



OPEN DIALOG

**Report:
The Russian Federation is responsible for the spread
of terrorism and extremism in eastern Ukraine**



Russia is the main external source of redeployment of militants and weapons (including heavy armament - tanks, armoured personnel carriers, multiple grad rocket launchers) into the territory of Ukraine

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1. Introduction

The number of victims of confrontations between the forces of the anti-terrorist operation in Ukraine and terrorist groups in Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces is growing every day, and includes civilians. Meanwhile, the Russian authorities have never openly condemned the terrorist means of action of so-called supporters of Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, which in Ukraine are considered terrorist organisations. On the contrary, the officials in Moscow protect the interests of 'separatists', accusing the authorities of Ukraine of carrying out 'punitive operations' in the east of the country and calling for an end to the anti-terrorist operation. The information presented in the report shows that it is the Russian Federation which is the main 'sponsor and organiser' of terrorism and separatism in eastern Ukraine:

Infiltrations of gunmen and armament (including heavy armament – tanks, multiple launch rocket systems, armoured transporting vehicles) are carried out from the territory of the Russian Federation to Ukraine;

- The Border Guard of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation does not prevent the infiltration of gunmen and weapons to Ukraine. What's more, Russian border guard workers are openly collaborating with the terrorists;
- Russian citizens fight on the side of terrorist organisations 'Donetsk People's Republic' and 'People's Republic of Lugansk' as volunteers;
- Russian legal structures (Russian Cossacks) are involved in the organisation of sending gunmen and weapons to Ukraine;

On 3 June, 2014, the President of the Russian Federation once again denied the presence of Russian soldiers and instructors on the territory of Ukraine. *"No military forces, no Russian instructors are present in the south-east of Ukraine"* [1], - Putin stated. Let us recall that Russia's president made similar statements during the Russian occupation of the Crimea. Then, Vladimir Putin also categorically denied the presence of Russian troops on the peninsula, however, when the annexation of the Crimea had been completed, he admitted that there were Russian soldiers who acted under the guise of so-called 'Crimean Self-Defence Forces'. [2]

It is noteworthy that the tactics used by Russia in the east of Ukraine today is significantly different from the ones used in the Crimea. The **Kremlin didn't concentrate its attention on the units of the Russian army as was the case on the Crimean peninsula, but rather on separate terrorist groups**. Russia actively supports them with weapons and personnel - Russian 'volunteers' take part in military operations on the side of terrorist groups within the territory of Ukraine.

In order to eliminate terrorist groups in Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces and ensure civil security in those regions, the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the National Guard of Ukraine (part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) are carrying out an anti-terrorist operation (ATO). As of 11 June, 2014, terrorists have controlled the smaller part of these regions. It is noteworthy that they control exactly those areas which are the closest to the Russian border, as the main reinforcements (gunmen and weapons) for the terrorists come from Russia.



The alignment of forces in Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces. Red colour indicates the areas controlled by terrorists (as of 11 June, 2014)

Photo: <http://espresso.tv>

2. Gunmen from the Russian Federation are fighting on the side of the terrorists in eastern Ukraine

Among terrorists within the territory of Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces are citizens of the Russian Federation, including gunmen from the Caucasus republics. It is these gunmen, with characteristic Caucasian appearances, involved in the fighting in the east of Ukraine that prompted the confident assertion that the so-called 'People's Militia of Donbass' doesn't only include the people from the Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces.



Gunmen from the terrorist battalion 'Vostok'

Photo: <http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2014/06/2/7027718/>

One of the main striking forces of terrorists is the **'Vostok' battalion**. According to Ukrainian journalists who had the opportunity to communicate with representatives of the battalion, it was formed by former employees of Ukrainian special services (special forces of the Security Service of Ukraine 'Alpha', as well as special police forces 'Berkut'), Russian volunteers (mainly immigrants from the Caucasus regions of Russia - Ingushetia, Ossetia, Chechnya), as well as volunteers from South Ossetia (unrecognised republic in the Caucasus region). The Ossetian battalion is headed by Oleg (last name unknown), nicknamed 'Mamay', as well as the former chief of special forces 'Alpha' in Donetsk Province, Alexander Khodakovsky. [3] Previously, the main fighting presence within the battalion, were Chechens, but many of them were killed during the fighting in the Donetsk airport on 26 May, 2014. Now, the spine of the battalion is made up of Ossetians who have experience of participation in military operations in other hot spots. [4]

The information about the participation of Caucasian gunmen in the fighting in the east of Ukraine was also confirmed by other sources. This information was confirmed by an official representative of the terrorist organisation 'People's Republic of Donetsk', Miroslav Rudenko. [5]

