course of hostilities in Stanytsia Luhanska and 2,500 residential buildings were damaged, with 112 beyond repair.

Such massive shelling of Stanytsia Luhanska and the Kindrashivska railroad station, which led to deaths among civilians, is being a war crime under Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, the attacks on schools, hospitals and the town administration documented in Stanytsia are also considered a violation of international humanitarian law. The shelling, which resulted in numerous destroyed and damaged civilian buildings, can be also considered a terrorist act.

Thus, the local population's attitudes have undergone significant transformation over the course of the town's occupation by illegal armed groups from April to August 2014 – so much that the once pro-Russia's Stanytsia became "the heart of peace in Ukraine". After liberation by Ukraine, renovation finally began in the town, and Stanytsia got electricity, gas, and water back. However, some parts of the town are suffering from shelling to this day, which makes full restoration of residential buildings impossible. The residents were forced to adapt to the new reality and renew farming. Growing and selling fruit and vegetables kept the people alive through the hardest times and eventually developed into a full-fledged business after an entry-exit checkpoint had been opened there. The hard-working locals are feeding not just their own town but the residents of the occupied Luhansk as well.

Despite the regular shelling, the town is slowly getting used to peaceful life again. According to the population census, as of 1 January 2017, number of Stanytsia Luhanska residents equals 13,391⁹³ – almost as high as before the war started. People are returning home and the administrative center is coming back to life: administrative buildings are being repaired and new trees are planted, promising the return of former prosperity. Of course, the memory of past events and suffered losses cannot be left behind as easily.

It is important that the Ukrainian citizens that became victims of these crimes have already submitted applications to the European Court of Human Rights claiming their violated right to peaceful enjoyment of one's possessions guaranteed by the Article 1 of Protocol I to the European Convention on Human Rights.

⁹³ Population of Ukraine as of 1 January 2017 // State Statistics Service of Ukraine [website] – access: http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/PXWEB2007/ukr/publ_new1/2017/zb_chnn_0117.pdf

Annex #1

Perished in Stanytsia Luhanska in 2014 – 2018, civilians

1.	Akymenko, Liubov Ivanivna	08/03/49	09/02/14
2.	Bieriozin, Yevhen Mykolaiovych	08/13/66	06/14/14
3.	Borzenko, Valerii Mykolaiovych	11/08/75	06/14/14
4.	Velychko, Tetiana Panteliivna	03/23/57	11/19/14
5.	Verbovskyi, Oleksandr Anatoliiovych	08/07/81	09/02/14
6.	Hazhemon, Tetiana Volodymyrivna	05/02/60	07/05/14
7.	Hulidova, Nadiia Ivanivna	10/19/59	02/11/15
8.	Demianov, Denys Serhiiovych	05/09/86	07/27/14
9.	Yermilov, Volodymyr Mykolaiovych	05/25/67	07/02/14
10.	Yermilov, Ivan Volodymyrovych	07/01/09	07/02/14
11.	Ivanov, Roman Valeriiovych	04/30/81	07/02/14
12.	Ivanov, Stanislav Stanislavovych	04/24/78	07/02/14
13.	Kalinichev, Albert Hennadiiovych	04/13/75	12/25/14
14.	Kaluhin, Mykhailo Fedorovych	01/30/52	07/02/14
15.	Karpenko, Liudmyla Oleksandrivna	00/00/0000	09/03/14
16.	Kirnosova, Lidiia Dmytrivna	04/01/63	07/02/14
17.	Kulivets, Vitalii	00/00/0000	08/31/14
18.	Luhovskyi, Pavlo Petrovych	12/23/62	09/02/14
19.	Liova, Ivan Stepanovych	03/15/31	09/02/14
20.	Makahon, Oleksandr Stepanovych	04/15/58	07/29/14
21.	Myronenko, Valentyna Dmytrivna	06/08/51	07/02/14
22.	Milostnykh, Valentyna Oleksandrivna	12/20/36	09/02/14
23.	Oleksandr Pavlovych	00/00/0000	07/02/14
24.	Padalka, Iosyf Romanovych	04/07/26	07/02/14
25.	Pankova, Maryna Vadymivna	03/01/59	08/06/14
26.	Perebyinos, Andrii Valentynovch	11/21/68	07/02/14
27.	Piddubna, Olena Volodymyrivna	00/00/0000	07/27/14
28.	Raievskyi, Mykola Borysovych	07/17/51	07/26/14
29.	Redkokashyna, Tetiana Petrivna	06/12/53	09/15/14
30.	Redkin, Anatolii Leontiiiovych	10/18/59	05/31/15
31.	Redkin, Daniil Anatoliiovych	00/00/0000	05/31/15
32.	Rybak, Hanna Nykyforivna	02/24/28	07/29/14
33.	Sviatoshenko, Mykola Hryhoriiovych	07/21/80	02/08/15
34.	Skliarov, Petro Mykolaiovych	02/02/51	08/18/14
35.	Stepanov, Serhii Oleksandrovych	00/00/0000	06/14/14
36.	Sulimenko, Fedir Afanasiiovych	03/15/29	08/29/14
37.	Talalaiev, Oleksandr Viktorovych	11/28/67	09/01/14
38.	Talalaieva, Liudmyla Vasylivna	08/16/51	08/18/14
39.	Tselikova, Yevheniia Pavlivna	11/15/36	08/8/14
40.	Chyzh, Oleksandr Nykyforovych	03/24/40	08/19/14
41.	Shamardin, Dmytro Oleksandrovych	09/05/69	02/07/14
42.	Shevyriova, Nina Ivanivna	01/28/36	08/18/14
43.	Shestukhin, Viacheslav Anatoliiovych	07/06/88	09/02/14
44.	Shestukhina, Alla Mykolaivna	12/12/64	09/02/14
45.	Shumakher, Iryna Oleksandrivna	08/03/80	09/11/14