In an interview for the Russian TV channel 'Dozhd' ['Rain'], Alexey Moroshkin, a Russian citizen, also confirmed the presence in the ranks of the so-called "People's Militia of Donbass" of persons from Caucasian regions of Russia. For some time, Alexei was a member of the 'People's Militia of Donbass', and before that, he served in the 'Self-defence forces of the Crimea' and engaged in blocking Ukrainian military units. *"I saw people whose appearance proved that they are from the Caucasus, who were engaged in the performance of military operations ... They say 200 Chechens*

have come... This information is not being concealed there, and they are not shy about it. Now, in the 'Vostok' battalion, there are many Chechens, Cossacks (Russian Cossacks - Ed.)" [6], – Moroshkin stated.



Militants of Caucasian participate in the pro-Russian rally in Donetsk
Photo: <http://espreso.tv/>

According to the news online portal 'Kavkazskiy Uzel' ['The Caucasian Knot'], militants from Chechnya are indeed engaged in fighting in eastern Ukraine. *"When they say that there are no Chechens there, it is an outright lie. Over the past two weeks, soldiers of former battalions of Special Forces 'Zapad' ['West'] and 'Vostok' ['East'] have been deployed there [7]; they used to be subordinate to the GRU (Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation - Ed.). There are also volunteers from other structures. No one is talking about the losses, but I know that among the dead, there is a resident of our district, from the village of Germenchuk, who was brought here yesterday, I believe, from Donetsk. There were also dead from Urus-Martan, Gudermes and other places" [8], - a resident of the Shalinskiy District of Chechnya told the portal. Some armed men, acting on the side of the terrorists, openly admit that they came from the Chechen Republic and call themselves 'Kadyrov people' [9],[10].*

At the same time, the leader of the Chechen Republic, Ramzan Kadyrov has denied reports about the presence of armed citizens of the republic in the East of Ukraine: *"Ukrainian sources mirror reports that some 'Chechen units' from Russia invaded Donetsk. I officially declare that it does not correspond to reality. No 'Chechen servicemen' and especially 'military convoys of Chechnya' are taking part in the conflict". [11] Nevertheless, according to media reports, the Chechen fighters arrived to fight for the 'People's Militia of Donbass' on the direct orders of Ramzan Kadyrov. [12]*

Representatives of other Caucasian republics of Russia are also present among the terrorists. And so, the head of Ingushetia, Yunus-Bek Yevkurov admitted that 20-25 residents of Ingushetia are acting on the side of rebels in the east of Ukraine. [13]

Previously, the formation of a volunteer battalion to support the partisans of independence of Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces was referred to by one of the political leaders of South Ossetia,

Alan Kotayev. *"The squadron already comprises up to 50 people. For full formation, another 50 men are needed. We will come as volunteers, and we hope to acquire weapons on arrival"*. [\[14\]](#)

3. First confirmations of the deaths of Russian gunmen on the territory of Ukraine

For a long time, information regarding the presence of Russian armed militants in eastern Ukraine was not officially confirmed. There were only reports given in the form of operational data of security services in Ukraine and information disseminated by individual journalists. Also, reports were spread that the bodies of dead Russians had been secretly trafficked to Russia.^[15]

The first reliable information about mass deaths of Russian fighters in eastern Ukraine was publicised after the anti-terrorist operation in Donetsk on 26 May, 2014. Then, the Ukrainian army and the security forces eliminated at least fifty terrorists. Later, it transpired that at least 31 of them were citizens of the Russian Federation. *"At the end of the day, when we met with our colleagues in the hotel cafe for dinner, we were approached by a man from the circles of Alexander Boroday, the Prime Minister of the self-declared People's Republic of Donetsk. He said that the next day, a convoy of two trucks with dead bodies would leave Donetsk for Russia and asked the journalists a favour: to escort them to the border. He promised to report within half an hour, where exactly they were to be taken, and who would accompany the 'cargo', and then asked whether we agreed to go. We were stunned by what we heard [16]"*, - journalist Maria Turchenkova stated. It was the first official recognition by the leadership of terrorist organisations that Russian citizens are involved in the Donbas battles and are also being killed.



A lorry carrying dead bodies of Russians (marked as 'cargo 200') on the border with Ukraine

Photo: <http://www.echo.msk.ru/blog/maryautomne/1332306-echo/>

As reported by the Caucasian media, most of dead Russians are residents of the Chechen Republic ^[17], as bodies of several dozen militants were transported to the territory of the republic.

The full list of those killed has not yet been made public, only some of the names are known, among them - **Sergey Zhdanovich**, a veteran of the Second Chechen war, **member of the city council of Electrogorsk from the 'Yedinaya Rossiya' ['United Russia'] party**. As became known to Russian journalists, Zhdanovich's trip to Donetsk was organised by the head of the city executive committee from 'United Russia', Roman Tikunov. In April 2014, Zhdanovich applied as a volunteer for the militant groups of the so-called 'Crimean Self-Defence Forces", but they did not manage to transfer him. On 14 May, 2014, he announced to his family that he had been urgently summoned to the Rostov-on-Don for 'military training'. ^[18] **This suggests that the leadership of the pro-government party 'United Russia' is involved in the recruitment and organisation of the transfer**

of militants to Ukraine. Previously, Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC), Andrey Parubiy reported that Ukrainian intelligence had discovered a large military base near Rostov-on-Don, where Russian fighters are trained for operations in Ukraine. [\[19\]](#)

Official Russian authorities did not react in any way to the delivery to Russia of the bodies of militants. Russian state media did not cover the event.

4. Gunmen break through the Ukrainian-Russian border en-masse

Recently, attempts to break through the Ukrainian-Russian border by militant groups have become more frequent. The activation of terrorists at the border can be attributed to the acute need for reinforcement for groups who suffer permanent losses as a result of the anti-terrorist operations, conducted by Ukrainian special forces. The main source of reinforcement in the form of new fighters and weapons is the Russian Federation.

On 27 May, 2014, near the border settlement of Astakhovo (Lugansk Province), a column of cars (several trucks, vans and passenger cars) with militants and weapons penetrated Ukraine from the Russian Federation. Having noticed the illegal crossing of the border by motorcade, the Border Guard Service of Ukraine opened fire. Some of the law-breakers managed to break into the territory of Ukraine. Due to fighting, Ukrainian Border Guard workers managed to seize one van and two passenger cars, in which they found Kalashnikovs, rocket launchers and explosives. Previously, the State Border Guard of Ukraine reported that 40 trucks with armed men who were in readiness to cross the border with Ukraine are present on the territory of Russia, near the border with Ukraine. It cannot be ruled out that these very cars were the ones that crossed the border on 27 May, 2014. [\[20\]](#)

On 30 May, 2014, Ukrainian Border Guard workers detained two minibuses with weapons, which attempted to enter the territory of Ukraine from Russia. In the seized vehicles, 28 Kalashnikovs, 6 rocket launchers 4 sniper rifles, 3 machine guns, 40 boxes of ammunition and grenades. [\[21\]](#)

On the night of 4 June, 2014, military clashes of Ukrainian Border Guard workers and terrorist groups in the area of the checkpoint 'Marinovka (Donetsk Province) took place. From the territory of the Russian Federation, a group of terrorists (1 armoured personnel carrier (APC), and approx. 10 trucks) stormed the Ukrainian Border Guard unit. Also, from the territory of Ukraine, terrorists carried out attacks through which they tried to provide support for the passage of equipment from Russia. The clashes resulted in the destruction of 1 APC and 3 trucks; the remaining gunmen were forced to retreat from the border into the territory of the Russian Federation. [\[22\]](#)

Against the backdrop of militants' constant attempts to break through the Ukrainian-Russian border, **the question regarding the inaction of the Border Guard of the Russian Federation remains open.** Since the interstate border is an object of responsibility of the two states (Ukraine and Russia), the Russian Border Guard Service bears full responsibility for the penetration of militants into the territory of Ukraine from the Russian Federation. At the moment, no case is known when Russian Border Guard workers tried to prevent the penetration of militants into Ukraine. *"They cross the border of the Russian Federation with weapons, and Russian border guards are not taking any action to arrest them. The Russian FSB doesn't detain them on the territory of the Russian Federation, when they are approaching the border of Russia. How can it be called? I genuinely believe that Russia is a sponsor of terrorism. We must call a spade a spade",* [\[23\]](#) - Adviser to the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, Anatoliy Gerashchenko, stated in connection to the events.