Annex #2

Perished in Stanytsia Luhanska in 2014 – 2018, Ukrainian military personnel

1.	Alymov, Ruslan Mykolaiovych	11/25/75	01/01/16
2.	Babenko, Viktor Volodymyrovych	06/20/81	03/17/15
3.	Babkov, Vitalii Ihorovych	02/13/88	07/10/17
4.	Balaboskin, Ihor Vasyliovych	03/15/75	11/04/15
5.	Blyzniuk, Volodymyr Volodymyrovych	08/28/88	09/06/14
6.	Vashchenia, Ivan Petrovych	02/06/75	06/17/14
7.	Havrylov, Valerii Vasyliovych	04/12/71	02/08/15
8.	Holembiovskiy, Ruslan Mykhailovych	01/23/81	11/28/14
9.	Holubiev, Denys Hryhorovych	03/12/83	02/07/15
10.	Huvir, Serhii Ivanovych	04/24/93	09/29/17
11.	Huk, Andrii Myroslavovych	05/08/71	09/24/16
12.	Dede, Dmytro Vasyliovych	03/12/84	09/29/17
13.	Derkach, Ivan Stepanovych	0708//66	09/11/17
14.	Dzundza, Volodymyr Sviatoslavovych	10/07/83	05/22/16
15.	Dorosh, Taras Ruslanovych	10/30/87	01/14/15
16.	Duryba, Yaroslav Vasyliovych	09/21/73	05/15/15
17.	Zavalniuk, Viacheslav Viktorovych	12/09/90	10/27/14
18.	Ishchenko, Andrii Vasyliovych	01/25/79	11/16/14
19.	Kvartsiany, Mykhailo Andriiovych	21/04/78	05/27/15
20.	Kozak, Marian Ivanovych	07/20/84	08/03/15
21.	Korneliuk, Bohdan Oleksandrovych	09/28/94	01/12/17
22.	Krokhmal, Volodymyr Antonovych	07/20/87	17/06/14
23.	Lahno, Roman Ivanovych	0719//77	01/09/15
24.	Moreka, Vitalii Mykhailovych	09/11/82	10/31/14
25.	Mukomelets, Ruslan Arkadiiovych	03/23/74	01/16/16
26.	Naidion, Oleksandr Viktorovych	11/07/84	11/16/14
27.	Osypchuk, Vasyly Petrovych	02/15/63	03/24/16
28.	Pavliuk, Oleksandr Albertovych	05/29/68	03/08/15
29.	Rykov, Oleksandr Viktorovych	12/06/70	12/28/15
30.	Rozlutskiy, Ihor Vasyliovych	04/25/91	11/19/14
31.	Rubtsov, Vadym Kostiantynovych	11/11/91	02/07/15
32.	Semchyshyn, Andrii Yevhenovych	05/30/71	10/31/14
33.	Semchyshche, Ruslan Stepanovych	02/07/77	11/19/14
34.	Susloparov, Oleksandr Oleksandrovych	11/25/78	01/16/15
35.	Tymoshchuk, Andrii Petrovych	08/01/72	06/12/15
36.	Fomin, Serhii Valentynovych	08/19/75	03/11/16
37.	Furyk, Roman Stepanovych	02/20/63	01/09/15
38.	Chindiaskin, Yevhen Valeriiovych	08/29/80	02/07/15
39.	Chupryna, Valerii Oleksandrovych	12/29/81	04/17/16
40.	Yukhymchuk, Vitalii Vasyliovych	11/21/87	11/18/16

Annex 3.

Perished in Stanytsia Luhanska in 2014 – 2018, members of the illegal armed formations

1.	Antipin, Serhii Mykolaiovych	02/11/77	08/24/15
2.	Derii, Roman Oleksiiovych	11/30/89	09/05/14
3.	Dubyna, Vasyl Anatoliiiovych	05/10/82	08/20/14
4.	Karavanov, Mykola Serhiiiovych	12/02/91	08/24/15
5.	Kasieiev, Roman Volodymyrovych	09/05/86	03/02/17
6.	Kulahin, Mykola Oleksandrovych	09/25/86	05/06/14
7.	Kupyn, Oleksandr Yuriiovych	05/12/62	01/09/15
8.	Leshchynskyi, Yaroslav Leonidovych	04/10/69	05/13/15
9.	Maiboroda, Ihor Volodymyrovych	04/08/66	11/09/14
10.	Martynov, Ruslan Mykolaiovych	03/05/81	08/24/15
11.	Myronenko, Zakhar Mykolaiovych	06/25/87	11/15/15
12.	Moiseiev, Oleksandr Mykolaiovych	01/08/89	06/15/14
13.	Nikolaiev, Viktor Volodymyrovych	04/02/61	06/28/15
14.	Poliekhin, Pavlo Volodymyrovych	07/13/90	08/24/15
15.	Romanyshyn, Viktor Mykolaiovych	07/01/55	06/08/15
16.	Sukharevskyi, Serhii Vitaliiiovych	11/12/90	08/03/15
17.	Taranenko, Andrii	00/00/0000	11/28/14
18.	Tykhonenkov, Ihor Anatoliiiovych	10/28/63	08/24/15
19.	Yakovliev, Ihor Volodymyrovych	10/21/91	08/24/15