Presently, some sections of the Ukrainian-Russian border are under the full control of terrorists. It is known that at the checkpoint 'Dolzhansky' (Lugansk Province), militants of the terrorist groups, operating in Lugansk Province, established their own checkpoint. On the Russian side, Russian border guards work with them. Terrorists control a significant stretch of the Ukrainian-Russian border in Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces. Previously, the State Border Guard of Ukraine announced the closure of a number of checkpoints on the border with Russia. Under the current contracts between Ukraine and Russia, in the case of closing one side of the checkpoint, the

other party is also required to prevent the passage of citizens across the border through this checkpoint. [24]

On 6 June, 2014, temporary chargé d'affaires of Russia in Ukraine, Andrey Vorobyov, was summoned to appear in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. In the ministry, he was handed a diplomatic note demanding that the Russian side provide an explanation regarding the incidents of gross violations of the ordinary regime of the Russian-Ukrainian border. *"A strong protest was issued to the Russian side with regard to the inaction of the Border Guard workers and other competent authorities of Russia, which do not prevent illegal movement of organised armed groups and individuals into the territory of Ukraine. Such actions of the Russian side have already led to the compromising of security on the Russian-Ukrainian state border and an acute aggravation of the situation in the border areas in Ukraine"*, [25] – Ukraine's MFA stated.

According to the Security Service of Ukraine, **Russian paramilitary forces - Cossacks have been directly involved in the transfer of armed groups, as well as supplies of weapons from the territory of the Russian Federation to Ukraine.** Nikolay Kozitsin, Ataman of the International Public Organisation 'Great Don Army' (one of Russian Cossack troops based in Rostov Province), has been engaged in the coordination of the transfer of combat groups and weapons engagement). He also coordinates the activities of terrorist groups in eastern Ukraine. [26] Under Russian law, the Cossacks have a special legal status and carry out public service.

It is worth noting that on 20 May, 2014, the General Agreement on Mutual Assistance and Cooperation between the Cossacks and the People's Republic of Donetsk ('PRD') was signed in Moscow. The agreement was signed by the so-called 'PRD' officials in Russia and the leadership of several Russian Cossack organisations. One of the points of the agreement imposes an obligation on the Cossacks to organise the collection and transportation of humanitarian aid, intended for citizens of the so-called 'PRD'. [27] Hence, it is possible that weapons transported from Russia to Ukraine arrive under the guise of humanitarian aid.

According to the operative data of the Information and Analytical Centre 'Informatsyonnoye soprotivlyenye' ['Information resistance'], during the penetration into the territory of Ukraine by militant groups and columns of military equipment, operations aimed at their surreptitiousness are carried out not only by Russian Border Guard workers, but also the Armed Forces of Russia. In particular, when redeploying mercenary groups and batches of weapons into the territory of Ukraine, in the border zone of Russian airspace, a AEWA (airborne early warning aircraft) reconnaissance aircraft A-50 (NATO code - Mainstay) of the Russian Air Force is patrolling the area. The crew of the plane are to spot the Ukrainian military aviation, which could disrupt the operation of redeploying Russian mercenaries into the territory of Ukraine. [28] Also, according to 'Information resistance', the tanks redeployed to Ukraine from the territory of the Russian Federation - are T-64BV tanks; these tanks used to be part of the equipment of the brigade of the coastal defence of the Ukrainian Navy in the Crimea, but all combat units (41 tanks) were withdrawn to the mainland of Ukraine. These tanks are also at the disposal of Russia's Ministry of Defence; they were decommissioned from the military equipment of the Russian army, but they are still kept in the storage bases of the Ministry of Defence. [29]

5. The Ukrainian-Russian border was crossed by Russian tanks and other heavy armament

On 12 June, 2014, reports on the movement of tanks in some cities of Donetsk Province spread. In particular, the tanks were sighted in Torez [30] and Makeyevka. [31]

On the same day, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov stated that armoured vehicles (tanks, armoured personnel carriers, armoured cars) invaded Ukraine from the territory of the Russian Federation through checkpoints on the border, controlled by militants. *"On Thursday we saw three tanks, which, to our knowledge, had passed through the border and were in Snezhniy (a town in Donetsk Province - Ed.) from the morning. After that, two of them moved towards Gorlovka. They were subjected to attack by our military forces"*, [32] - the minister enunciated.

Official representatives of the U.S. State Department reported the penetration of tanks and other heavy weapons (in particular, multiple grad rocket launchers BM-21) from the territory of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. [33]

The press service of NATO, citing intelligence reports, reported that indeed, tanks could have been brought to Ukraine from the Russian Federation. [34]

In turn, the press service of the Russian Foreign Ministry labelled Arsen Avakov's statement as 'misinformation'. [35]

On 13 June, 2014, terrorists attacked the town of Dobropole (Donetsk Province) using BM-21 multiple grad rocket launchers (2 cars). Presumably, the terrorists intended to bombard the Ukrainian army checkpoint, located at the entrance to the city, but made a mistake when aiming, hence the warheads hit the suburbs. As a result of shooting, at least one person was killed and another was wounded. [36] During salvo fire, one of the military vehicles caught fire, failing to discharge all warheads. As evidenced by poorly painted markings on the combat vehicle, as well as stamps in the documentation, stored in the cabin of the BM-21, it belongs to the Russian 18th Separate Guards Motor Rifle Brigade (Southern Military District, Russia). [37]



Multiple grad rocket launcher BM-21, used by terrorists in Dobropole
Photo: <http://sprotyv.info/ru/news/1195-hroniki-rossiysko-ukrainskoy-voiny-rossiyskiy-grad-pod-dobropolem-foto>

6. Conclusions

Existing evidence shows that Russia actively supports the armed struggle of terrorist groups in Donetsk and Lugansk Provinces against the central authorities of Ukraine, thus interfering in the internal affairs of another state. In particular, **Russia is the main external source of redeployment of militants and weapons (including heavy weapons: tanks, armoured personnel carriers, multiple grad rocket launchers) into the territory of Ukraine.** In the ranks of the so-called 'People's Militia of Donbass', there are citizens of the Russian Federation, including militants from the Caucasus regions of Russia.

Under Russian law, 'Mercenaries', i.e. the involvement in military operations in order to obtain material compensation is a criminal offence (Article 359 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). [38] However, there is no known case in which Russia's Investigation Committee (IC) instituted criminal proceedings against citizens of the Russian Federation, who are sent to fight on the territory of Ukraine, although there are grounds and an appropriate legal basis to do so. At the same time, the Investigation Committee of Russia opened a criminal case "against yet unidentified members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as persons from the 'National Guard of Ukraine' and the 'Pravyi Sektor' ['Right sector'] on charges of shooting in the cities of Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, Donetsk, Mariupol and other settlements, proclaimed as the 'Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic' on the grounds of existence of elements of crime under Article 356, section 1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (the use of prohibited means and methods of warfare). [39]

Russia has actively supported the 'separatist' movement in the east of Ukraine for the past few months. During this time, the actions of the terrorists caused the deaths of hundreds of people, and catastrophic socio-economic conditions in the region. Despite this, the Western democracies still refrain from introducing a so-called 'third package' of sanctions against the Russian Federation (sanctions against individual sectors of the Russian economy). In such circumstances, the Russian Federation can indefinitely continue to wage the 'hybrid war' against Ukraine - to sponsor and support the armed resistance of the separatists against the Ukrainian authorities. The Open Dialog Foundation believes that the international community must make it clear to the Russian authorities that the West considers Russia the main culprit in the developments in Eastern Ukraine. We hereby urge democratic countries of the West to introduce new sanctions against the Russian Federation, as it is the only way to stop the bloodshed in the Donbas.

Revanchist attitudes among the Russian ruling elite associated with attempts to resume Russia's influence on the territory of the former Soviet Union threaten to destroy the whole system of security on the European continent. Russian military aggression against Ukraine takes place under the guise of protecting the 'interests' of Russian-speaking citizens, shows that the victims of such aggression may be other post-Soviet countries, where most of the population are ethnic Russians (Belarus, Latvia, Estonia). The conflict in eastern Ukraine is convenient for the Russian Federation, as in this way, the world's attention can be diverted from the conducted annexation of the Crimean peninsula. In this regard, there are fears that the armed conflict in Lugansk and Donetsk Provinces could drag on indefinitely. For early stabilisation of the situation in the region, the international community must jointly oppose the principal 'mastermind' behind the actions of terrorist groups in Eastern Ukraine: Russian Federation.

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39. Investigation Committee of the Russian Federation / A criminal case was opened with regard to the use of prohibited means and methods of warfare in the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic. - <http://www.sledcom.ru/actual/403388/>

The Open Dialog Foundation was established in Poland, in 2009, on the initiative of Lyudmyla Kozlovska (who is currently the President of the Management Board). The statutory objectives of the Foundation include protection of human rights, democracy and rule of law in the post-Soviet area, with particular attention devoted to the biggest CIS countries: Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

The Foundation pursues its goals through the organisation of observation missions, including election observation and monitoring of the human rights situation in the CIS countries. Based on these activities, the Foundation creates its reports and distributes them among the institutions of the EU, the OSCE and other international organisations, foreign ministries and parliaments of EU countries, analytical centres and media.

In addition to observational and analytical activities, the Foundation is actively engaged in cooperation with members of parliaments involved in foreign affairs, human rights and relationships with the CIS countries, in order to support the process of democratisation and liberalisation of internal policies in the post-Soviet area. Significant areas of the Foundation's activities also include support programmes for political prisoners and refugees.

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